

Effects of international migration and remittances on rural households in Edo State, Nigeria

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This paper focuses on the effects of international migration and received remittances on rural households in Edo State, Nigeria. The empirical results are based on a quantitative and qualitative survey of 240 household heads. The findings show that some households in the study received remittances from migrants outside the country in cash and items; the dominant channel for receiving money being Western Union money transfer. The mean amount received by households in the past 12 months was N543,000. Households who received money in the past 12 months used it for the purchase of food items, debt repayment and the education of household members. Data revealed that international migration affected households' agricultural productive capacity in ways such as a decline in food production and farming activities. There was a significant difference in assets such as plots of land and the number of houses owned after migrants left overseas. Considering the poverty reduction effect that international remittances have, this type of remittances must be encouraged. Moreover, policies to encourage better use of remittance funds could be focused more on small household size, female-headed households and households with elderly heads as they are likely to receive more remittances.

Key Words: *international migration, migration effects, remittances, agricultural production, Nigeria*

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Introduction

The number of Edo State inhabitants migrating out of Nigeria has continued to multiply. In the year 2017, about 10,000 inhabitants of the state, left the shores of Nigeria illegally, of whom 3,000 lost their lives as they travelled through the desert and seas (Owegie, 2017). Additionally, more than 6,000 migrants were assisted to return to the country from Libya in 2018 by the International Organization for Migration. Over 3,000 of these returnees were Edo State indigenes (Ochoga, 2018), and particularly youths from rural areas.

Although several migration studies have been carried out in Edo State, Nigeria, most of them dwelt mainly on the characteristics of migrants and factors of migration. Previous studies such as Iheke (2012), Hernandez-Coss & Bun (2006) have examined the impact of international migration on the economy of nations, and gaps persist in understanding the effects of international migration on the rural population. Oboh & Osirike (2017) carried out a study on international migration in Edo State. Their focus was, however, on its impact on income generation and poverty reduction in Orhionmwon Local Government Area of the state. Similarly, Alenkhe & Longe (2015) in their study focused on the extent migrants have through remittances, brought any benefit or succour to the society in general and families of the migrants in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State. It is worthy of note that both studies were carried out in two LGAs in Edo south senatorial district of the state.

Consequently, there is a need for studies on the effects of international migration among rural dwellers in Edo State. Furthermore, the present study hopes to achieve more as it covers six LGAs spread across the three senatorial districts of the state. This will help get a more comprehensive assessment of international migration activities in Edo State. Thus, the overall purpose of the study was to assess the effects of international migration and remittances on rural households in Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain: effects of international remittances on rural households' welfare; effects of international migration on households' social development, effects of international migration on households' agricultural productive capacity and differentials in assets of remittance-receiving households before and after migrants left for overseas.

Theoretical and conceptual framework

In assessing the effects of international migration on rural households in Edo State, there is a need to consider the key assumptions in various international migration theories and results from other empirical research. This is because theories will explain all issues related to the movement of people and their contribution to both destination and countries of origin. Across specialised literature, there is no universally accepted theory. Massey et al. (1993, p. 453) theorised that "at present, there is no single, coherent theory of international migration, only a fragmented set of theories that have developed largely in

isolation from one another, sometimes but not always segmented by disciplinary boundaries." Nonetheless, Bodvarsson & Van den Berg (2013, p. 489) opposed Massey's conception and thus stated that "while there is a strong tendency in the literature to distinguish between domestic (internal) and international (external) migration, there is actually just one economic theory of migration."

Massey et al. (1998, 1993) and Schoorl (1995) distinguish between the two categories of international migration theories. Firstly, there are models which describe the initiation of an international movement. According to these authors, neoclassical economics, the new economics of migration, the dual labour market theory and the world system theory belong to this group (Haimannová, 2015). Secondly, some theories explain why the transnational movement of people persists across space and time. According to Massey et al. (1993, 1998) and Schoorl (1995), this group includes the network theory, the institutional theory, the cumulative causation theory and the migration system theory. It behoves to note, however, that some authors (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg, 2013; King, 2012) do not agree with the categorisation Massey et al. (1993) put forward, and there is no consensus on where to draw the line between theories of international migration or which of them should be considered more important than others (Haimannová, 2015). It is not the purpose of this paper to describe in detail all existing theories.

Despite those mentioned above, this paper will use the theoretical frameworks (and by extension the conceptual framework design), and the summary of Massey et al. (1998, 1993), since it remains the most referenced suggestion of theories classification. Thus, this study adopts neo-classical macroeconomic and microeconomic theories; the new economics of migration theory, and the dual labour market theory to shed light on issues relating to the initiation of international movements.

Conceptual models are tools for communication across disciplines and help to develop questions, clarify boundaries of the systems under study, and identify gaps in existing research (Heemskerk et al. 2003). Developing a conceptual framework is a crucial way to advance migration research. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework builds on the various models which describe the initiation of migration (neoclassical macroeconomics and microeconomic theories; the new economics of migration theory and dual labour market theory); and those theories which explain why the transnational movement of people persist across space and time (the migration system theory).

From the schema, household characteristics such as sex, age, marital status, educational level, household size, employment status, household income, participation in social organisation as well as household assets strongly affect who migrates and who does not (Block A). International migration not only occurs due to household characteristics but also due to other numerous factors that sociologists identify in the form of push and pull factors. Push factors, such as unemployment, inadequate social infrastructure, poor medical care, famine and drought, natural disasters, traditional and cultural practices can force members

of a rural household to move from Nigeria to other countries (Block B). Pull factors include a higher standard of living, better employment opportunities, or political stability, all of which convince rural dwellers to migrate overseas (Block C). These determinants (household characteristics, push factors and pull factors) are responsible for the decision of rural household members to migrate overseas (Block D). The conceptual framework further provides an overall picture of how international migration affects rural households (Blocks E and F) and communities of origin (Blocks G and H) both positively and negatively. These effects, later translate into positive or negative living outcomes among rural households and communities of origin (Blocks I and J).

Materials and methods

Study area

The study was carried out in Edo State, Nigeria, from November 2018 to June 2019. The state was created on August 27, 1991 out of the defunct Bendel State. Edo State is bordered in the south by Delta State, in the west by Ondo State, in the north by Kogi State and in the east by Kogi and Anambra States. It occupies a land area of about 19,187 square kilometres (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2011) with 180,000 farm families (Omoregbe & Ajayi, 2009). It has a population of about 3,218,332 (NBS, 2011).

Ethnic groups in Edo State include Bini, Esan, Etsako, Owan and Akoko Edo, with the population engaging in professional and non-professional as well as skilled and unskilled jobs. Farming is the predominant occupation among rural dwellers. The main crops grown are rubber, oil palm, cocoa, yam, cassava, maize, rice, plantain, pineapple, tomatoes as well as leafy vegetables. There is also a significant animal husbandry industry, with cows, goats, pigs, rabbits and sheep being the main products. Edo people are progressives and explorers. Hence, they migrate and can be found across several states in Nigeria and other countries across the globe.

Edo State has three agricultural zones, viz.: Edo Central, Edo North and Edo South. Edo Central agricultural zone has five extension blocks, namely: Esan Central, Esan West, Esan North-East, Esan South-East and Igueben. Edo North agricultural zone comprises six extension blocks: Owan West, Akoko-Edo, Etsako West, Etsako East, Owan East and Etsako Central. Edo South agricultural zone has seven extension blocks: Oredo, Ovia South West, Ovia North East, Ikpoba-Okha, Egor, Uhunmwode and Orhionwon. In all, there are a total of 18 extension blocks in the study area.

Research design

The study adopted the survey design. Survey research involves the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). This type of research allows for a variety of methods to

recruit participants, collect data, and utilise various methods of instrumentation (Ponto, 2015). Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g. using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g. using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e. mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research (Singleton & Straits, 2009).

Population and sampling procedure

The sample population for the study was comprised of all international migrants' household head in Edo State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to collect data from the population of international migrant(s) households' head in the study area. In the first stage, the three agricultural zones (Edo Central, Edo North and Edo South) in the state were selected. In the second stage, two blocks were randomly selected from each zone, giving a total of six blocks. The blocks selected were Esan West and Esan North-East (Edo Central agricultural zone); Etsako Central and Etsako West (Edo North agricultural zone) and; Ikpoba-Okha and Orhionmwon (Edo South agricultural zone). In the third stage, two circles were purposively selected from each block, giving a total of 12 circles. In the fourth stage, a list of households with international migrant(s) was compiled with the help of community youth leaders in each circle. Community youth leaders were engaged because they were likely to know more households with international migrants based on the assumption that most migrants are youths. From the list, twenty (20) household heads were randomly selected from each circle. Thus, the total sample size for the study was two hundred and forty (240) respondents.

Data collection

Quantitative data were collected using a semi-structured interview, held with respondents who are the household heads to derive information on international migration in sampled households in line with the outlined objectives of the study. The instrument was validated by five academic staff in the Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. These experts were requested to check the items for correctness, logical arrangement, to identify ambiguous statements and make suggestions. Their comments and suggestions were used to improve the instrument.

In addition, focus group discussion (FGD) was used to collect qualitative data, especially for objective two. The FGD involved group discussions where men, women and youths gathered together from different backgrounds or experiences to discuss specific issues of interest in international migration. One FGD was conducted in each of the sampled zones giving a total of three FGDs. Furthermore, key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with one opinion leader considered to be adequately knowledgeable in each of the sampled blocks. Thus, in each of the zones, two KIIs were conducted, resulting in a total of six KIIs.

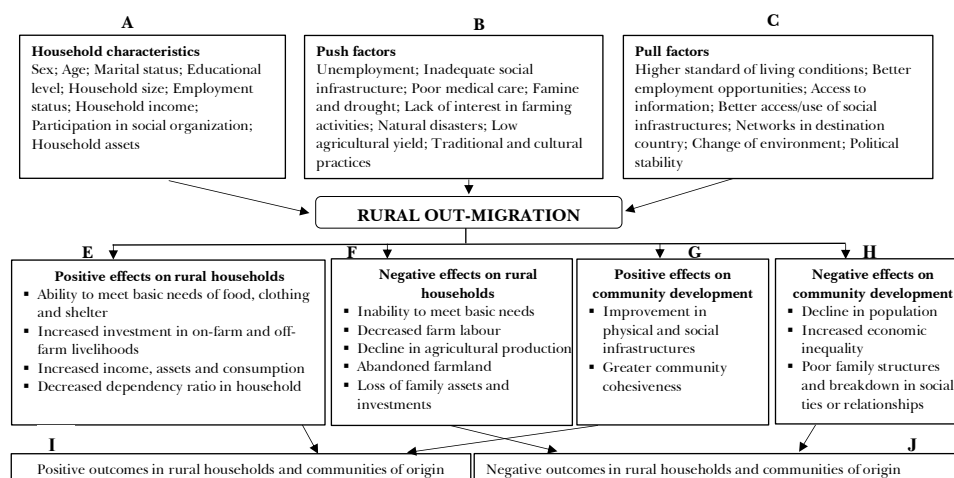


Figure 1: Schema on the effects of international migration on rural households in Edo State, Nigeria. Source: Uddin, 2019

The FGDs and KIIs were used to gather ethnographic information, especially those that may be difficult to adequately capture when using questionnaires. As a result, illustrative quotes from the FGDs and KIIs were used to support and strengthen the quantitative data.

Data analysis

Effects of international remittances on rural households' welfare, social development, agricultural productive capacity were analysed and presented using frequency, percentage, mean scores and standard deviation. Furthermore, differentials in assets of remittance-receiving households before and after migrant left the country were analysed using paired sample t-test.

Paired sample t-test is a statistical technique that is used to compare two population means in the case of two samples that are correlated. Paired sample t-test is used in 'before-after' studies, when the samples are the matched pairs, or for case-control studies. The paired sample t-test is a parametric test.

Results and discussions

Effects of international remittances on rural households' welfare

a. Money received by rural household

the findings presented in Table 1 show that 54.6% of households in the study area received money from migrants outside the country, while 45.4% did not. The dominant service for receiving money was Western Union money transfer (25.8%). Other means included friends or relatives (17.1%), direct transfer to a bank account (14.6%).

Table 1. Monetary remittances received by rural household

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean (\bar{x})
Receive money in the past 12 months			
Yes	131	54.6	
Channel for receiving money*			
Western Union	62	25.8	
Through friend or relative	41	17.1	
Direct transfer to a bank account	35	14.6	
MoneyGram	17	7.1	
Internet money transfer	10	4.2	
Foreign exchange bureau	7	2.9	
Mobile phone/telecommunication service	1	0.4	
Amount received in the past 12 months (n=126)+			
≤ N100,000	21	8.8	
N100,001 – N400,000	53	22.1	
N400,001 – N700,000	15	6.2	N543,000
N700,001 – N1,000,000	9	3.8	
Above N1,000,000	28	11.7	
Purpose remittance was committed*			
Purchase of food items for household	86	35.8	
Debt repayment	56	23.3	
Education of household members	53	22.1	
Savings for migrant	50	20.8	
Investments in business	48	20.0	
Rebuild/maintain house	40	16.7	
Hiring of labour for farming	40	16.7	
Purchase of farm inputs (e.g. fertiliser, tools)	39	16.2	
Health care of household members	38	15.8	
Build a new house	34	14.2	
Increase farm size	32	13.3	
Purchase of land	30	12.5	
Purchase of household goods (e.g. TV)	30	12.5	
Renting/hiring of land for farming	21	8.8	
Processing of agricultural commodities	19	7.9	
Rent for housing	17	7.1	
Ceremonies (e.g. weddings, funerals etc.)	15	6.2	

*multiple responses,
+ 1 naira = 365 USD

Furthermore, 22.1% of households received monetary remittances ranging from N100,001 to N400,000 in the past 12 months, while 11.7% received more than N1,000,000. The average sum received by households in the past 12 months was N543,000. For households who received money in the past 12 months, 35.8% committed received funds to the purchase of food items, debt repayment (23.3%), education of household members (22.1%) and savings for those that have left abroad (20.8%).

These findings are a clear indication that migrants sought ways to improve their standard of living and their family back in Nigeria by sending money. Evidence suggests that remittance-receiving households generally have higher incomes and more significant expenditure, as well as a lower likelihood of suffering from extreme poverty, compared to households that do not receive it (Ratha, 2013). In light of the channels through which households received money sent to them, Chukwuone et al. (2012) posit that most monetary transfers to Nigeria, are through Money Transfer Organizations (MTOs).

Informal sources from their findings include relatives, town unions and individuals entering Nigeria from migrants domicile foreign countries, among others. Furthermore, studies based on household data in various sub-Saharan African countries have found that the majority of remittances go towards meeting basic consumption needs (Wurku & Marangu, 2015). A survey of migrants indicates that 69.7% of migrants send remittances to their home countries to meet essential household needs (United Nations, 2011). It has also been found that remittances have a multiplier effect due to an increase in household expenditure and welfare (Gupta et al., 2007). According to the World Bank (2007), remittances from migrants provide households with a source of income that could facilitate investments in agriculture. This implies that money received from international migrants will be used to hire labour for farms, increase farm size, or purchase farm inputs. Remittances are mainly personal transactions to relatives and friends, and they make a significant contribution to the welfare and of the recipient households.

b. Goods received by households

Aside from monetary remittances, 26.7% of households analysed received goods from migrants in the past 12 months (Table 2). For households who received goods in the past 12 months, 20.8% received mobile phones, among others. Access to ICT tools such as the mobile phones could translate to use in making migration decisions among some household heads. According to Ebri (2017), international migration increases due to awareness of opportunities in various countries through various platforms such as television, the Internet, among other mediums. Ruysen (2013), further substantiates that technological revolutions are expected to deepen migration pressures both within and across borders.

Effects of international migration on households' social development

Entries in Table 3 reveal that international migration positively affected households' social development by reducing the number of mouths to feed (41.2%), decreases the dependency ratio in households (28.8%) and increases in household heads' recognition in social gathering (22.9%). Contrarily, some households were unable to pay school fees for their household members (34.2%), had their savings depleted (33.3%) and could not pay rent for housing (22.9%). Even more, some households felt rejected and abandoned (7.5%) and lost some members of their household to untimely death (5.4%). From these findings, it is evident that the social impact of migration is not always negative.

Table 2: Goods received by the sampled households

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Receive goods from migrants		
Yes	64	26.7
Goods received by household*		
Mobile phones	50	20.8
Clothes	39	16.2
Refrigerator/Deep freezers	24	10.0
TV	21	8.8
Cars	19	7.9
Washing machine	16	6.7
DVD/Sound system	11	4.6
Stove/cooker	9	3.8
Computer and accessories	9	3.8
Set of furniture	7	2.9
Grinding machine	6	2.5
Microwave	4	1.7
Motorbike	4	1.7
Set of hairdressing equipment	4	1.7
Sewing machine	2	0.8
Trucks	1	0.4

*multiple responses

Table 3: Effects of international migration on household's social development

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive effect		
Reduction in the number of mouths to feed	99	41.2
A decrease in dependency ratio in household	69	28.8
Increased social recognition	55	22.9
More money for leisure	42	17.5
Acquisition of chieftaincy title(s)	28	11.7
Negative effect		
Inability to pay household members' school fees	82	34.2
Depleted savings	80	33.3
Deprivation of leisure time	58	24.2
Inability to pay rent for housing	55	22.9
Greater burden in managing family life	52	21.7
Loss of family properties due to inability to repay debts	42	17.5
Collapse of other family businesses aside farming	41	17.1
Not enough time for involvement in social activities	39	16.2
Poor housing conditions	32	13.3
Inability to adequately purchase food items for household	29	12.1
Inability to get adequate health care	28	11.7
Weak family structures and breakdown in social ties or relationships	28	11.7
Inability to purchase household goods (e.g. TV)	23	9.6
Feelings of rejection and abandonment	18	7.5
Untimely death of some members of the household	13	5.4

*multiple responses

A reduction in the dependency ratio in some households would mean that such household will benefit more from the remittances received and as such, improve their standard of living. According to Ohagi & Isiugo-Abanihe (1998), the positive impact of migration is evident in the enhancement of the lives of individual migrant and their families. However, it is important to note that some households in the study are suffering as a consequence of international migration. Inability to pay schools fees, or rent, poor housing conditions among others could, in the long run, translate to increase in the number of school 'drop-outs' from such households and even homelessness. A surge in illiteracy could mean an increase in youth restiveness and bring crime waves within a community. Furthermore, these negative situations in some households could cause its members to migrate (especially through illegal means) in search of greener pastures overseas.

Participants in the FGD conducted in Edo South Agricultural Zone were asked what some of the challenges faced by households with international migrants were. They said "there are families who never get to hear from migrants from their homes. It cannot be ascertained whether they are dead or alive. Also, some families spend lots of money to send migrants abroad, but some were repatriated after a while. Likewise, some families have some migrants serving jail term overseas for offences they committed, and in worse cases, some migrants were sentenced to death." On the implication of this, they said: "these families are left with pain, regrets, debts for those who took loans to sponsor migrants and lose of family assets used as collateral or sold to sponsor such trips."

In light of the above, D'Emilio et al. (2007) posit that migration can be a rewarding experience that is made in the interest of the household welfare, but in most cases, moving to another country and being separated from one's immediate family takes place at a considerable emotional cost. Furthermore, Kahn et al. (2003) assert that migration increases the risk for family breakdown, especially fragmentation of social networks and psychosocial stress. By implication, the emotional impact of migration is not just limited to the migrants themselves, but also the family left behind.

Effects of international migration on households' agricultural productive capacity

As presented in Table 4, the absence of migrants affected households' agricultural productive capacity in different ways: a decline in food production (2.67 ± 1.33), in farming activities (2.62 ± 1.28), high cost of labour (2.58 ± 1.27) and farm work getting tedious (2.55 ± 1.29). Nonetheless, the absence of migrants did not affect the demand for locally grown foods (2.02 ± 1.11). These findings are in line with those of Olayide (2009); Lewis (2004); Osondu & Ibezim (2001) that migration leads to a decline in food production among rural households. The result of these findings is further corroborated by Adewale (2005); Ofuoku & Chukwuji (2012); Ofuoku & Emerhi (2014) that migration places a greater burden on farming households.

Table 4: Effects of international migration on households' agricultural productive capacity

Variables	Mean (\bar{x})	SD.
Decline in food production	2.67*	1.33
Decline in farming activities	2.62*	1.28
High cost of labour	2.58*	1.27
Farm work becomes more tedious	2.55*	1.29
Reduction in agricultural labour force	2.36	1.17
Poor farm management	2.35	1.27
Reduction in farm size	2.29	1.27
Diversification into non-farm occupation	2.28	1.21
Food insecurity in households	2.18	1.24
Farm work is mostly done by the elderly	2.07	1.19
Reduction in demand for locally grown foods	2.02	1.11

* ≥ 2.5 accepted

Thus, farmers spend more time to cover the same area of land than when (s)he had the assistance of the migrant. Depriving himself or herself of leisure time, involvement in social activities may consequently lead them to decide to reduce the farm size to the one (s)he can manage because the elderly may not have the energy needed to do most farming activities.

Differentials in assets of remittance-receiving households before and after migrant left for overseas

Statistical tests were carried out to determine whether significant differences exist in the assets owned by remittance-receiving households after migrants left the country. The result of the t-test is presented in Table 5. The results show that there were significant differences in plots of land ($t=4.022$), number of houses owned ($t=4.870$), mattress ($t=7.942$), radio ($t=6.493$), watch/clock ($t=8.376$), furniture ($t=2.415$), generator ($t=3.108$), irons ($t=2.954$), mobile phone ($t=8.657$), fan ($t=6.587$), television ($t=2.074$) and gas cooker ($t=3.143$) in remittance-receiving households. This result implies that remittance-receiving households owned more assets. The more plots of land owned might have been made possible by remittance income which enabled them to acquire more land. It is expected a priori that some basic household assets would be positively affected. This explains the increased number of mattresses, radios, watches/clocks, furniture, generators, irons, mobile phones, fans, televisions and gas cookers owned by the remittance-receiving households. According to Carling (2006), for many people, emigration also provides opportunities, such as obtaining status symbols such as land, houses or cars.

Conclusion and recommendation

Some households received remittances from migrants in cash and kind, which led to a decline in their likelihood of suffering extreme poverty.

Table 5: Differentials in assets of remittance-receiving households before and after migrant left

	Mean diff.	Std. error	t-value
Land (in plots)	1.279	0.318	4.022*
House ownership	0.550	0.113	4.870*
Motor vehicle	0.474	0.300	1.580
Bicycle	0.154	0.104	1.477
Motorbike	0.286	0.163	1.749
Barrow	0.111	0.111	1.000
Cattle	3.333	3.333	1.000
Sheep	-5.667	3.923	-1.445
Goat	-10.462	7.963	-1.314
Pig	0.500	3.775	0.132
Poultry	-18.444	16.498	-1.118
Mattress	1.583	0.199	7.942*
Radio	1.026	0.158	6.493*
Watch or clock	0.867	0.103	8.376*
Mat	0.111	0.096	1.160
Furniture	0.862	0.357	2.415*
Generator	0.471	0.151	3.108*
Modern stove	0.143	0.261	0.548
Refrigerator	0.286	0.250	1.142
Laundry iron	0.706	0.239	2.954*
Personal computer	0.667	0.333	2.000
Mobile phone	1.258	0.145	8.657*
Fan	2.414	0.366	6.587*
Television	0.588	0.284	2.074*
Gas cooker	1.500	0.477	3.143*

* $p \leq 0.05$

With increased income, some households invested more in agriculture as remittances from migrants were used to hire labour for farm work, increase farm size and purchase farm equipment. Even more, some households were able to meet basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. Also, there was a decline in the dependency ratio of some households. An indication that such households will have more value for remittances received, as well as an improved standard of living. Contrarily, some households did not receive cash or items. While a few were comfortable, a more significant number experienced increased hardship and/or the untimely death of some of its members.

Considering that international remittances can lead to a reduction in poverty, it is useful that this type of remittances is encouraged in Edo State. Moreover, policies to encourage the better use of remittance funds could be focused more on the small-sized household, together with, female-headed households and households with elderly heads that are likely to receive more remittances. Such programs could be in the form of capacity building and campaigns to encourage better use of international remittances. These programmes can be facilitated by extension personnel across the state since they have a proper understanding of rural dwellers who are mainly farmers. Also, these programmes could create a

platform to educate people (more importantly, household heads) on how they can directly have access to information about their migration aspiration without needing to go through traffickers.

This research significantly contributes to the existing literature on international migration in Nigeria because, in conceptualising the effects of international migration in this research, a clear distinction was made between the effect of international migration on the society, the economy and development as a whole, or the macro-level effect, and the effect on the individual migrant and his or her household and family, or micro-level effect. The meso-level impact, which refers to the impact of migration on local communities, was also considered. Furthermore, much of the existing literature on migration in Nigeria focuses mainly on rural-urban or urban-rural migration (Adewale, (2005); Ofuoku & Chukwuji (2012); Ofuoku & Emerhi (2014); Ohagi & Isiugo-Abanihe (1998); Olayide (2009); Osondu & Ibezim (2001). This study, however, took a different path to shed more light on how rural dwellers migrate beyond the shores of Nigeria, the country with the largest population in sub-Saharan Africa.

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