

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LABOUR GROWTH AND THE YOUTH PENCHANT FOR MIGRATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the incessant population growth rate in Nigeria that has led to a high increase in the labour force amidst the high level of unemployment opportunities. The paper is, therefore, aimed at examining the problems that are associated with the population growth rate acting as a causative factor for youth migration in Nigeria. In determining a direction for this study, a hypothesis was formulated. Survey methodology, particularly the administration of questionnaire was used to elicit data from randomly sampled respondents from the three Senatorial Districts in Edo-state. Oral Interviews were also conducted with respondents other than in the sampling size. The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using the Pearson's Product Movement Correlation Coefficient (r). It was found out that there is a strong positive relationship between the accelerated labour growth rate and youth migration. It is therefore recommended that adequate use of data on population growth vis a vis the growth of the labour force should be made available to the relevant authorities to guide policy formulation and implementation on tackling youth unemployment problem in Nigeria.

Keywords: Labour, Growth, Youth, Migration, Nigeria.

Introduction

The combination of high fertility rate as well as the declining mortality rate had accounted for the demographic trends in sub region of West Africa including Nigeria. The demographic pressure associated with population growth has spiked up social demands and above all the unemployment rate. The population of the young people aged between 15 and 34 years is estimated at slightly above 1/3 of the total population (34 percent) or 102 million inhabitants.

The population of the young which is affected by unemployment is particularly high and a driver of social tension (UNECA, 2010:49).

As a corollary to the above, despite the incapacity of the labour market to create jobs, the current unemployment rate of one-third or more among secondary school leavers / university graduates continually pose great challenges to migration (Adepoju 2018).

From the statistics of the census in 2006 had proved that persons younger than age twenty-five (25) accounted for over 60 percent while the children ranked below 15 years of age accounted for 42 percent of the population (National Population Commission, 2018). This suggested that a growth would be expected between the next 40-50 years regardless when fertility will be drastically reduced to a non-replacement level. For instance, If 3.2 % had constituted the population of persons within the age bracket of 65 years and above, it is then assumed that Nigeria's population will experience 3.2% growth annually (National Population Commission 2010).

Despite all efforts to combat unemployment, Nigeria with a 1% income rise and a high rate of unemployment remained a developing country with extreme poverty despite its recent growth in its Gross Domestic Product (Uche, 2014). The presence of this group (which is the unemployed youths) had led to a reasonable social policy concerns in Nigeria in the recent times. Unemployment and underemployment had remained, both social and economic challenges facing the nation (Bolarinwa, 2012). The most unfortunate has been that the productive employment had never marched the growth of the labour force. This invariably means that, labour supplied is at variance with the labour demanded. This is further worsened by population explosion (Bolarinwa 2012).

Studies on migrants had further shown that about 40-60 percent of the migrants to the major cities and abroad have indicated the quest for jobs and employment opportunities (Adepoju, 1986). Another study also revealed that the search for basic social services accounts for about 20-30 percent while, 10-15 percent of the migrants are as a result of agricultural failure, environmental degradation and communal clashes among others (Adepoju 2010).

In Nigeria, as in every other developing country, government as well as policy makers, has had difficulties in arriving at reasonable solution that would successfully tackle youth unemployment which could be hinged upon the lack of the initiatives to include job creation in their developmental plans, policies and programmes (Okafor, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

The pursuit for higher or wage employment in Nigeria among the youth is urban centered, which often times is accentuated with the inability of the informal sectors in the rural areas to accommodate the incessant growing numbers of these job seekers. This group is left with no choice than to seek for an alternative destination (Edward, 2011). Apart from the above, the negative economic growth as experienced from the successive administrations could result in a more deplorable standard of living of the people (Bello, 2003).

The United Nations Population Fund had stated that the Nigerian population has risen to 201 million people as contained in the 2019 State of the World Population Report. (Punch Newspaper, April 30, 2019). It is therefore understood that this issue of population growth in relation to unemployment remains multi-faceted. Never the less, it must also be noted that several programmes have been initiated at all levels in addressing youth restiveness (The Guardian, 2015) as cited by (Rufus and Oluwatunmise 2007).

The more recent is the N-power programme of President Mohammadu Buhari's administration which is geared toward providing jobs for the unemployed youth (Rufus and Oluwanstunmaise 2017).

In spite of the laudable myriad of policies and programmes initiated by successive and present governments, the issue of migration remains an intractable challenge.

Therefore the following research question becomes imperative to this study:

1. To what extent is the accelerated growth rate of the labour force a catalyst for the desire to migrate among the youths?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To ascertain the extent to which the accelerated growth of the labour force is a penchant for youth migration.
2. To proffer solutions that will address the explosive growth in the labour force vis-à-vis the available jobs that has led to the increase in youth migration.

Research Hypothesis

H_{R1}: There is a relationship between the accelerated growth rate of the labour force and the desire of youth for migration in Nigeria.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Youth

In Nigeria, the concept of who is a youth ranges between the ages of 15 to 35. However, such age bracket had gone lesser Michelle (2007). These variations in this definition of who is a "youth", refers to someone within the above said age and not above 40 years of age. It can however, be asserted therefore, that a youth is one in the age bracket 15 years but however not above 40 years. The role of the youth in any society according to The National Youth Policy (2009:2) cannot be over emphasized without them there can be no future. Thus, the youth in any society is as important as a nation itself.

The youth population as at today is astronomically over and above the population of the old vis- a- vis what it was in the past. This new trend creates a situation where by the labour force of the youth exceeds the available jobs. These unemployed youths are seen as destabilizing threats rather than contributing to a responsive capacity for empowerment. On the one hand, they are rather tools in the hands of the elite; on the other hand, they have no choice but to migrate (Michelle 2007).

The Concept of Migration

Migration has become a global phenomenon with no acceptable definition. But most definitions had utilized both time and space criteria and those that are included in migration processes are commonly considered as least semi-permanent kind of migration which often times take place across or within a define geographical area or enclave as had asserted by Nwamaife et al(2013).

From the above, migration is concerned with goods and services as well as that of the human capital within or across the national boundaries. But, from the view of the United Nations, the concept has a different connotations Nwamaife et al still continued (2013).

International Migration and Remittances

International migration can be seen as a way to further household social economic advancement, where remittances are used to enhance the long term economic status of families through the investment in capital assets that will generate further income. Remittances, therefore, can be defined as the financial inflow arising from the cross-border movement of nationals of a country and the transfer of money and goods sent by migrant workers to their country of origin (Thapa and Acharya, 2017).

In most developing countries around the world, migrant remittances have come to play an increasing as well as significant role in the advancement and developmental processes (Ndisika,2018). Some economists have estimated that nearly one tenth of the world populations are beneficiaries of the billions of dollars in migrants' earnings known as remittances that are sent to nation around the globe (Debalin, A., Oni, B. and Adekola, O. 2000).

The Concepts of Employment and Unemployment

It is worthy of note to discuss these phenomena based upon the various literatures on this issue with the intention of arriving at an acceptable conceptual framework.

In the views of the World Bank Development Report (1985), employment depicts creating jobs at the prevailing wage rate. In order words, this could also be seen as an exchange in cash or kind for an active, direct and personal participation in the work process. These could further be explained in terms of the number of man hours that was put in during that particular time or period.

Employment

Other scholars, writers and authorities such as Keynes (1936) have posited that employment means a situation where the prices of wage goods affect the available supply of labour. Keynes, while further elaborating on this, took account of both frictional and voluntary unemployment. This concept depicts a situation in which aggregate employment is inelastic in response to an increase in the effective demand for output. Bovenkerk (1974) sees this phenomenon as a situation that connotes the absence of more jobs than the available men ready to do the work. Despite this, these phenomena in several ways are related. There also exist clear distinctions between these two concepts which are at least operationally (Hassan, 2013).

Unemployment

The concept of unemployment seems to win consensus on its definition. According to Okafor (2011), unemployment describes the conditions of people who are without jobs also assert that people have to be redundant within a particular period. Unemployment therefore, refers to that fraction from the labour force that chooses to work but there are no jobs. On the other hand, people might be willing to work but the available work might not meet their physical ability. Often times these people cannot work because of the unavailability of these jobs. More explanations state that the labour force is continually greater than the number of available jobs.

Unemployment therefore is characterized by age, sex and education in any society. Never the less, this group as included by The Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (FEMLP) that they are those that are out of work, willing to do work, seeking for a job but such work are not available to them (Hassan, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on both the "Structural Functionalist Theory and the "Pull" and "Push" migration theory as propounded by Gabriel Almond and Ravenstein in the year (1885) in explaining the relationships between the labour force growth rate and youth migration in Nigeria, using Edo State as the unit of analysis. The two theories that will be discussed and applied below were adopted for this study because adopting only one theory would not have provided the explanatory ambit needed to capture all the sides of the linkage between the accelerated growth of the labour force and youth migration in Edo state. Therefore, the two theories will be used in complementary ground as they each make up for the inadequacies of the other.

Thus, in the utilization of this theory in relevance to the explanation of the variables of this study, it is therefore assumed that all the various sectors or structures in every political system of the world are functionally interrelated. That is all the sectors in the political system, such as the agricultural, educational and the power sector as well as, the defense, aviation, Labour and the others. These sectors perform functions which are needed for the survival of the entire system. However, the labour sector and the others in Nigeria are assumed to be dysfunctional, creating an increase in the unemployment rate and underemployment. The consequence of this state of disequilibrium means that the unemployed youths have no other choice than to migrate (Ebri, 2017; OkahDonli and Osadolor, 2018).

Methodology

Research Design and Population of the Study

The research employs the survey research design and the study research population comprises the youth population of Edo State in the three Senatorial Districts which stood at 4,235,800 of the age bracket 16 – 40 years.

Sampling Size and Sampling Technique

The cluster sampling technique shall be applied in this study from where a sample size of 1,500 is selected based on their geographical location and population density.

From the table below, Edo Central has a population of 18% of the total population; Edo North 30%, while, Edo South 52%. It is on the basis of this percentage distribution that total samples of 1,500 questionnaires are distributed as follows:

Table 1: Senatorial District, Population, Percentages and Sample Allocation

Area	Population	Percentage %	Sample Allocation
Edo Central	775,000	18	275
Edo North	1,252,100	30	443
Edo South	2,208,700	52	782
Total	4,235,800	100	1,500

From the table above, Edo Central had 275 questionnaires administered in the senatorial district, Edo North 443 questionnaires administered in the senatorial district while a total of 782 questionnaires were administered in the Edo South senatorial district.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

In carrying out this study, a total of 1500 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. Out of these, a total number of 1466 questionnaires were retrieved. Eventually, 1466 respondents translate to the samples analyzed in the study.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of responses to questionnaire item 1 that the “lack of adequate coordination between population growth statistics and provision of employment to match with growth result in migration”

Question One

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	420	28.6	28.6	28.6
Disagree	318	21.7	21.7	50.3
Undecided	272	18.6	18.6	68.9
Agree	302	20.6	20.6	89.5
Strongly Agree	154	10.5	10.5	100.0
Total	1466	100.0	100.0	

1. Pie Chart Representation of the questionnaire item 1 that the “lack of adequate coordination between population growth statistics and provision of employment to match with growth result in migration”

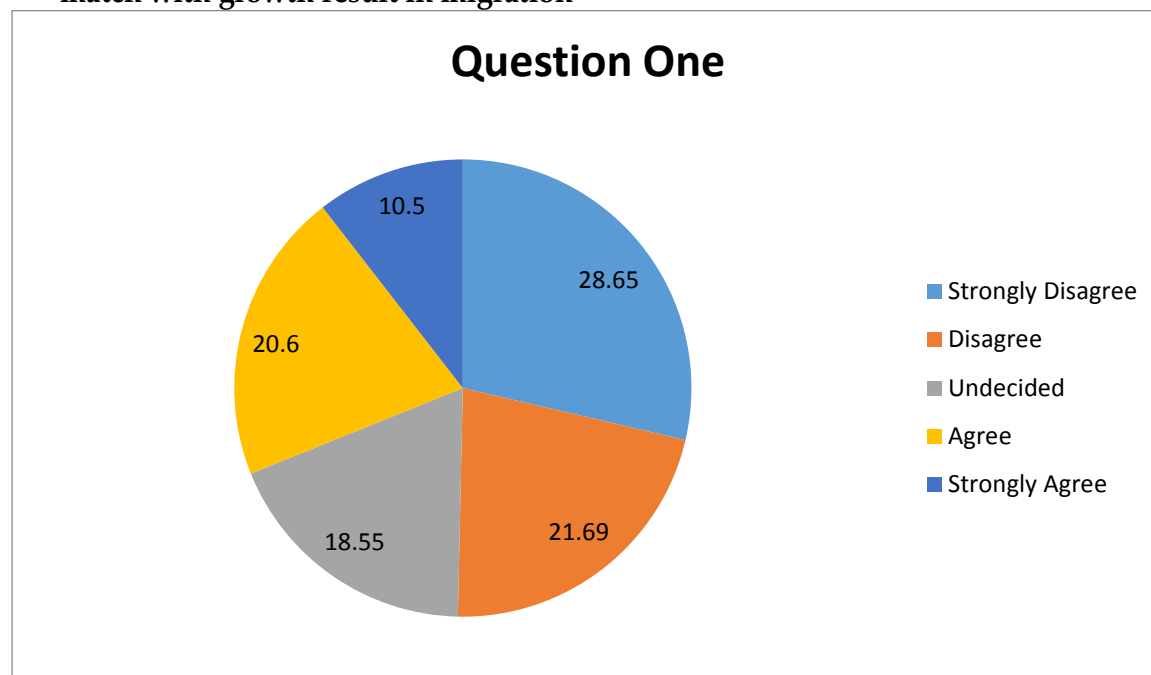


Table 2 illustrates the respondents’ opinions on lack of adequate coordination between population growth statistics and provision of employment opportunities to match the population growth being a major reason for youth migration. 28.6% of respondents strongly disagree and, 21.7% disagree while 18.6% are undecided. 20.6% agree while 10.5% strongly agree.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of responses to questionnaire item 2 that the “Nigerian public service salary is good enough to prevent youth migration”

Question Two

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	380	25.9	25.9	25.9
Disagree	456	31.1	31.1	57.0
Undecided	252	17.2	17.2	74.2
Agree	288	19.6	19.6	93.9
Strongly Agree	90	6.1	6.1	100.0
Total	1466	100.0	100.0	

2. Pie Chart Representation of the questionnaire item 2 that the “Nigerian public service salary is good enough to prevent youth migration”

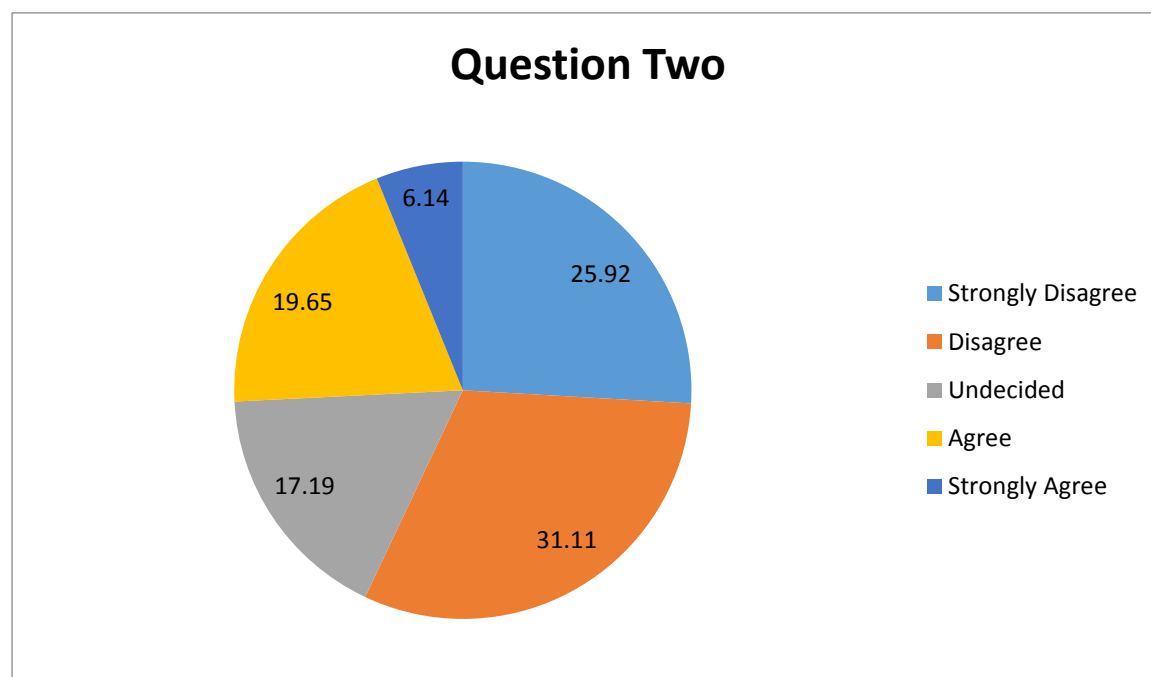


Table 3 illustrates that 380 respondents representing 25.9% of the population sample strongly disagree while 456 respondents representing 31.1% disagree that the salary structure of the Nigerian public service is good enough to prevent youth migration. 252 representing 17.2% are undecided, 288 representing 19.6% agree while 90 respondents making up 6.1% of total respondents sampled in the study strongly agree to this.

Table 4: Frequency distribution of responses to questionnaire item 3 that the “disparity between the salary structure of the Nigeria Public service and their foreign counterparts induces their penchant for migration”

Question Three

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	86	5.9	5.9	5.9
Disagree	222	15.1	15.1	21.0
Undecided	156	10.6	10.6	31.7
Agree	592	40.4	40.4	72.0
Strongly Agree	410	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	1466	100.0	100.0	

3. Pie Chart Representation of the questionnaire item 3 that the “disparity between the salary structure of the Nigeria Public service and their foreign counterparts induces their penchant for migration”

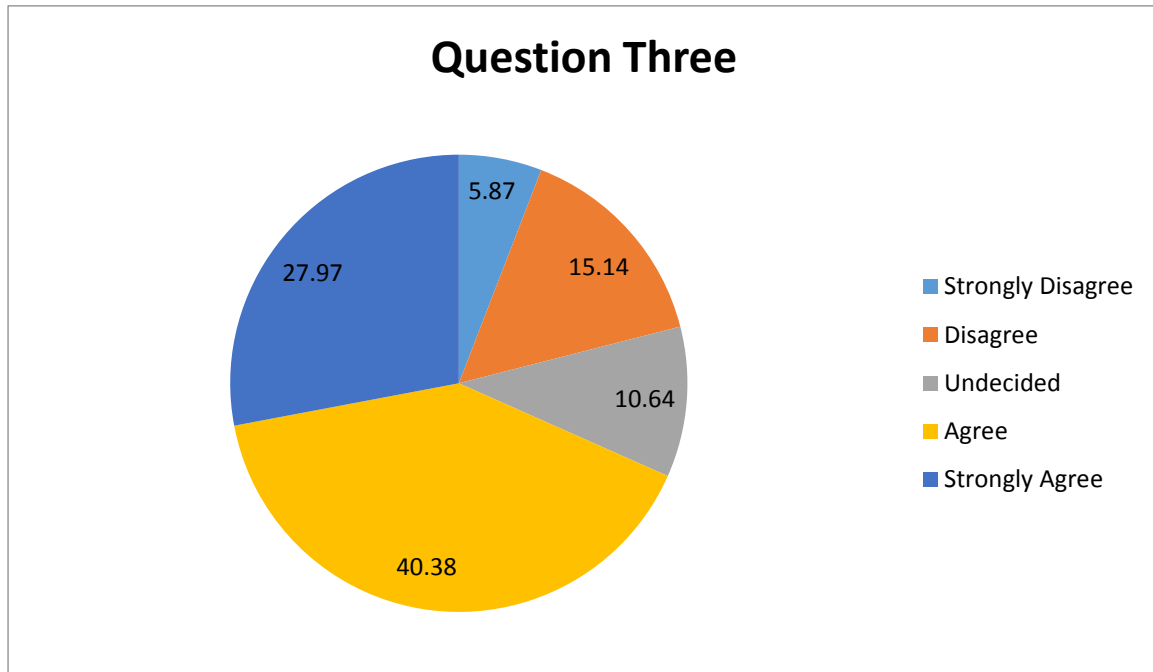


Table 4 above reveals that 5.9% of respondents strongly disagree while 15.1% disagree with the assertion that the disparity between the salary structure of the Nigerian public service and their foreign counterparts induces youth penchant for migration while 10.6% were undecided. 40.4% agree while 28.0% strongly agree that the salary structure of the Nigerian public service vis-a-vis its foreign counterparts makes the service less attractive to youths.

Test of Hypothesis

In testing for the relationship between youth migration (independent variable) and accelerated growth rate of the labour force (predictive variable), question one is utilized.

Question One

Lack of adequate coordination between population growth statistics and the provision of employment to match the growth is a resultant effect for youth migration.

Statement of the Hypothesis

H₀¹: There exists no relationship between the accelerated growth rate of the labour force and the youth crave for migration.

H_a¹: There exists a relationship between the accelerated growth rate of the labour force and the youth crave for migration.

Table 5: Regression analysis between the accelerated growth rate of the labour force and the youth crave for migration.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.
1	.727 ^a	.529	.529	.000 ^b

Regression is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 3.5 shows that there is a positive relationship (Pearson $R = 0.727$) between the accelerated growth rate of the Labour force and the desire for youth migration. With the p-value (Sig. = 0.000) less than 0.01, this indicates that the null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between the accelerated growth rate of the labour force and the youth crave for migration is rejected while the research hypothesis stating that there exists a relationship between accelerated growth rate of the labour force and the youth crave for migration is accepted.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

The Pearson's $r = 0.727$ at $\alpha 0.01$ shows a high positive relationship between the accelerated growth rate of the labour force and the youth migration, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between the accelerated growth rate of the labour force and youth migration and the acceptance of the research hypothesis which states the contrary. The findings concerning accelerated growth rate vis-a-vis increase in the labour force being a causative factor for youth penchant for migration has a direct replica in Akinloye (2008) who noted that the increase in birth rate had created a difference between labour force growth and the provision of jobs, making the rate of unemployment becoming more and more acute. Further to that is Agbowu's (2012) contention that unemployment necessarily becomes an issue in the development discourse with the effect being free choice migration rather than its becoming a desperate journey.

The accelerated growth rate and the labour force increase in the low- income countries like Nigeria has increased considerably. According to the IMR (2017), a total share of the international migrants trooping to the high-income countries has increased to 6.6 percent between 2010 and 2015. The migration to the high income countries turned sour as a result of the economic meltdown in these high-income countries between the year 2014 and 2017 which, consequently, had led to the clamp down on the incessant influx of migrants. Many of them are Nigerians repatriated and becoming returnees in their own country (IMR 2017).

It is also noted that Nigeria's population as at the year 2005 was 138, 865, 000 and in 2006, at a time when government was employing the recorded migrants figure for that year was 34,000 (Refer to table 6) and as mentioned in hypothesis 4, there was unemployment freeze between 2007 and 2010 and by the year 2010 Nigeria's population had progressively increased to 158, 503, 197 which is an increase of over 20, 000, 000 people. The migrant rates jumped from 34, 000 in 2005 to 60,000 in the year 2010, that trend continued on yearly basis from 2015 through

2016 and 2017 up to 2018 when the Nigerian population had increased to 195, 874, 683 (Refer to table 6).

This progressive growth in the population and the concomitant increase in migrants' rate further buttress the thrust of this study. To further underscore the alarming rate of unemployment, it is recorded that an average of 250, 000 Corps members complete their national Youth Service on yearly basis giving a cumulative average total of 2, 250,000 employable youths without deliberate provision of jobs opportunities or deliberate public policies to keep them engaged after the National Service year.

The Sure-P programme and the N-Power initiatives of both immediate and present administrations cannot be said to have tangibly addressed the scourge of youth unemployment in Nigeria and Edo State in particular. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO), country of origin report in Nigeria in November, 2018 puts the employment rate at 14.20 percent for 2016 and 18.80 percent for 2017. These rates considering the Nigerian population from 2017 to 2018 (Refer to table 6) is quite alarming.

Table 6: Nigeria Population Progression (2018 Historical)

YEAR	POPULATION	YEAR PERCENTAGE CHANGE (%)	YEARLY CHANGE	MIGRATION AVERAGE
2000	122,283,850	2.53	3,093,781	19,005
2005	138,805,016	2.58	3,581,169	34,000
2010	158,503,197	2.68	3,927,636	60,000
2011	162,430,833	2.68	4,353,146	60,000
2012	166,783,979	2.68	4,469,810	60,000
2013	171,253,789	2.68	4,589,601	60,000
2014	175,843,390	2.68	4,712,602	60,000
2015	180,555,992	2.71	4,893,067	60,000
2016	185,449,059	2.66	4,932,944	60,000
2017	190,382,003	2.64	5,026,084	60,000
2018	195,408,087	2.62	5,119,691	60,000

Source: Adapted from Nigeria Population (2020) Worldometer (see appendix vi)

Table 6 takes a historical account of Nigeria's population progression from the year 2000, taking cognizance of the yearly percentage changes and the average movement of the people (youths) outside the shore of Nigeria. Taking a cue from the Nigerian population of 122, 283,850 in the year 2000 with a migratory average of 19,005 and the country's population of 138,865,016 in 2005 with yearly percentage change of 2.58 leaves the migratory average at 34,000.

By the year 2010, after about three years of employment freeze at the federal public sector the population had to 158,503,197 with a migratory average rate of 60,000 almost doubly the year 2005 figure. From the year 2010 onward up to 2018 the average migratory rate has remained constant perhaps because the population increase has equally remained at arithmetical

progression. This scenario gives credence to the findings in hypothesis 5 that the accelerated growth rate of the labour force is a factor or a causative factor for youth migration in Edo State.

All these data about population growth rate are resident in the National Bureau of Statistics, these data are supposed to be made available (where the agencies of government are structurally functioning together) to other agencies of government like the Ministries of Labour, Productivity and Employment, Federal Civil Service Commission, State Civil Service Commission and even to state local governments service commission which are supposed to be in charge of employing youths into their different services. Unfortunately, such synergy as exposed by the structural functionalism is hardly the case in the Nigerian situation.

5.1. Conclusion

The immediate scenario pointed above is aggravated by the accelerated growth rate of the Labour force in Nigeria. Prior to this study period the historical perspective to population growth rate in Nigeria is indicative of employment crisis especially at the period of the focus of this study. The growth rate without concomitant employment creation, policies and programmes which was worsened by the employment freeze of 2006-2009 further worsened the youth penchant for migration in the subsequent years that are the focus of this study.

5.2. Recommendations

It is recommended that adequate use of data on population growth vis-à-vis the growth rate of the labour force should be made to guide policy formulation and implementation on tackling youth unemployment problem in the country. By this we mean that such policy plans should consistently be based on data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and policy response too should be annually with relevant budgetary provisions. Government should be abreast of data on the numbers of graduates being churned out of tertiary institutions as well as those passing out through the NYSC programs and adequate arrangement should be made to get them employed.

Nigerians should key into modern development planning strategy where every step of the government is guided by data collection and its analysis on the basis of which policies are formulated and implemented as it is done elsewhere around the world.

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