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EXPLORING AFRICAN MIGRANTS' DECISIONS TO MIGRATE TO NEW ZEALAND

OLUFEMI MUIBI OMISAKIN¹

ABSTRACT

Migration is the movement of people from one geographic location to another. It can be either domestic or international. This study focuses on international migration. Individuals or groups who decide to leave one country to go to another, intending to live there for a year or more, are considered international migrants (Vore, 2015). The study discusses how and why migrants migrate voluntarily and why they may be forced to migrate.

The study examines the decision factors causing Africans to migrate to New Zealand. Three schools of thought (push and pull, structuralist, and transnational) in the migration literature were used to evaluate participants' motives. An interpretive study approach was used to collect data; a thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that participants migrated for work, career development, children's welfare, quality of life, environment and security.

Keywords: Migration, push and pull, transnational, structuralist.

INTRODUCTION

Migration, the movement of people from one geographic location to another, is as old as humanity. People migrate either within or outside their country on a temporary or permanent abode. They may be forced to migrate, or may migrate voluntarily. People are forced to migrate because of natural disasters, political and economic challenges, religious or ethnic persecution or war. People migrate voluntarily for work, family reunification, schooling and diplomatic employment (Vore, 2015).

This study focuses on international migration. According to the World Bank (2016, p. 1), "More than 250 million people or 3.4% of the world population live outside their countries of birth."

Economically, international migration is a two-sided coin. While the receiving countries need migrants to help accelerate economic growth and development, the sending countries benefit from direct investment from migrants, who send remittances to their families (Omisakin, 2016). Remittances help migrants' families in their home countries to improve their living standards, provide access to health services and offset school bills and other necessities (Nwajiuba, 2007). According to the World Bank (2016), migrants remitted US \$432 billion to home countries from developing countries, with India being the largest recipient (\$69 billion), followed by China (\$64 billion) and the Philippines (\$28 billion). Migrants from sub-Saharan African countries remitted only \$35.2 billion.

There have already been several studies on migration and the flow of migrants (Dayton-Johnson, 2009; Hagen-Zanker, 2008). However, this study specifically addresses the increasing number of Africans migrating to New Zealand for settlement and examines their motives for migrating.

The researcher engaged with participants on a one-to-one basis through face-to-face interviews to collect data. Through interviews, participants shared their reasons for their decisions to migrate with the researcher. Data was collected and analysed using thematic

¹ Dr Olufemi Muibi Omisakin, Applied Business Lecturer, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology Department of Business Management – Auckland Campus, New Zealand. E-mail: olufemi.omisakin@nmit.ac.nz.

analysis. Three schools of thought were used to support the analysis of the data collected. The push and pull factor was used to evaluate migrants' decisions to migrate from a cost-benefit analysis perspective. The structuralist school of thought was used to evaluate participants' decisions from a lifestyle perspective, and transnational thought was used to evaluate participants' decisions from the position of circular mobility to maintain transnational links.

The rest of the study is structured as follows: the second section reviews previous literature and theories relevant to the study. The results of the review were used to evaluate the findings. The third section discusses the method used to collect data, and the fourth section analyses the data collected and findings as to why participants migrated. The fifth section presents a migration decision-making and cost-benefit framework, and the final section discusses the research contribution to migrant studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

New Zealand has become a popular destination for migrants and is now a multi-ethnic society. According to Tabor (2014), migrants' choice of New Zealand is based on the perception that it is a desirable destination for quality of life, with a peaceful environment, good governance, mild climate, and connectivity to nature. Although New Zealand is a multi-ethnic society, Māori are the indigenous people. (Liu, Wilson, McClure and Higgins 1999). Today, however, people of European descent constitute 74% of the population, followed by Māori at 14.9%, Asians at 11.8%, Pacific people at 7.4%, and then Middle Eastern, Latin American and African people making up the smallest percentage of the population, at 1.2% (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). As New Zealand attracts immigrants from all over the world, their greatest impact is on Auckland, because it has the highest concentration of immigrants in the country. These effects are mostly felt in the areas of housing, infrastructure and jobs (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). However, the influx of immigrants into Auckland has also had a positive impact on Auckland's economy, particularly in the areas of migrant business, availability of skilled labour, economic growth and development, and cultural diversity (Cain et al., 2011). According to Whybrow (2005), international migrants infuse their host countries with new energy and new ideas. Developed and developing countries acknowledge the contributions of immigrants to their countries' economic growth and development (Fairlie, 2008; Whitehead, Purdy, and Mascarenhas-Keyes, 2003). However, some researchers argue that migration from underdeveloped countries could constitute a "brain drain" for the sending countries, especially with the migration of skilled migrants (Stark, Helmenstein and Prskawetz, 1997; Beine, Docquier, and Rapoport, 2003). According to the United Nations International Migration and Development (2005), a country that experiences huge outward migration of its skilled population could experience economic loss through the reduction of its output production.

Migration thoughts

King (2012) conceptualised three schools of thought on migrants' motives to migrate.

The push and pull factor is based on migrants' beliefs that the benefits of migrating to another country exceed the costs, and that therefore migration will be worthwhile. However, this is not always the case (according to Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (2009)), as sometimes migrants are unable to meet their expectations because of structural or cultural challenges in their new country. This school also suggests that migrants could be moved to return home when they are unable to realise their desired goal. This is often difficult, as the challenges that prompted them to migrate might still exist.

The structuralist factor prompts people to migrate because of structural economic and power inequalities. Therefore, countries with weaker economic and governance structures often see greater numbers of their population migrating to secure livelihoods. This view suggests that people's motivation to migrate increases when they find it difficult to secure

and sustain their livelihood in their home countries, probably due to population growth and other factors (De Haas, 2007). However, the inability of people to sustain their livelihood is not limited to high population growth alone. It could result from natural disaster, war, the loss of a job and the inability to secure another, or a host of other variables (Siddiqui, 2003).

The transnational factor involves the creation of transnational community networks linking migrants to wider diaspora groups. Transnational motivation assumes that a migrant's motive to migrate depends not only on the connections established by migrants in the country of origin or the destination, but also within established migrant networks between the countries of origin and destination (as well as connections and flows across borders) (Faist, 2000). Networks established by migrants outside their country of origin and destination are sometimes useful in transferring migrants to other destinations (Ozkul, 2012).

Why people migrate

Migration within a country is referred to as internal migration, while the movement of people from one country to another is referred to as international migration. Akhtar (2013) regards migration as positive action against poverty and economic and environmental challenges, resulting from a desire to attain a better life. Internal or international migration could be the result of a combination of economic, political, and social factors that often contribute to migrants' decisions to migrate across borders.

The researcher categorises these factors into push and pull. Therefore, the literature review in the study is limited to push and pull motives for migrants to migrate to another country.

Push and pull factors

The economic push and pull factor

According to Kainth (2010), migrants often migrate for economic reasons that particularly motivate people from underdeveloped countries to migrate to developed countries. Most developing countries are challenged by unemployment and underemployment leading to poverty because their economies are largely dependent on agriculture. Production is seasonal and dependent on natural factors (weather). Agricultural workers have limited control over the yield, and international prices for agricultural products are determined and controlled by the developed countries who buy them. The researcher considers this to be a significant reason pushing migrants towards prosperous countries with abundant job opportunities. People will naturally think of emigrating from countries with job shortages to countries with job availability. However, job availability varies among the receiving countries, and for migrants looking for a better life, getting a good job in the new country could be no more than a dream. The availability of employment in migrant receiving countries and their living wages, better working conditions, good infrastructures, and other life-enhancing amenities are nevertheless regarded as pull factors for migration. This analysis also explains why people migrate from one location to another in a country, leading to some being more prosperous than others are.

The political push and pull factor

In some cases, the political factor is an important reason why people migrate from a country. Many African and some Middle Eastern countries lack good political systems, causing people to flee. For instance, people have moved en masse out of Syria, Libya, Somalia, Congo, Iraq, and other countries in the face of the challenges of war and the lack of good governance, in search of political stability the rule of law, human rights protection and peace. Political push factors can also constitute pull factors because people will be attracted to countries with democratic systems where people's rights are respected and protected by good governance. In

addition, migrants are pulled to countries with good education systems. The United Nations Human Rights Council (2009) suggests that an ideal state should be able to guarantee either locals or migrants the right to pursue their personal aspirations without government interference. Exercise of fundamental human rights is a motivating force for migration from one country to another (Ravlik, 2014).

The sociocultural push and pull factor

“Sociocultural” means relating to both social and cultural issues, and both can motivate people to emigrate. In highly tribalised countries, people are often persecuted because of their tribal lineage, ethnicity, political affiliation and opinions, culture, religious beliefs, nationality, and social connections. The researcher believes that if such persecutions continue, people will be forced to migrate from the troubled environment. According to Piesse (2014), the continuous inability of some countries to desist from persecution because of their authoritarian regimes will continue to cause significant conflict. The author concludes that, even if the conflicts are resolved, it will be difficult for these countries to experience peace, especially where there is high social and cultural diversity. People pushed to migrate to other countries because of sociocultural or political persecution often do so for humanitarian reasons, either as refugees or as asylum seekers. This has been the case for people pushed to migrate from Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Somalia to Europe, as well as for people pushed to migrate to Australia from Sri Lanka. The same reason applies to the forced migration of the Rohingya people out of Myanmar.

The environmental push and pull factor

This factor could be better analysed from an internal migration perspective. Ecological problems such as famine, climate change, and excessive rainfall could induce people to migrate from one geographical location to another. When this situation occurs, the affected people migrate to areas conducive to human survival and habitation where food, water, and other necessities of life to support human settlement are available. When this occurs, conflicts and clashes often occur, especially in countries with tribal, ethnic, and religious differences. People might also be pushed out of their countries because of other man-made environmental threats like pollution and flooding. However, people are also pulled to other countries with less hazardous or less polluted environments, or with natural beauty, good climate, good beaches, and peace.

Tabor (2014) argues that migrants choose New Zealand as a desirable destination because of its serenity, good climate, and quality of life. Corroborating this view, the New Zealand Department of Labour (2009) maintains that migrants select New Zealand as a destination for its relaxed pace and peaceful life as well as because of its good lifestyle, good climate, and clean green environment. Migrants also regard New Zealand as an ideal place to raise their children and create a good future for them.

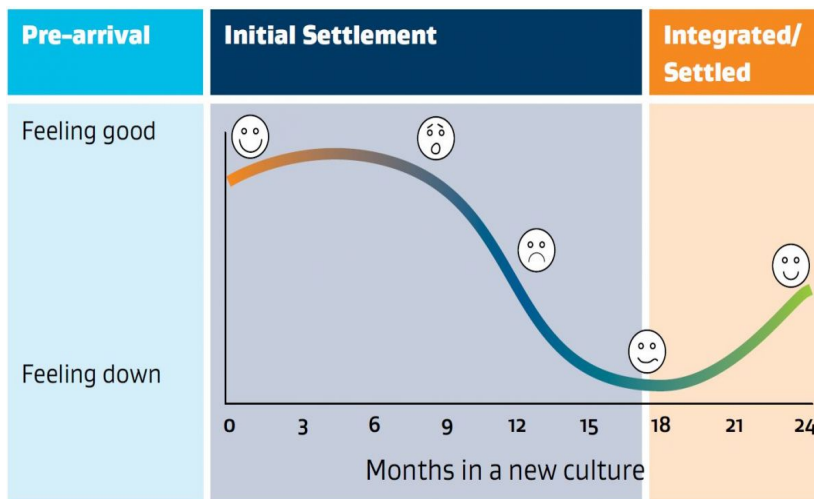


Figure 1: New Zealand migrant settlement experience curve. The New Zealand Government developed this to illustrate the steps towards integration.

Similarly, the New Zealand Labour and Immigration Research Centre (2012) maintain that migrants come to New Zealand because of job opportunities, the good environment, and the landscape. Statistics New Zealand (2007) concludes that migrants are pulled to New Zealand for the following reasons: social (32.4%), education (22.7%), employment (16.9%), environment (12.5%), and political/cultural (15%).

According to New Zealand Immigration (2016), migrating to a new country such as New Zealand is a major life change that may require starting from scratch and making stressful life adjustments. In most cases, migrants' expectations are high when they embark on the act of migration, thinking that their life will be better within a short time of arrival. Sometimes, however, the reverse is the case (Omisakin, 2016), and migrants go through several emotional stages as they settle and integrate into their new community (Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment 2016). Based on Figure 1, arrival is associated with happiness and excitement because everything looks different and new. After this, a migrant can feel frightened, realising that living in a foreign country is not as easy as they thought. At this stage, the migrant could be homesick, thinking about their family. When migrants experience this and other negative experiences (such as the inability to achieve whatever they dreamed of before migrating), they might ask themselves if they should return home or fight to stay. Staying will require support to help achieve goals. This could be provided through informal networks or through access to a counsellor for advice. Migrants who are successful at these stages will achieve their goals, such as getting a job or starting to settle and integrate into their new community. They will then start feeling that New Zealand is their home.

New Zealand's Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy

In view of the challenges faced by migrants in their attempts to integrate successfully into the New Zealand environment, the New Zealand Government in 2002 adopted a settlement and integration strategy to help migrants start a new life in New Zealand. The aim was that migrants would be able to make New Zealand their home, participate fully, and contribute to all aspects of New Zealand life. The New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy aims to achieve five measurable outcomes for migrants:

1. Employment – to ensure that working age migrants have work that matches their skills;
2. Education and training – to ensure that migrants achieve New Zealand educational and vocational qualifications by helping them to attend schools or vocational training;

3. English language – to assist migrants to learn and confidently use English in their daily lives;
4. Inclusion – to assist and help migrants to participate in and have a sense of belonging in their New Zealand community; and
5. Health and wellbeing – to assist migrants to enjoy healthy lives and feel confident and safe.

How far this strategy has been successful in New Zealand is another area of future research.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher adopted a qualitative approach for data collection. The interview method was used to elicit information from participants. According to Myers and Newman (2007), the interview method is an effective way to access and interpret information from participants. Participants were interviewed to obtain information about their decisions to migrate to New Zealand (Bryman, 2008). To realise this goal, the researcher made use of semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interview: Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) described the semi-structured interview as a qualitative method of inquiry with the use of predetermined sets of open-ended questions. The researcher used this to extract information on decisions, experiences, opinions and ideas from the participants on the topic at hand used this.

The researcher designed a semi-structured face-to-face open-ended interview question schedule relating to migrant decisions to migrate to New Zealand. Interviews were conducted with 17 participants, and the purposive sampling method was used to select participants (Grinnell and Unrau, 2005). Kirkwood (2009) argued that extracting information on migrants' decisions, opinions, and experiences is complex and personal. The author concluded that the interpretive paradigm is most suited to resolving a complex phenomenon of this nature. During the interviews, participants' responses were tape-recorded. Interviewees' non-verbal communication that could not be recorded was observed and noted for research analysis and obtaining findings (Bernard and Ryan, 2010; Denscombe, 1998).

DATA ANALYSIS

Responses collected from participants on their decisions to migrate to New Zealand were transcribed. The researcher then carefully read and re-read the interview transcripts (Rice and Ezzy, 1999). Analysis began with categorising, ordering, manipulating, and summarising data to make meaning of it before it was fully analysed and meaningful conclusions drawn (Brink, 1996). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. Anderson (2007) argues that thematic analysis is the most foundational of qualitative analytic procedures because of its informed objectivity. Thematic analysis enables the researcher to search for common themes emerging from the data collected. The emerged themes are important for the description of the phenomenon under study (Daly, Kellehear, and Gliksman, 1997).

Analysis of findings

Presentation and discussion of the study's findings starts with participant demographic information.

Participants by age and gender

The participants were aged between 30 and 58 years old, and their gender distribution was 6 males and 11 females.

Participants by nationality and qualifications

Table 1 contains data on participants' nationality and the qualifications. The table shows that eight participants were of Nigerian nationality, four were from Ghana, and there was one each from Congo, Somalia, and Sudan. Two participants were Ethiopian.

Participants by qualification

One participant (Janet) held a doctorate (PhD); three participants (Mat, Matiness, and Ama) had master's degrees; and two participants (Halle and Man) had postgraduate diplomas. Keji, Rose, Matule, and Nathaniel had bachelor's degrees. Mohammed, Jully, Emily, and James held diplomas. Hamid and Ruth had high school certificates, while Hajia had no qualification.

Table 1: Participants' nationality and qualifications

Participant	Nationality	Qualification attained
Halle	Nigeria	Postgraduate diploma
Keji	Nigeria	Bachelor's degree
Mohammed	Somalia	Diploma
Man	Nigeria	Postgraduate diploma
Hamid	Sudan	High school certificate
Janet	Nigeria	PhD
Mat	Nigeria	Master's degree
Matiness	Nigeria	Master's degree
Rose	Ghana	Bachelor's degree
Matule	Congo	Bachelor's degree
Nathaniel	Ghana	Bachelor's degree
Ruth	Ethiopia	High school certificate
Hajia	Ethiopia	None
Jully	Nigeria	Diploma
Emily	Ghana	Diploma
James	Ghana	Diploma
Ama	Nigeria	Master's degree

Participants arranged according to years in New Zealand

Four participants had been in New Zealand for between five and nine years. Seven participants had been in New Zealand between 10 and 14 years, while five had been in New Zealand for between 15 and 20 years. Only one participant had been in New Zealand for more than 20 years. More than two-thirds of participants had been in New Zealand for more than 10 years.

Participants' reasons for migrating

The most common reason among participants for migration to New Zealand was to seek a better life, as indicated in Table 2. Nine participants migrated to New Zealand to improve their life circumstances. Halle states, "I migrated to New Zealand to develop my career and have a better life." Mat and Matiness had lived in Germany for five years and enjoyed their stay there. Planning to move out of Germany, they got information that convinced them that New Zealand might be significantly better than Germany in terms of job opportunities and peaceful life. They migrated to New Zealand as highly skilled migrants. Mat said, "Despite my positive anticipation of getting a good job in New Zealand, I could not secure one for long time. The first job I got was as a mail sorter, and until now I could not secure a job in my discipline." Mutule, Jully, and James claimed that they originally came to New Zealand to explore. On arrival, they appreciated the country's natural beauty, serenity, environment, and temperate weather as the initial motivators for them to stay. James said, "The main reason why I chose to stay in New Zealand was because the culture is less materialistic than in my home country. People here seem friendly and trustworthy, the scenery and environment are beautiful, and I have experienced social acceptance. For all these reasons, I made up my mind to make a career and enjoy a better life in New Zealand." Man and Nathaniel indicated that they migrated to New Zealand for a change of environment for a short time; never expecting it would become their permanent abode. Mohammed, Hamid, Janet, and Rose

migrated to New Zealand because they needed to reunite with their families. Ruth and Hajia migrated as refugees because of the political instability in their country.

Emily migrated to New Zealand with her parents when she was a teenager: “I came with my parents when I was a very young kid. I did not know where we were coming to and

Table 2: Participants’ reasons for migrating

Participant	Reason for migration
Halle	To develop a career and forge a better life
Keji	Seeking a better life
Mohammed	Family reunification
Man	Change of environment for a better life
Hamid	Family reunification
Janet	Family reunification
Mat	Seeking a better life
Matiness	Seeking a better life
Rose	Family reunification
Matule	Seeking a better life
Nathaniel	Change of environment for a better life
Ruth	Refugee
Hajia	Refugee
Jully	Seeking a better life
Emily	Came with family at a young age
James	Seeking a better life
Ama	Family member was offered a skilled job

when we got to New Zealand, I did not know where we were. I was told the story later because I kept asking. As a kid growing up I never knew any country that I could call mine except New Zealand. I grew up, married, and started raising my nuclear family here in New Zealand.”

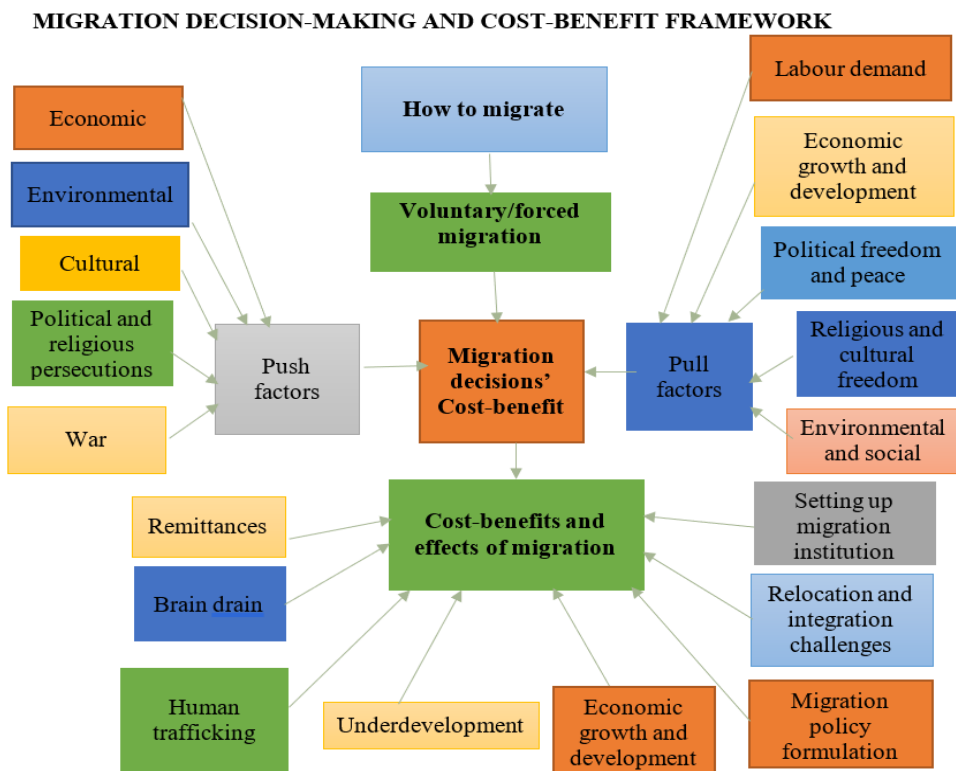


Figure 2: Migration and decision-making and cost-benefit framework

The above framework (Figure 2) represents a generic migration decision-making process, along with cost-benefit and effects of international migration.

CONCLUSION

This study has answered important questions relating to migrants' decisions to migrate. Findings from the study indicate that decision factors to migrate to New Zealand include opportunities for work and children, quality of life, environment, security, and career development. It is evident from my contact with the participants that they enjoy New Zealand, but most are not happy because they have been unable to realise their potential. Conclusively, by presenting an international migration decision-making and cost-benefit framework, the researcher has added significantly to migration studies regarding migrants' decision to migrate.

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