

SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF HUSBANDS' MIGRATION ON SPOUSES AND CHILDREN IN KUMBOTSO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KANO STATE

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ABSTRACT: Husbands' migration is a major concern in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State. This cemented the core thrust of the research as it dwells on assessing the impact of husbands' migration on spouses and children in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State, Nigeria. The objective of this study includes examining husbands' migration, examining the effect of husbands' migration on spouses and children and finding ways to mitigate the problem (s) of husbands' migration. The study employed Everett Lee's (1966) model of migration as the foundation for explaining the relationships between core variables. A total of 166 respondents were sampled for the study, with 150 used for the quantitative survey and 16 used as Key informants. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data, and the results were presented in the form of tables. The results generated showed that the causes of the husband's migration were poor earnings, unfavourable government policies, and a high rate of unemployment. The impact of this migration includes eroded family structure and relationships, women's engrossment in more responsibilities and a test on their decision-making capacity, delinquent behaviour, and drug trafficking by children. The findings concluded that there are negative impacts of husbands' migration on spouses and children. The study recommended that the Kano State Government should promote financial stability, education and employment opportunities; reduce the drivers of migration and promote resilience, thereby enabling husbands to stay rather than migrate.

Keywords: Left-Behind Spouses, Educational Impact, Children's Upbringing, Kano, Migration

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the rise in migration of people across countries has drawn attention to the economic and social well-being of migrants, their families and communities. Currently, out of 281 million international migrants worldwide, approximately 150 million are labour migrants (International Labour Organisation, 2021). These migrants contribute to the development of their destination countries and also support their home economies by sending remittances to their families. Worldwide, labour migration is often seen as a saviour, especially for workers from poor families where problems such as poverty, unemployment, inequality and conflict are prevalent. Indeed, labour migration has become an essential aspect of less developed nations and is central to understanding globalisation and development in the current era. (ILO, 2021).

Undoubtedly, migration is one of the main global challenges faced by society worldwide and is testing the response capacity of our societies and the international community. With globalisation, the world community has witnessed the huge movement of masses from one part of the globe to another. One of the major reasons for the phenomenon of migration is considered to be the desire for change in socio-economic status.

Motivations for migration were with the primary aim of invigorating the economy of families; however, it always remain an issue that as they leave the country, they leave behind many issues that were to be dealt with by left-behind family members who may or may not be ready for these. Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon with both opportunities and challenges. While it can lead to improved livelihoods for migrant workers, it also disrupts family dynamics, especially in regions like Kumbotso LGA in Kano State, where male-dominated migration patterns are prevalent; the absence of husbands impacts the well-being of spouses and children left behind, often in adverse ways.

Statement of the problem

It is clear that male outmigration has brought about more responsibilities in both social conditions and economic activities; it has also added additional tensions to the remaining wives. Disrupted family life can lead to poor diets and increased psychological problems. Migration may reduce incentives for education when perceived future returns on education are low, because of high expectations from migration (Datta, 2021).

It is now well accepted that international migration of a parent can have both positive and negative effects on children in the home country. First, there is the possibility that remittances sent from abroad will relax the household budget constraint and result in an increase in child schooling, child health, and a corresponding decrease in child labour. Several studies find evidence supporting this hypothesis (Edward & Ureta, 2003).

In Kumbotso, one of the key challenges faced by families left behind is the issue of food sufficiency. As fathers/husbands migrate, the sole responsibility of feeding the family rests on the shoulders of the mother/wife. But most of the women are handicapped in terms of economic flamboyancy, they find it difficult to meet the standard of diet as compared to when their husbands were around. Families who could afford healthy three-square meals now have to settle for less and this has led other families into starvation and malnutrition.

Access to healthcare remains a significant challenge for families in Kumbotso LGA. Many families relying on health insurance schemes, such as the National Health Insurance Scheme, face difficulties when the primary breadwinner travels, often losing their health coverage and being excluded from medical insurance altogether. Consequently, these families are compelled to substitute standard medical care with traditional remedies, which may lead to long-term health issues. Additionally, it was observed that children of migrant families tend to have lower school attendance, frequently due to illnesses that affect them repeatedly. The impact of male migration on children's school attendance cannot be overemphasised in Kumbotso LGA, as they either drop

out of school, enrol in less qualitative schools or are always sent back home due to school fees that are unsettled.

The year 2019-2025 was the peak of COVID-19 when Kano indigenes began to experience a lot of hardships as prices of commodities skyrocketed beyond the reach of the common man, leaving him with no option than to migrate in the hope of finding greener pastures.

This study therefore investigates the socio-economic consequences of male migration on the spouses and children left behind in Kumbotso LGA, Kano State.

Research Questions

The study has the following questions:

- i. What are the causes of male migration in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State?
- ii. What are the socio-economic impacts of male migration on the families left behind in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State?

Research Objectives

This study investigates the socio-economic consequences of male migration on the spouses and children left behind in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State, with particular emphasis on household livelihood, healthcare and educational outcomes.

The specific objectives include;

- i. To examine the causes of male migration in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State.
- ii. To examine the socio-economic impact of male migration on the families left behind in Kumbotso LGA of Kano

Scope and Delimitations

The study focuses on the socio-economic effects of male migration on Women and children in Kumbotso LGA of Kano state. The choice of Kumbotso LGA of Kano state resulted from the observation of the researcher on how women toil daily to provide necessities for their children and ensure they are protected.

The time frame for the study is 2019 to 2025; the period is chosen especially because this was when the researcher noticed a drastic change in male migration. The academic scope of the study is centred on examining the socio-economic effect of male migration on Women and children in Kumbotso Local Government Area of Kano State. The study is limited to understanding the socio-economic effects of male migration on families left behind with particular attention to the impact of male migration on spouses and children in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State.

Significance of the Study

The study is of great importance, as it provides necessary information on the effects and remedies to male migration on women and children in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State. The study serves as an incentive to parents (male) who are supposed to address the problem of child abuse and family lifestyle. This research report is useful to the Government as it serves as a guide towards tackling the problems associated with migration, especially among male counterparts. The study is also useful for further research in areas related to migration, particularly as it pertains to families left behind.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Clarification

Husbands' migration refers to the movement of married men from one geographical location to another, often for economic reasons, leaving their spouses and children behind. This form of migration can be temporary or permanent and is typically characterised by infrequent family reunification.

Empirical Review

Studies such as Adepoju (2010) and Oucho (2009) suggest that male migration in Sub-Saharan Africa is driven by economic necessity. While remittances are often cited as beneficial (World Bank, 2021), evidence from rural areas indicates that women's workload increases dramatically (Yaro, 2008). Research in Northern Nigeria by Hamza and Yahaya (2017) shows that women experience emotional distress and social pressure in the absence of their husbands, while children's academic performance is often poor due to a lack of paternal support.

Gaps in the Literature

There is limited research focused specifically on rural northern Nigeria, especially at the LGA level. Most studies are macro-level analyses that fail to capture the gendered and localised experiences of migration on spouses and children.

Push and Pull Theory of Everett Lee

The push-pull theory, proposed by Everett Lee (1966), provides a theoretical explanation for why people move from one geographical location to another. The theory proposes that there are factors (such as environmental conditions, demographic factors, and economic conditions) responsible for the decisions of migrants to move from their place of origin to new destinations. Lee further stated that 'the push factors' are the conditions influencing people to move from their origins to the new destinations, while the 'pull factors' are the forces attracting migrating individuals to the new destinations.

In Nigeria, various factors, including environmental, social, political, demographic, and economic, influence people's decisions to relocate from one geographical location to another. Most often than not, disasters (environmental factors), age and gender (demographic factors), government policy (e.g. the movement of Bakassi people to Nigeria) and developmental projects (political factor), marriage and conflicts (social factors), and job transfer and opportunities (economic factors) influence people to move either internally or internationally (BBC News, 2006; NPC, 2012; IOM, 2017).

Against the backdrop of the theoretical gap existing between the reasons for migration and the cultural adaptability of migrants in the host communities, cultural diffusion theory provides theoretical explanations on how the movement of people from one geographical entity to another stimulates the transmission of physical elements, ideas, values, and attitudes from one social group to another. It is premised on the fact that once 'cultural traits' were developed, they spread out to different social groups undergoing the process of adaptation and migration (Winthrop, 1991).

However, given that push-pull factors influence the movement of people from their respective origins to new destinations, it is inevitable that migrating individuals will experience culture shock. Not only do these individuals experience culture shock, but they are also bound to contact some forms of cultural traits of the host community through diffusion of ideas, norms, values and language, which in turn psychologically affect families left behind. Following the process of adaptation, migrants in the host societies acculturate through the process of socialisation. In the end, migrants' behaviours are affected either positively or negatively to influence not only the attitudes and behavioural patterns of migrating individuals, but also the people at the origin and destination. This helps explain the last objective, being the reasons why people migrate or stay back, and ways to mitigate the effects of migration.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodology that was used in this research. This section consists of research design, research setting/study area, population of the study and their characteristics, sample size, sampling procedure, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

Research Design

This study is a descriptive survey research design. This involves the administration of a structured questionnaire to the selected respondents (male and female). The justification for selecting male and female is to have a full representation of the population's gender characteristics, as it's one of the variables under study. A Key Informant Interview (KII) was conducted, during which conversations were recorded and supplemented with field notes. By combining deep qualitative and quantitative insight from surveys, triangulation creates a richer, more credible understanding of husbands' migration.

Study Area

The study area is Kumbotso LGA of Kano state, Nigeria. It is located in Kumbotso town and the

area council is made up of eleven political wards, Unguwar Rimi, Mariri, Na'ibawa, Panshekara, Guringawa, Danbare, Chiranchi, Challawa, KurekenSani, Danmaliki, and Kumbotso. Kumbotso LGA is made up of legislative councils who are responsible for the social and economic development of the towns and communities under its jurisdiction in the lowest levels, consisting of the executive chairman, the councillors and other political subordinates, thus existing under Kano State central senatorial zone with its capital administrative headquarters in Kumbotso.

Research Population

The study populations of this research are residents of Kumbotso LGA of Kano State. The research population of this study includes married women and children left behind. These respondents were selected because they were in a better position to give information about their challenges. Kumbotso LGA has a total land area of 186.7 km² and a population of 294,391 during the 2006 census (NPC, 2007). The population structure consists of 166,171 males (56.4%) 128, 220 females (43.6%). Age groups consist of (0-14) 137,138, (15-64) 150,448, (65+) 6805. (NPC 2022 projection).

Sample Size determination

This section is used to determine the sample size for both methods: quantitative and qualitative.

Determination of Sample Size for Quantitative Research

For the quantitative aspect of the research, the Get sample calculator developed by Ajireloja (2020) was used. The objective of this mobile application is to simplify the determination of sample size for research studies. This application is based on two well-known formulas used for determining sample size, particularly when selecting a sample from a population of people.

The Cochran formula is used with

Confidence Level: 95%

Standard Deviation: 0.5

Margin of error (e): 8%.

The above information gave a sample size (n) of 150

The samples were taken from eleven of the (11) political wards

Determination of Sample Size for Qualitative Research

The researcher employs a combination of convenience and purposive sampling techniques to select 16 respondents who are considered to hold key information relevant to the study. This includes (2) religious leaders, (2) elderly, (2) traditional leaders, (5) women who were experiencing the

problem and (5) men who had once migrated and are from the streets of Na'ibawa and Unguwar Rimi. In total, the sample size for both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research is 166 respondents.

Sampling Procedure

The researcher employed a multistage simple random sampling technique for the quantitative data, which consisted of the following stages.

The first stage consists of the clustered wards of Kumbotso LGA, which are divided into eleven wards. These eleven wards are Challawa, Chiranchi, Danbare, Danmaliki, Gurungawa, Kumbotso, KurekenSani, Mariri, Na'ibawa, Panshekara, and Unguwar Rimi.

In the second stage, the researcher picked at random from each of the 11 wards via lottery methods by writing the various units/streets in the 11 wards into 11 separate pots, and 1/3 of the entire units were selected. This is to have a good representation of all the wards.

The final stage was to use the systematic and simple random sampling with the nth number (the 7th household) in every tenth household in each of the units selected until the required allocated sample size is achieved. All females whose spouse has migrated or once migrated from each unit were administered questionnaires, making a total of 150 questionnaires covering Kumbotso LGA. Every household had an equal chance of being selected from the sample.

Key Informant Interview (KII) was also conducted, which was targeted to gain an in-depth clarification and enrichment on data generated from the questionnaire.

Data collection tools

Self-formulated questionnaires in line with the research objective were made, and these were administered to the respondents for the purpose of collecting quantitative data. For the Key Informants Interview, a KII guide was developed for use during the field work to guide in gathering data for qualitative analysis.

Method of Data Collection

Mixed methods (Quantitative and Qualitative) were adopted for this study. This consists of a structured questionnaire and a guide for Key Informant Interviews to generate information. The questionnaire was used to generate the quantitative data, while the Key Informant Interviews were used for qualitative data generation. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Demographic variables related to the research, such as age, gender, educational status and place of residence, among others, were assessed.

For the qualitative method, data were generated through the use of Key Informant Interview (KII). However, the interviews (KII) contain some probable questions to further elaborate on issues concerning the study, which will give more insight and first-hand information on the research. The

respondents were interviewed individually at their residence and at a time convenient for them. To do this, two research assistants who understand the local language were trained and employed. Their duties were to help explain the questionnaire in the local dialect clearly to the respondents, some of whom cannot read and write, or those who may find it difficult to understand some aspects of the questionnaire. For the KII, the interviews were orally administered while responses were recorded with the consent of the interviewee and later transcribed by the researcher according to the objectives of the study.

Method of Data Analysis

A mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data analysis, was used for this study. The quantitative data serve as numerical data analysed, while the qualitative analysis involves oral information from the respondents.

The methods of data analysis are descriptive statistics, such as percentages, presented in tables. For qualitative analysis, the data and information are analysed using content analysis. The data and information complement insights into the subject matter of the study, and the data collected are analysed based on the research objectives.

RESULTS

Table 1: Causes of Male Migration in Kumbotso LGA

Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Earning money to support the family		
Strongly agree	10	6.66
Agree	95	63.33
Strongly disagree	5	3.33
Disagree	40	26.66
Undecided	0	0.00
Total	150	100
Poor government policies		
Strongly agree	91	60.66
Agree	50	33.33
Strongly disagree	5	3.33
Disagree	4	2.66
Undecided	0	0.00
Total	150	100
High rate of unemployment		
Strongly agree	104	69.30
Agree	21	14.00
Strongly disagree	5	3.33
Disagree	10	6.66
Undecided	10	6.66
Total	150	100

Field Survey, 2025

The above table portrays view of respondents on causes of male migration in Kumbotso LGA, Kano State. From the variables examined, the data obtained shows that 63.33%, of the respondents agree to that *“Men may be expected to support the family economically, so may migrate to try and earn money, leaving their families behind.”* 6.66% strongly agreed, while 26.66% disagreed with it. Only 3.33% strongly disagree. This depicts the responsibilities of men as likely to lead them to migrate in search of greener pastures.

It was also deduced from the table that 60.66% strongly agree with the notion that “Poor Government policies” is one of the causes of male migration, 33.33% agreed with this, while 3.33% strongly disagree with the notion and 2.66% disagree.

The table further revealed that 66.6% answered ‘strongly agree’ to the question ‘Is there a high rate of unemployment in the country?’ 14% agreed with the notion, while 3.33% answered ‘strongly disagree’, 6.66% disagreed, and 2.66% remained undecided.

Table 2: Socio-Economic Impact of Male Migration on Women

Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Results in eroded family structures and relationships		
Strongly agree	91	60.66
Agree	50	33.33
Strongly disagree	8	5.33
Disagree	1	0.66
Undecided	0	0
Total	150	100
Women are engrossed in more responsibility and get engaged with more tasks than they would have ever done.		
Strongly agree	82	54.66
Agree	15	10.00
Strongly disagree	30	20.00
Disagree	20	13.33
Undecided	3	2.00
Total	150	100
Male migration has given more opportunities to test the capacity of women in terms of sole decision making.		
Strongly agree	75	50.00
Agree	40	26.66
Strongly disagree	15	10.00
Disagree	15	10.00
Undecided	5	3.33
Total	150	100

Field survey, 2025

The table above evaluates the view of respondents on socio-economic impact of male migration on women, from the variables evaluated, it was obtained that, 60.66%, strongly agree to the

likelihood of the notion *“It results in eroded family structures and relationships”*, 33.3% agreed, while 2.66% disagreed with it, and 0.66% disagreed. This indicates that a significant percentage of respondents support the notion that male migration could lead to eroded family structures and relationships.

It was also deduced from the table that 54.66% strongly agrees to the notion that *“Women are engrossed in more responsibility and get engaged with more task than they would not have ever done.”* as one of the socio-economic impacts of male migration, 10% agreed, while 20% strongly disagree to the notion, 13.33% disagree, 2% were undecided.

The table further revealed that, amongst the impact of male migration, 50% strongly agree with the notion that *“Male migration has given an opportunity to test the capacity of women in terms of sole decision making sometimes.”*, 26.66% agree, while 10% either strongly disagree or disagree, nullifying the notion, and 3.33% remain undecided.

Table 3: Socio-Economic Impact of Male Migration on Children in Kumbotso LGA

Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Children left behind tend to exhibit delinquent behaviour.		
Strongly agree	90	60.00
Agree	10	6.66
Strongly disagree	40	26.66
Disagree	10	6.66
Undecided	0	0
Total	150	100
Children left behind may fall victim to trafficking, which may result in lifelong trauma.		
Strongly agree	77	51.33
Agree	21	14.00
Strongly disagree	50	33.30
Disagree	2	1.33
Undecided	0	0
Total	150	100

The table above show the of respondents view on socio-economic impact of male migration on children, from the variables examined, the table that 60% strongly agrees to the notion that *“Because there is no proper guidance, Children left behind might tends to exhibit delinquent behaviour”* as one of the socio-economic impacts of male migration on children, 10% agree, while 26.66% strongly disagree to the notion, 6.66% disagree.

The table further revealed that amongst the impact of male migration on children, 51.33% strongly agree to the notion that *“Children left behind might fall victim to trafficking, which can result in lifelong trauma.”*, 14% agree, while 33.33% nullify the notion by strongly disagreeing with it, and 1.33% only disagree.

Table 4: How to reduce the negative effect of male migration on women and children

Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Countries should promote stability, education and employment opportunity for their citizens.		
Agree	142	94.66
Disagree	8	5.33
Total	150	100
Promoting resilience through campaigns, thereby enabling individuals to make the choice between staying and migrating.		
Agree	140	93.33
Disagree	10	6.66
Total	150	100

The preceding table shows respondents' views on prominent ways of mitigating the negative socio-economic impact of male migration on women and children. From the variables examined, it was obtained that 94.66% agree with the notion that “*Countries should promote stability, education and employment opportunities for their citizens*”, while 5.33% disagree with it. This shows that a higher percentage of the respondents support the notion that the negative impact of male migrations on women and children could be mitigated through the promotion of stability, education and employment.

It was also deduced from the Table that 93.33% agree with the notion that “*Promoting resilience through campaigns, thereby enabling individuals to make the choice between staying and migrating,*” as one of the mitigating factors of negative socio-economic impacts of male migration on women and children, while 6.66% disagree with the notion.

Some other ways of mitigating the negative impact of male migration on women and children, as stated by respondents of KII, are:

A respondent voiced out that through awareness of the consequences of migration and employment opportunities, the negative impact of male migration could be curbed”

Another respondent buttressed that.

The government should create employment and public awareness, improve the standard of education and job opportunities.

Other respondents suggested that the Government should play a mitigating role by employing more male youths in order to be able to fend for their families.

Interpretation of results

This section provides a detailed interpretation of the findings on male migration in Kumbotso LGA of Kano State and situates them within the framework of Everett Lee’s Push-Pull Theory of Migration (1966).

Prevalence and Determinants of Male Migration

The survey reveals the primary motives cited for migration include a combination of economic and educational reasons (42%), economic motives alone (25.33%), and economic, educational, and health reasons (24.66%).

From the perspective of Lee's theory, these findings align with push factors such as unemployment, poverty, and inadequate social services, which compel men to seek livelihoods elsewhere. Equally, pull factors in destination areas such as job availability, better educational institutions, and health facilities serve as attractions. The underlying implication is that migration is a rational response to structural deficiencies in the origin environment.

These findings correspond with numerous studies across Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa. Adepoju (2000) and Afolayan (2004) have highlighted the economic and educational dimensions of male migration. Similarly, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM, 2019) attributes internal migration in Nigeria largely to livelihood insecurity. Thus, the evidence from Kumbotso LGA confirms dominant patterns observed in the broader migration literature.

According to the data, 54% of male migrants originate from rural areas, compared to 33.33% from urban areas. This suggests that rural environments, characterised by poor infrastructure, agricultural decline, and limited access to services, exert stronger push pressures.

Theoretical Interpretation

This finding aligns with Lee's proposition that migration tends to originate from areas with greater negative differentials. Rural areas, especially in Northern Nigeria, often exhibit these differentials in stark terms, thereby pushing males towards urban centres or other regions with more economic vibrancy.

The pattern observed in Kumbotso is supported by empirical studies on internal migration in Nigeria, which consistently emphasize the rural-urban dynamic (NBS, 2018; IOM, 2020). No significant divergence is noted.

The findings indicate significant socio-economic effects of male migration on women. A substantial proportion of respondents strongly agreed that reflects on policy implications for migration and development in Northern Nigeria.

Findings reveal that male migration is predominantly driven by economic, educational, and government policy-related push factors, with unemployment and poverty being the most significant. The consequences of male out-migration are profound, especially for women and children left behind. Women experience increased domestic and financial responsibilities, while children face emotional detachment, behavioural challenges, and vulnerability to exploitation. Despite these hardships, some women gain greater autonomy and decision-making capacity in the absence of male heads of households.

The implications for migration and development policy in Northern Nigeria are substantial. The findings underscore the urgent need for multi-sectoral policy interventions that address the root causes of distress migration. Improving local employment opportunities, expanding access to quality education, and strengthening rural infrastructure are essential to reducing the push pressures that compel men to migrate. Furthermore, addressing the social consequences of migration requires policies that support female-headed households and protect vulnerable children.

Conclusion

It is important to acknowledge certain methodological limitations of the study. The data was collected solely from Kumbotso LGA, which may not fully represent the experiences of all communities in Northern Nigeria. The localized nature of the sample limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Additionally, while the study captured quantitative and qualitative data, the voices of actual migrants were not directly included, which may have limited the study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, recommendation is one of the nerve wires that a researcher cannot do without. It is important because it gives a way forward for administration and policy making for future usage through the views based on the fact of the data obtained from the research.

- i. Launching community-based employment schemes targeted at young men, especially in rural areas.
- ii. Expanding vocational training and adult education programs, particularly those linked to local industries and agriculture.
- iii. Providing psychosocial support and social protection services for families of migrants, with particular attention to women and children.
- iv. Implementing awareness campaigns on the risks of irregular migration and promoting safe migration channels.
- v. Kumbotso should promote stability, education and employment opportunities and reduce the drivers of migration by promoting resilience, thereby enabling individuals to make the choice between staying and migrating.

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