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Demographic Correlates of Occupational Mobility of the Rural Labour Force in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The few studies on occupational mobility of rural labour force in Nigeria dwell largely on the rationale for dynamism with little attention on influence of demographic variables. Therefore, this study examined the influence of age, sex and marital status on occupational mobility of the rural labou force in Delta State, Nigeria. It utilised both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from survey of selected settlements and household heads using a questionnaire. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in the selection of sample. The first stage involved a random selection of five settlements from the study area. The second stage involved systematic random sampling of 450 household heads from a total of 4,587 households enumerated in the selected settlements. The questionnaire covered occupational dynamics and socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the labour force between 2009 and 2013. The Pearson Correlation and simple percentages were used to analyse the data collected for the study. The result showed a significant influence of age ($r=-.080$, $p<0.05$), sex ($r=.125$, $p<0.01$), and marital status ($r=.103$, $p<0.01$)) on occupational mobilityover the two-time period. The study recommends the taking of inventory of those affected by the change with a view to planning for them.*

Keywords: *Occupational mobility, Demographic variables, Rural labour force, Delta State, Nigeria.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational mobility refers to the ability, willingness and action of an individual to change occupation. It is determined by both internal and external factors. The former comprise an individual's acquired skill, age, sex and marital status while the latter comprise the prevailing economic activity and dynamics in an individual's geographical area. Occupation is generally regarded as important indicator of social and economic structure of an individual. Itprovides income, determines social status and personal satisfaction. Consequently, it is the most social and ubiquitous of all social and economic factors used in the measurement of social class, leisure time orientation and other non-work related characteristics.

An enormous variety of occupations are found in any country and many different schemes are adopted in the presentation of this information (Kuznets, 1967; United Nations, 1969; 2006;Onyemelukwe and Filani, 1983; Yesufu, 2000).For instance, Onyemelukwe and Filani (1983)categorized the labour force into agricultural, industrial and service sectors based on occupational definition. In addition, the labour force in the various occupations is not stationary as they experience the movement of people into and out of them, thus there is occupational dynamics of labour. Knowles and Wareing (1983) have highlighted several factors that influenced the occupations of the labour force over space and time. These factors, which may lead to occupational mobility, are physical, demographic, economic, social and political in nature.

Though the literature is replete with studies on occupational mobility, most of them are in developed countries such as the United States and United Kingdom. Examples of these, according to Senivasa (2013), include Behrmanand Taubman(1985), Becker and Tomes (1986)and Haider and Solon (2006).However, studies on occupational mobility in Nigeria such as Oluwagbemiga (2014) examined the relationship between occupational mobility and higher education. The study reveals that women have the highest unemployment rate from all the regions of Nigeria despite their level of education. It also reveals disparity in professional and technical occupations and among males in the regions. Similarly, significant factors influencing occupational mobility of highly educated labour have been

identify to include marital status,, age at marriage, religion, place of residence and wealth index (NPC, 2009). Other studies of occupational mobility, particularly in the rural areas have focused mainly on the rationale and trend of change over space and time (Mackay, 1992; Igben, 1992 and2012; Senivasa, 2013). For instance, McKay (1992) advanced three reasons forex plaining the volume and type of occupational shift or change in any area. The reasons are; the availability of a predominant technology, the availability of a particular type of labour or activity, and the policies of relevant trade unions.

Senivasa(2013) observed that there were relatively more changes in the occupational structure and marked deviations from the traditional occupations among the Kurubas in Karnataka, India. Similarly, Igben's (2012) study of the occupational dynamics of the rural labour force of Delta State, Nigeria as a result of environmental degradation induced by petroleum exploitation activities revealed that there were significant changes in the occupational composition of the labour force over space between 2001 and 2006.Earlier, Igben (1992) studied the changing occupational pattern in Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. The study showed that there were significant changes in the occupations of the rural population as a result of declining tin mining activities in the area.

Against this background that these previous studies pay little or no attention to the influence of demographic variables on occupational dynamics, and the need to understand the factors influencing the phenomenon with a view to aid manpower planning, this study examines the influence of age, sex and marital status of the labour force on occupational mobility of the rural population in Delta State, Nigeria. Its specific objective is to determine the relationship between the age, sex and marital status of the labour force and spatio-temporal changes in occupations between 2009 and 2013.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. Study Area

Delta State, Nigeria was created from the defunct Bendel State on 27th August, 1991. Delta State lies roughly between Latitudes $5^0$00' and $6^0$30' north and Longitudes $5^0$00' and $6^0$45' east, over an area of 22,159 square kilometres, of which more than 60 per cent is land. The state is bordered in the north by Edo State, by Ondo State to the northwest, Anambra State to the east and Bayelsa State to the southeast. On its southern flank is the Bight of Benin, which covers approximately 160 kilometres of the state's coastline. At inception, the state was made up of twelve political divisions called Local Government Areas (LGAs), which was later increased to 19 in 1991. Presently, the state is divided into twenty-five Local Government Areas.

The 2006 provisional national population census put the population of Delta State at 4,098, 391 persons, made up of 2,074,306 males and 2,024,085 females (NPC, 2006). The population consists of many diverse, but related ethnic groups. Among the indigenous groups are the Urhobo, Ijaw, Isoko and Itsekiri in the southern part of the state and Ibo and Ukwuani in the north. Close to 25 per cent of the total population lives mainly in towns and cities (NPC, 1991). The capital of the state is Asaba. Other major towns of over 200,000 persons are Agbor, Warri, Ughelli, Sapele, Effurun, Ogwashi-Uku and Kwale. These are located mainly on the relatively dry, upland areas of the state. Most of the rural population in the southern part lives in the swampy riverine areas. Consequently, the state is mostly rural dominated by primary occupations such as farming, fishing, hunting, lumbering, fuel wood gathering, raffia and rubber tapping, and palm nut collection.

2.2. Research Design

The design adopted for the study is ex-post facto or causal-comparative. This design commonly reconstructs the past by asking retrospective questions on an earlier period and comparing it with the present situation (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). The design enables data at two-time period to be collect.

2.3. Population and Sample

The target population for this study is anyone, male or female who is economically active in the rural sector of Delta State. It includes persons engaged in farming (arable and animal husbandry), fishing, lumbering, hunting, tapping of raffia palms for wine and rubber trees for latex, and other occupations that rely on the ecology of the area.

The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select sample for this study. The first stage involved selection offive settlements randomly from a list of rural settlements in Delta State using the table of random digits. The settlements selected for the study were Oleri (Udu LGA), Beneku (Ndokwa East LGA), Oviri-Olomu (Ughell South LGA), Ugborodo (Warri South West LGA) andOvade (Ethiope West LGA).

The second stage involved the selection of households in the sampled settlements. In each of the selected settlements, the total number of households was estimated with the help of village head or his representative. Actual counting of households was further made easier because of the existing sub-divisions in each of the selected settlement called quarters. Thus, enumeration was done on the basis of quarters until the entire settlement was covered. The systematic random sampling technique was employed for the selection of households in each selected settlement. This required a serial numbering of the households, after which the household was randomly picked. Subsequent ones were picked at a chosen interval until the total number of designated sample size of households in each settlement was achieved. A total of 450 households were targeted for the 5 settlements, with 10 per cent being from each settlement. At the end of the data collection exercise, atotal of 449 questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents.

The questionnaire used for the study was designed to cover all facets of the study. Each question was brief and carefully worded so that it was comprehended by the respondents in a way desired by the researcher. The questions were also presented in a systematic manner so that responses could be related to one or other aspects of the study. It comprises questions on location, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents, as well as the temporal dynamics of occupations of the entire labour force between 2009 and 2013.

2.4. Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected for the study were coded and compacted into manageable size. The frequencies of occurrence of events, means and percentages were worked out and presented in tables. The process of data analysis was facilitated by the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0 version). The influence of demographic variables on occupational dynamics was tested using the Pearson Correlation Analysis. The test is a measure of the degree of linear relationship between two variables. It provides an index r known as the correlation coefficient, which value ranges from -1 through 0 to +1 indicating situations of perfect negative relationship, no relationship and perfect positive in relationship respectively. In using this technique, occupational dynamics in the sampled settlements is the dependent variable (y), while age, sex and marital status individually are the independent variables.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Age and Sex Composition of Labour Force

Table 1indicates that majority of the total sampled population of392 respondents representing 87.3 per cent, were above the age of 46 years. Out of this percentage, 133 persons or 29.62 per cent of them were in the age cohort of 56-60 years, closely followed by those above 60 years old (24.73%) and those in the 50-55 years with 22.05 per cent. The younger age groups trailed behind, with 10.91 per cent for those between 46-50 years, and 6.01 per cent and 3.12 per cent respectively for 41-45 and 36-40 years old. The percentages became lower with decreasing ages, as those between 26-30 years, and below 20 years formed 2.0 per cent and 1.6 per cent respectively.

Table 1. *Age and Sex Composition of Household Heads*

Sl.No.	Age Group	Males	Females	Total	Percentage
1.	Below 30 years	7	-	7	1.56
2.	31 – 35	9	-	9	2.00
3.	36 – 40	14	-	14	3.12
4.	41 – 45	26	1	27	6.01
5.	46 – 50	29	20	49	10.91
6.	51 – 55	58	41	99	22.05
7.	56 – 60	80	53	133	29.62
8.	Above 60 years	48	63	111	24.73
Total		**271**	**178**	**449**	**100.0**

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

In addition, a majority of the household heads were males representing 60.36 per cent in contrast to a lower percentage of 38.64 per cent females. The predominance of male-headed households is in agreement with the National Population Commission (NPC) documented Household statistics of 2008. The statistics showed that 83 per cent of households in Nigeria are headed by males while females headed only 17 per cent. However, the slight deviation from this statistics in the study area is because majority of the women bear the burden for the survival of their household unit, either as a primary bread winner due to unemployment of their husbands, who as a result had to be away, or of their unit within a polygamous homestead.

Furthermore, majority of 382 respondents, representing 85.08 per cent are married. While 8 respondents or 1.7% are singles, 33 respondents (7.35%) are divorced.Widows account for 26 respondents representing 5.79 per cent as depicted in Table 2

Table 2. *Marital Status of Respondents*

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	8	1.78
Married	382	85.08
Divorced	33	7.35
Widow	26	5.79
Total	**449**	**100.0**

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

3.2. Occupational Mobility of Labour Force

Investigation into the occupational history of the respondents in the past five years (2009- 2013) indicated that there were temporal changes in the occupations of the labour force. These changes are assessed by comparing the occupational compositions of the labour force for the two-time periods.

Table 3 shows that a total of 385 respondents representing 85.46 per cent of the total sampled population were in the primary sector in 2008. Of this number, 233 households or 51.89 per cent were in arable farming growing crops, such as cassava, yams, cocoyam, potatoes, maize, sugar cane and vegetables. The next important activity is forestry with 23.61 per cent of the total size; followed by fishing (7.80%) and hunting (2.45%). A factor which might be responsible for the high percentage of people in the primary sector of the study area is the geographical nature, which is mostly rural and the over dependence of people on land for survival.

Table 3. *Occupational Dynamics of the Labour force in 2008 and 2012*

Types of Occupations	Frequency 2008	%	Frequency 2012	%
1. Farming	233	51.89	116	25.84
2. Hunting	11	7.80	45	10.92
3. Fishing	35	2.45	9	2.00
4. Forestry	106	23.61	94	20.94
5. Trading	46	10.24	49	10.91
6. Civil Service	14	3.12	18	4.01
7. Company work	3	0.67	88	19.60
8. Others	1	0.22	30	6.68
Total	**449**	**100.00**	**449**	**100.00**

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

Just a few of the households were in economic activities other than primary. Trading employed 46 households (10.24%). Next was the civil service, mostly teaching, which employed 14 households (3.12%). Three (3) households (0.67%) were engaged in company works, working mostly as artisans and unskilled labour in oil and allied companies. Finally, one household (0.22%) were unemployed.

In 2013 the table reveals that 116 households, representing 25.39 per cent were engaged in farming. While 45 households (10.02%) were into fishing, 9 households (2.00%) were engaged in hunting. Forestry, including lumbering and tapping of rubber and palm trees employed 94 households (20.94%). Other occupations include trading, which employed 49 households (10.91%); the civil

service that employed 18 households (4.01%) and 88 household heads (19.60) were company workers. Lastly, 30 household's heads representing 6.68 per cent were unemployed.

Furthermore, the influence of age, sex and marital status on occupational dynamics of the labour force was tested, using the Pearson Correlation Analysis. The Correlation Coefficient (r) for age of respondents and occupational dynamics is -0.080, as shown in Table 4, indicating a negative and inverse relationship between the two variables. The relationship was also significant at 0.05 confidence level. In contrast, the Correlation Coefficient (r) for sex of respondents is and occupational dynamics is .125, thus there is positive and direct relationship between the two variables as depicted in Table 5. The relationship was also significant at 0.01 confidence level. Similarly, the Correlation Coefficient (r) for marital status of respondents is and occupational dynamics is .103 indicatinga positive and direct relationships between the two variables. The relationship was also significant at 0.01 confidence level as shown in Table 6.

Table 4. *Correlation between Age of Respondents and Occupational Dynamics*

		Have you change your occupation between 2009 and 2013?	Age of respondent
Have you change your occupation between 2009 and 2013?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.080*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028
	N	449	449
Age of respondent	Pearson Correlation	-.080*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	
	N	449	449

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 5. *Correlation between Sex of Respondents and Occupational Dynamics*

		Sex of respondent	Have you change your occupation between 2009 and 2013?
Sex of respondent	Pearson Correlation	1	.125**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	449	5
Have you change your occupation between 2008 and 2012?	Pearson Correlation	.125**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	449	449

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 6: Correlation between Marital Status of Respondents and Occupational Dynamics

		Marital status	Have you change your occupation between 2009 and 2013?
Marital status	Pearson Correlation	1	.103**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	449	449
Have you change your occupation between 2008 and 2012?	Pearson Correlation	.103**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	449	449

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Occupational mobility in the study area isinfluenced by the age, sex and marital status of the respondents. While the tendency to change occupations decreases with increasing age, sex and marital status have very little influence on occupational dynamics.The implication of the above findings in the study area, which is rural, is enormous. It worsens the problem of rural-urban migration and causes a lot of manpower problems such as under-employment, unemployment, increased dependency of the population and even a possibility of changers to lose their social respect and status.

Following from the above, the study recommends that the relevant government agencies like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the Ministry of Labour and Productivityshould carry out an inventory of those involved in occupational dynamics in the rural areas. Such inventory should cover the socio-economic and demographic characteristics, nature of dynamics, rationale for dynamics and the socio-economic impacts of occupational dynamics on the population. This should be done with a view to planning for those who are adversely affected.

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