

## **IMSU Journal of Communication Studies**

Volume 4, Issue 1, 2020 ISSN: 2682-6321, E-ISSN: 2705-2240 www.imsujcs.com



### EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF IMMIGRATION TO EUROPE ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN

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#### ABSTRACT

This study is an effort into the humanitarian problem orchestrated by African emigration into Europe at the confluence of the Mediterranean, Libya, and Spain. In the instances of Nigerians' experience in the Libyan post-war challenges, this study explored the effects of social media and level of education on the misconstrued migration perception of youths to Europe using Neo-Classical theory (Hicks, 1932) and Ravenstein's (1889) Dual Theory of Labour in explaining the cause of African perennial search for greener opportunities abroad even at the expense of their lives. Responses of 369 young adult persons were elicited and analyzed using factorial design and one-way analysis of variance as statistical tool. Data analyzed confirmed that public migration perception of the public to Europe differed across social media user group users at F (1, 369) = 5.37, p < .05 with high users having more appropriate perception than low users. Also, group differences were observed across levels of education on migration perception of the public to Europe at F(1, 369) = 4.69, p < .05 with participants with high education showing more appropriate perception than participants with low level of education. Against this finding, it is recommended that the government establish visa services which will be fair to migrants and sensitize the public on the prospects and dangers of migration.

**Keywords:** Labour distribution, migration, public perception, Libyan crisis, social media, education level, unemployment

#### Introduction

Human migration is part of life and a defining process of evolution. It is an uncontested fact that migration has become very topical issue amidst the global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Topical as it is, migration from one part of the country or continent to another is in essence, an established human attitude across races, civilizations, religion, socio-economic circumstances and other subtle definitions of the entire human endeavour. For several reasons, people migrate to other parts of the world as tourists, others to visit important religious places connected to their faith, for health or medical purposes and yet some migrations are caused by socio-economic purposes such as the search for "greener pastures" (Shaw, 2007). The later is the interest of the current study especially in consideration of the recent Libyan crises and what migration to Europe means to struggling third world countries of Africa with grand history of poverty and life threatening conditions (Kosho, 2016).

United Nation's factsheet indicates that no historical period has ever witnessed such tremendous displacements and replacements across countries and continental borders such as one being witnessed in the current 21<sup>st</sup> century. Africa's history of continental (international) migration is not new with Malian migration expeditions dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup>century A.D (Findley, 2004). However, it is pertinent to recall that both WW I and WW II (1914-1918 and 1939-1945 respectively) and the aftermath of the post war political and socio-economic crises which ensued characteristically defined the late 20<sup>th</sup>century and 21<sup>st</sup> century migration in its entire ramifications. It is noteworthy to underscore that while the postwar challenges stimulated growth in industrialization across the Europe and America, in contrast, Africa as a continent whose development was stalled by colonial exploitation is still battling to feed her overshooting population with near absence of industrialization in comparison to the West.

Against this background, Africa's migration evolution to other parts of the world is fairly predictable; something which can be said to be mainly driven by socio-economic factors such as the need to seek greener pastures (livelihood and employment), seek quality education, access quality healthcare and to escape poverty. Although, the ILO and United Nations General Assembly ratified policies which were geared towards promoting right and legitimacy of people in need of migration provided that they are not threats in whatsoever capacity to their host nations, Africa's experience in attempts to pursue their dreams and better their lots is not a palatable experience. Dramatic events such as: drowning of Africans in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, terrorist attacks and threats and most recently, slavery of migrants in the recent case of the Libyan case have coloured debates and public perception (Kosho, 2016). These debates in line with Shaw's (2007) assertion on why people migrate to the parts of the world categorically question Africa need for migration the pros and cons albeit the consequences especially for the teeming youths who are readily the victims of Atlantic and Mediterranean mishaps enroute to Europe.

It is the interest of the researchers, to evaluate certain factors which may influence opinions of the general public into encouraging or discouraging youths from embarking on what may become a perilous journey across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic in attempts to migrate to Europe or through it to other continents of the world which they may have adjudged as "greener pastures" to the current situation in Nigeria. Critically, the researcher considers that the increasing trend of illegal migration from Africa is not unconnected to the advances of ICT practically mobile and digital devices which have fuelled youths' interests in migrations based on what they see and hear on so many social platforms and the internet. As much as social media enables easier networking of people in the migration racketing business and made more youths victims than before; it has also helped to educate and disseminate information on the inherent dangers of illegal immigration to intending migrants on the need to follow due process and avoid the horrors of crossing the Mediterranean and the Atlantic through makeshift rafters and boats or other obnoxious means.

There is a strong feeling that youths and their kins that have proper education and are exposed via social media networks will be able to resist the urge towards illegal migration more easily that otherwise.

#### **Statement of Problem**

All countries of the world protect their borders and restrict immigrants without genuine reasons from entering their countries either for: security, socio-economic, political, religious or other reasons. However, the inequality of labour distribution has continued to play a pivotal role for low income countries who are perpetually seeking to migrate to higher wage paying countries. As long as these economic remain unattended to high surge of migration from low income and middle income countries to high incomes countries will continue. Academically, not many studies have directed efforts to the core causes of high surge migration especially to the continents of Europe and America.

There is also the problem of visa racketing in almost all embassies of the world which aid illegal migration through obnoxious means. Without those rackets, the migration process will have only a route which will discourage illegal migration. This particular problem to a large extent exacerbated the Libyan crises which indirectly abated human trafficking in form of modern slavery for cheap labour and prostitution.

Another problem to be considered in this study is the fact that a lot of genuinely intending migrants are easily denied visa either on economic grounds or worst on unexplained grounds without appeal or window for looking into their genuine reasons of migration. This sort of situation usually provokes illegal migration of the victims.

Before now, many studies on migration do not consider the influence of social media and level of education on the migration fantasies held by intending migrants until the case of the Libyan slave trade in Africa which proved to be one horrendous experience negating the widely held perception of migration. Perhaps, it could be a function of how the media reported the issue. One may ask, what factors could influence the perception of the public on migration to foreign countries in search of a better life because without understanding factors which influence a behaviour it may be difficult to sensitize people in the right direction.

In the light of these, it is the purpose of this paper is to ascertain whether people's view on migration to foreign countries is influenced by the social media and education qualification. With the research purpose defined, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What influence do social media have on perception of the public towards migration to Europe?
- 2. To what extent has the Libyan crises affected the attitude of the public towards migration?
- 3. What influence does level of education have on perception of the public towards Libyan migration crises?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

- 1. H<sub>1</sub>: Perception of the public towards Libyan migration crises will significantly differ based on social media usage
- 2. H<sub>2</sub>: Perception of the public towards Libyan migration crises will significantly differ based on level of education qualification.

#### **Literature Review**

#### Migration

Migration is geographic movement of people across a specified boundary for the purpose of establishing a new permanent or semi-permanent residence or it is the movement of people from one place to live in another. People may decide to migrate as individuals, in family units or in large groups. Migration, whether internal (when people move within national boundaries such as with a country, state or city) or international (when people move outside the national boundaries or internationally from one country to another) has a profound effect on socio-economic development, which could be negative or positive whether it is rural-urban migration (various villages to towns and cities); urban-rural migration (from towns, cities to villages); rural-rural migration (from one village to another village); urban-urban migration (from one city to another city) or international migration (from one country to another) reasons of migration remain either push factors (problems of the intending migrants such as lack of services, lack of safety, high crime, crop failure, drought, flooding, poverty, war etc) or push factors (factors which attract intending migrants to a place such as higher employment, more wealth, better services, good climate, safer, less crime, political stability, more fertile land, lower risk from natural hazards etc).

#### **Illegal Migration: Causes and Consequences**

Blockade of borders are actually necessitated by varying socio-political cum economic factors. However people especially from low income countries who are seeking greener pastures who feel denied usually gear up for the ultimate risk of crossing the borders illegally either by foot or sea in a most perilous manner. In line with reasons for migration as answered by Shaw (2007), it is noteworthy that reaction to changes in economic conditions, pursuit of seasonal agricultural activities, choosing a better way of life, to gain experience and training are all part of the reasons why people migrate and when they are denied entry, are tempted to enter illegally in arrangements with visa rackets and trans-border transporters. Other unpalatable reasons for migration may incline towards threats of war, famine, outbreak of diseases in case of epidemic and international conflicts especially those aligned towards terrorism and religious radicalism as was case with ISIS region of Iraq.

#### The Libyan Case

While these stipulated reasons for migration is in actual logic, founded, one would perhaps hold a different view to migration in the light of the Libyan migration crisis in which scourges of youth were trafficked into Libya with a promise of jobs. However, scores of the migrants were reportedly subjected to modern day slavery in forms of conflict mercenaries and prostitution. Particularly relevant to migration as a public discourse, aspects of which have become increasingly contentious in national, regional and global arenas in recent times as a result of Libyan case, it is widely accepted that the nature of the messages communicated by the media in all its forms can have a discernible impact on overall societal attitudes, which in turn can have a bearing on behavior (Kosho, 2016). As a current megatrend in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, migration has unsurprisingly been on the forefront of media coverage with the social media being actively used in disseminating cases of the Libyan crisis.

#### **Social Media**

Kietzmann and Kristopher (2011) noted that social media "depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content". Furthermore, Sahu (2013) and Shaw, (2007) opined that social media is a group of internet based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations, and that allow the creation and exchange of user created content. In mainstream media and pop culture, social media are often used to describe web sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, and all places where humans can go to interact and engage with others by simply logging on through a computer or mobile device. Which such freedom of communication, populists can also interact with people through the social media.

Social media will continue to evolve as far as the boundaries of information communication technologies improve. Literature indicates that social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro-blogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. Technologies include: blogs, picture-sharing, blogs, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowd sourcing and voice over IP, etc.

It is arguable that most of what we have come to know about the migration crisis in Libya were dished out by social media platforms like facebook, twitter, instagram, etc. Social media take centre stage in the presentation of migration and ethnic minorities, and a substantial number of textand content-based studies from various countries have demonstrated that new media tend to construct our image of minorities along the same lines. The impact of the media in public opinion psychology principal were sketched by Lippmann's (1922) classic called "Public Opinion", which began with a chapter titled "The World Outside and the - Pictures in Our Heads". As the author noted, the news media are a primary source of those pictures in our heads about the larger world of public affairs, a world that for most citizens is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind.

#### **Theoretical framework**

There is not a generally accepted theory that can explain international migration without limitations; however, this study was anchored on Neo- Classical Theory (Hicks, 1932) and Dual Labour Market theory (Ravenstein, 1889).

#### The Neo- Classical Theory

Neo-classical theory of migration was propounded by Hicks (1932). The theory assumes that the unbalanced distribution of capital and labour at the macro level causes inequality in wages and living conditions is the leading factor of migration. The migrants move towards the places where employment, wages and other economic conditions are more favourable to them giving high chances of ending the differences in wages and living conditions between places. The neo-classical micro approach of migration (The Theory of the New Economics of Migration) considers not only the labour market but also the conditions of other markets such as the capital market or unemployment insurance market as reasons for migration.

In addition, this theory also considers household strategy behind migration as the actual drive of migration is to change the source of income rather than maximize the income. This theory also emphasizes the importance of financial transfers of migration in the context of socio- cultural changes. Moreover, this theory also helps to understand why individuals of a particular community are potential migrants. It also observes that poor people are less inclined to migration compared to

the rich due to the high costs of migration (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2003). The strength of Neo-classical theory is that it provides support for most labour-related migrations and explains the ulterior motives of migrants. This support further gifts the current study the framework to explain the motives behind the Libyan migration crises in and horrors of the Mediterranean in the hands of traffickers and visa/transportation rackets. Although, economic factors are good factors that trigger migration, the theory is weak because, economic factors account but only a part of the reasons for migration since there other religious and political factors also trigger massive migration of people.

#### **Dual Labour Market Theory**

Dual Labour Market theory was propounded by Ravenstein (1889). The theory proposes that redistribution of labour and the search of opportunity are the key economic movers of migration. This view was also shared by Adam Smith, father of economics, who viewed that labour migration is due to the imbalance in the labour market at different locations (Lebhart, 2005). According to this theory, the labour markets of industrialized countries have a dualistic structure - skilled workers (primary segment) and unskilled workers (secondary segment). The skilled workers are well- paid whereas the wages of unskilled workers in the secondary segment are low so that the local workers avoid secondary jobs. The employers do not pay higher wages to local workers to do the unpleasant jobs because they want to maintain wage differentials between the two segments of jobs. As a result of labour shortages at the bottom of the job hierarchy, employers are compelled to recruit the unskilled foreign workers, who do not plan to stay permanently, but accept the secondary job more easily since it pays them more income (Piore, 1979 and Stalker, 2000).

#### Method

Using survey design, responses of 369 (purposively determined) young adult persons were elicited and analyzed using factorial design and one-way analysis of variance as statistical tool. The participants of the study were drawn from Anambra State. The participants were made up of two hundred and thirteen (213) males and one hundred and fifty-six (156) female. Their ages ranged from 23 - 59 years with a mean age of 34.24 years and standard deviation of 2.60. The participants were selected through simple random sampling technique. In terms of participants' demographic characteristics, one hundred and ninety-six (196) participants were married while two hundred and eleven (111) participants were married, forty-two (42) are widowed whereas nine (9) were separated the remaining eleven participant did not disclose their marital status. In terms of educational qualification: 89 have Ordinary level Certificate (WAEC or GCE), 59 have Ordinary National Diploma (OND), Participants with National Certification of Education (NCE) were 48, participants with Higher National Diploma (HND) were 64 while those with Bachelors degree were 86. Also, participants with Master's degree were 17, and 6 participants have Doctoral degree. In terms of religion, two hundred and eighty-seven (287) were Christians, Nine (9) indicated that they were African Traditional Religionists, whereas eleven (11) did not indicate their religious affiliation.

The instrument for the study is Public Perception of Illegal Migration (PPIM) developed by the researchers to ascertain publics' view regarding international migration. The instrument was development by gathering a pool of items which were deemed the representation of the construct. The items generated were rated in the appropriateness and suitability by experts mainly lecturers and professionals from other walks of life. Their ratings enable the researcher to select all items equal or above the theoretical mean point. In all eight (8) items were selected and factored for the study. In the study, participants were asked to respond to the instrument using 4 point Likert forced responses. Other variables of the study (social media and level of education) were measured as demographic data.

#### Procedure

For the purpose of this study, the researchers conducted a pilot study using 57 sample copies of the instrument to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument among adult population in Anambra State. To obtain the responses of the participants, the researcher sought for participants' consent to participate in the study. Thereafter, the researchers introduced selves and the purpose of the study. The researchers also assured all participants of the confidentiality of their responses. Participants who took part in the pilot study were excluded from the main study but had homogenous characteristics. Favourable outcome from the reliability analysis (see statistical appendix) encouraged the researchers to move on to the main study.

In the main study, the researcher excluded the participants of the pilot study and selected participants from adult population in Awka, Onitsha, Owerri and Asaba. The researchers aided with research assistants (hired NYSC members on agreed stipends) approached each participant and requested him to choose a number from 1 through 5; those who chose either of 1, 3 or 5 were selected whereas those who chose either 2 or 4 were not selected for the study. Participants were met in their places of work, super markets, eateries and churches. Subsequently, the administered questionnaire were retrieved for analyses at the end of the filling after which the researchers thanked the participants for giving their time to research. Those that participated in the survey were also instructed on how to respond to the items in the questionnaire using the instructions on each of the questionnaire as a guide. On the whole, a total of 387 copies of the questionnaires were administered, 376 (97.1%) were collected back while 369 (98.1%) were properly filled and valid. The raw data were transferred to SPSS version 21 for data management. Being a cross-sectional survey study, factorial design will be adopted to ascertain if there are differences in public perception of obtained was be analyzed using multiple regression analysis. 2-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be adopted as statistical tool to analyze the data.

#### Results

Social Media	Education Level	Mean Std. Deviation		Ν
High Social Media	High Education	12.2687	.15298	108
Low Education		12.9706	.21087	151
Total		12.6218	.02274	259
Low Social Media	High Education	13.3081	.48939	83
Low Education		17.7500	.31906	27
Total		15.5241	.12559	110
Total	High Education	12.7502	1.02661	191
Low Education		15.3529	1.62557	178
Total (Group)		14.0521	.17627	369

 Table 1: Descriptive statistics - Mean, Standard deviation and Number of participants of the

 impacts of use social media and level of education on public perception of European migration

# Table 2: Between subjects' effects for the impacts of use of social media and level of education on public perception of European migration

	Type II Sum				
Source	of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected Model	604.430a	3	259.137	9.169	.000
Intercept	183365.493	1	192265.834	6.287E3	.000
Social media	59.402	1	64.405	5.376	.002
Level of education	46.246	1	53.232	4.693	.006
Social media*Level of	421.545	1	472.575	4.243	.019
education					
Error	4500.350	366	23.20		
Total	2053304.044	369			
Corrected Total	5382.347	368			

Dependent variable: Public perception of European migration

#### **Summary of Statistical Findings**

From the statistical analysis in Table 1, the result indicates that public perception on European migration differed based on social media use and level of education of the participants. Group mean on public perception of European migration showed that participants who are low on social media use had higher mean at 15.52 than participants who are high on social media at 12.62. Also, the group mean on public perception of European migration showed that participants with low on educational level had higher mean at 15.35 that those who are high on educational level at 12.57. From the result, it could be said groups with lower means had more appropriate perception of European migration than groups with higher means since the instrument is a negative construct.

Consequently, the weight of this observed group difference in mean was tested and Table 2 of between subjects' effects indicated that there is a significant group difference between participants with high social media use and low social media use on public perception of European migration at F(1, 369) = 5.37, p < .05. Hence, hypothesis I which stated that there will be significant group difference on public perception of European migration based on social media use was confirmed. Also, from the ANOVA table, significant group difference was also observed between groups with high educational level and low educational level at F(1, 369) = 4.69, p < .05 which equally conforms hypothesis II that stated that there is be significant group difference on public perception of European migration based on educational level of the participants. Furthermore more, interaction effect between social media use and educational level of the interaction effect is indicative that social media and educational level in significant ways moderate and influence public perception of European migration.

#### Discussion

Public perception of European migration can be influenced by many factors including social media use and educational level. Statistical analysis of the data obtained from the field work is indicative that high social media use was discriminated from low social media use on public perception of European migration.

Based on the findings, it could be ascertained that exposure to social media tends to enlighten the public understanding on migration issues including exposing them to the gains and associated dangers. This is particularly garnered from the experiences or stories of the members of the public shared online especially through social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, 2go, Badoo, Eskimi, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and HangOut among many others. These experiences or stories often comes from trusted friends, colleagues, superiors, religious leaders and trusted members of the society and thus, make their effects strong and difficult to reject. Also, events happening live are sometimes streamed through these social media platforms and enable the members of the public to experience real life situation and make the messages vivid and long lasting. Also, education is a moderator of behaviour; in most cases, the more educated one is, the better the person understands life and global issues including migration issues. Education enables one to look at issues or situation in a broader perspective and allowing critical thinking to filter pros and cons of the subject matter. There is expectation that more educated people or those with higher educational level of qualification will have more appropriate perception towards European migration since the experience through education will enable them evaluate the gains and challenges therein in European migration.

#### **Implications of the Study**

The Libyan migration tragedy is fresh as many stakeholders watched countless loss of human lives and displacement of people in what could have been preventable if the right orientation and sensitization was done. Against this backdrop, this study implicates victims of informed public seeking or advising their kins on European migration without proper evaluation on the circumstances of the intending migrants and the legitimate channels of migration. Without education and exposure to migration information more members of the public may become victims of slavery labour, forced prostitution and war mercenaries just as witnessed in the on-going crises in the Libyan gulf since the removal of their Military Ruler Ghadafi.

#### Conclusion

Migration is a serious issue with numerous associated dangers ranging from exploitation, security challenges such as terrorism and extremism and real displacement of international labour. Without the public having a balanced view of the prospects and challenges therein in migration, many more people will become victims of wild range of dangers associated with migration including the possibility of being defrauded the hard-earned resources in the hands of visa rackets. There is also the danger of loss of live to whether, conflicts, terrorism if one is not careful. Therefore, this study is an awakening as it evaluated the factors which influence public perception regarding European migration and intends to use it to sensitize the stakeholders on how best to educate members of the public especially regarding their orientation that in the streets of Europe lies gold waiting to be taken. Hard work, honesty and proper management of one's resources whether at home or abroad represents world's oldest known success recipe and no pasture can be greener than those!

#### Recommendations

Considering the huge humanitarian crises that usually occur as a result of un-guided and uninformed migration such as one witnessed in the Libyan crises which had thousands of Nigerian youths trapped in Libya without hope of any livelihood, there is need for government to establish migration/visa consultant services across the nation. Through these offices, sensitization of the

public on migration issues will be proactive. This will also avail intending migrants of the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to their legal/legitimate chances in their intending countries of migration which will enable them take decisions that will more appropriate. United Nations in collaboration with European Union member states should explore possibilities of visa friendly policies to encourage more legally and legitimately migration of genuinely intending migrants in order to utilize the abundant cheap labour lying waste in African due to lack of industrialization to create channels for balance international labour value between Africa and Europe.

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