

Young Men on the Move to Polish Shoes in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana

Augustine Tanle*

Abstract

In sub-Saharan Africa, young unemployed persons often migrate to the cities in search of employment, especially in the informal sector. This paper focuses on young migrants in the shoe-shine business which is common in Ghana but has attracted little or no research over the years. The study, which is guided by the migration networks theory and a conceptual framework on migration of young people to the urban informal sector, shows that the main motive for migrating is economic. There are migration networks which make it possible for new members to join the business. Most of the young migrants claim they have personally benefited from the business and are able to cater for their households better than before, while others have invested their earnings in various small projects at the places of origin, which has created some employment for others in the community. It is recommended that the government and the relevant stakeholders should occasionally organize entrepreneurship training for the shoe-shine operators to enable them operate effectively and sustain their business.

Keywords: young migrants, shoe-shine business, informal sector, Cape Coast Metropolis

*Department of Population and Health, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana

Author's email address: atanle@ucc.edu.gh

Introduction

Globally, migration of young people within and across regions is a common phenomenon, particularly in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. This could be partly attributed to the fact that they are more likely to migrate than any other age group (World Bank, 2012; World Development Report, 2013). In sub-Saharan Africa, it has been widely documented in the literature that young people (including migrants) are engaged in a variety of economic activities in the informal sector but some of these activities have not been systematically studied (Langevang & Gough, 2012; Langevang et al., 2012; White, 2012; Okojie, 2003). One of such economic activities is the mobile shoe-shine business in Ghana which is mostly urban-based and male-dominated. This study, therefore, focuses on migrants engaged in the mobile shoe-shine business in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Although some shoe-shine workers are stationed at OLA Estate, Tantri, Pedu junction and Bakaanu areas, this study focused on the mobile shoe-shine operators who constitute the majority in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The objectives of the study are to describe the shoe-shine business, examine the main motive for engaging in the business and assess the benefits involved in the business. The findings of the study could add to and update the literature on the migration of young people and their entrepreneurship in the urban informal economy. The paper which is divided into six sections covers the introduction, conceptual perspectives, theoretical framework, study area, data and methods, results and discussions, and conclusions.

Conceptual Perspectives

The concept of youth defies any specific definition, but it is mostly conceptualized on the basis of chronology, life stage or transitions. Chronologically, the youth mostly refers to people aged between 15 and 24 years, but in terms of stages in life, they are often classified between childhood and adulthood (Chigunta, 2012; Gough et al., 2013). The transitions approach to defining the youth often includes the transitions to education, the world of work and family formation. However, it is instructive to note that all these three benchmarks could vary from one geographical region, country or culture to the other due to rapid socio-economic changes orchestrated by globalization, formal education and migration (Langevang, 2008; van Blerk, 2008). In this paper, the words ‘youth’ and ‘young people’ are used interchangeably based on the existing data (GSS, 2012). The paper adopts the African Union’s definition of young people (15-34 years) because it is consistent with that of the National Youth Policy of Ghana (UNFPA, 2011; GSS, 2012).

The concepts of employment and unemployment have become central in most studies on young people (Gough et al., 2013), but the definition of each of these concepts has been contested in the literature, partly because of a lack of consensus in their conceptualization (Bunnell & Harris, 2012; Gough et al., 2013; Izzi, 2013). In this paper, the term employment is defined as having a paid job to which one reports on a regular basis. This includes public and private employment as well as self-employment.

In Ghana, the unemployed population is defined as comprising any person 15 years and above who, during the reference period, had no fixed job, is not seeking for a job and is not available for work. This population increased from 36.1 percent in 2000 to 45.6 percent in 2010 (GSS, 2012), but most of them could be young people because it has been noted that unemployment rates among young people are usually twice or thrice

the overall unemployment rate (World Bank, 2012). This is because young people are more likely to be unemployed compared to adults (World Development Report, 2013).

The main causes of being unemployed as indicated in the literature include rapid population growth with rising proportions of young people; limited job opportunities due to sluggish or stagnating economic growth, which in turn arises from the production of primary commodities and dependence on extractive industries; rapid rural-urban migration; restrictive labour market policies which create limited job opportunities, particularly in the formal sector; and educational curricula which are not in sync with the knowledge and skills needed by industry (Chigunta, 2002; Okojie, 2003; World Development Report, 2013). It has been noted that the rising levels of youth unemployment in Ghana are due to the introduction of both the Junior and Senior High Schools without any planned strategy to integrate them into the job market (Baffour-Awuah, 2013).

To address unemployment among young people, the government of Ghana has drawn up a National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) since 2006 (now known as National Youth Authority (NYA), the main objective of which is to identify projects with economic potential that can generate employment for as many youths as possible. The intervention, which covers ten modules ranging from agriculture-business through internships and industrial attachments to road construction, also aims at checking the drift of the youth from the rural to urban communities in search of jobs by creating opportunities in the rural areas for the youth through self-employment, wage-earning jobs and voluntary service activities (Baffour-Awuah, 2013). However, the weaknesses of the NYA include the fact that it is highly politicized because not all the teeming young people are involved in the programme; and its treatment of young people as a homogeneous group without much regard for their different background characteristics and spatial locations (ISSER, 2010; Gough et al., 2013; Darkwah, 2013).

Defined as a spatial movement involving temporary or permanent change in one's usual place of residence across defined geographical or political units at any given time period (Tanle, 2010), migration among young people could be temporary or permanent, voluntary or involuntary and in terms of space, it could be rural-rural, urban-urban, urban-rural or rural-urban. In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana, spatial differences between rural and urban areas are often cited as the main cause of movement of young people from rural to urban areas (Songsore, 2003; Adepoju, 2004; Tanle & Awusabo-Asare, 2007; White, 2012; Tanle, 2014). This is because urban areas are characterized by non-farm livelihood activities as opposed to rural areas where agriculture is the main economic activity. Consequently, migration from rural to urban areas has become the norm among most young people because agriculture is no longer attractive to them (White, 2012; Baffour-Awuah, 2013). For instance, the increasing urbanization in Ghana over the years, from 23.0 percent in 1960 to 32.0 percent in 1984 and 50.9 percent in 2010, can partly be attributed to the continuous migration of young people from rural to urban areas.

However, it is instructive to note that a few studies have found that some young people are choosing to stay in rural areas and some of those who have done so are successfully combining agriculture with alternative livelihood activities (Olwig & Gough 2012; Langevang & Gough, 2012; Gough et al., 2013). Others are noted to oscillate between urban and rural spaces in response to economic opportunities, social obligations and other preferences (Olwig & Gough 2012; Kristensen & Birch-Thomsen, 2013; Skelton & Gough, 2013;

Gough et al., 2013).

In most African countries, the urban informal economy is the main employer of most young people from the rural areas who are either employees or have created their own jobs through various social networks (Langevang & Gough, 2012; Langevang et al., 2012). In Ghana, a number of studies have reported on the growing youth enterprises or entrepreneurship in the urban informal economy partly because of the ease with which one could establish one's own business: little capital is required; knowledge, skills or basic accoutrements are what one often needs (Abebe, 2007; Porter et al. 2011; Langevang et al., 2015). However, some of these enterprises are highly gendered: females are mostly engaged in hairdressing, catering and restaurant businesses while males are mostly involved in the shoe-shine business, mechanics and commercial transport, among others (Abebe, 2007; Porter et al., 2011; Langevang, et al., 2015).

Theoretical framework

The study is guided by the migration networks theory proposed by Massey et al. (1993) and a conceptual framework on migration of young people to urban centres. The migration networks theory stipulates that migration comprises a set of interpersonal links or connections in which migrants interact with their families, friends or compatriots at the places of origin through the exchange of information and provision of diverse support mechanisms. These interactions facilitate the migration process as they reduce costs and inherent risks associated with migration (Taylor, 1999; Tanle, 2010). Through migration networks, current migrants could support potential migrants at places of origin to migrate by funding their trips and/or providing some initial support in the form of accommodation and job search at the destination (Pinnawala, 2009). The migration networks theory is suitable for the study because the migration of young people to the Cape Coast Metropolis to engage in the shoe-shine business could be based on personal networks established between those already in the business and the new arrivals. The former could provide diverse forms of initial support to enable the new arrivals establish themselves, as observed in some previous studies (Elkan et al., 1982; Synnove, 1999; Geest, 2005; Tanle, 2007).

The conceptual framework proposed comprised background characteristics, motivation and decision to migrate, and migration outcomes (Fig.1). It is suitable for the study because the various components provide the context for analysing the migration of young people from rural areas to the Cape Coast Metropolis to engage in the shoe-shine business. The individual background characteristics such as age, level of education, marital status, employment status and income level could influence a young person from a rural area to migrate to the Cape Coast Metropolis to engage in the shoe-shine business. It has been widely documented in the literature that most rural-urban migrants are young, have little or no formal education, are single, unemployed and have no regular source of income (Songsore, 2003; Mberu, 2005; Kwankye et al., 2007; Ackah & Medvedev, 2010; Besharov & Lopez, 2015).

Compared to the urban centres, most rural areas in Ghana have low socio-economic development, poor infrastructural facilities and rising levels of poverty which often compel the youth to migrate to the urban centres in order to meet their aspirations in life. The motivation to migrate to the urban centre could be informed by the characteristics of the urban informal economy which provide avenues for employment or for one to establish one's own business. The decision to migrate could be based on an already established migration network: the presence of others from the same village who are already in the shoe-shine business

in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Young people who are strong and have some skills and/or knowledge (human capital) could migrate to the Cape Coast Metropolis to search for employment. The migration outcomes among young people in the shoe-shine business could be positive or negative to the individual migrant at the destination and to his/her household and community members at the place of origin.

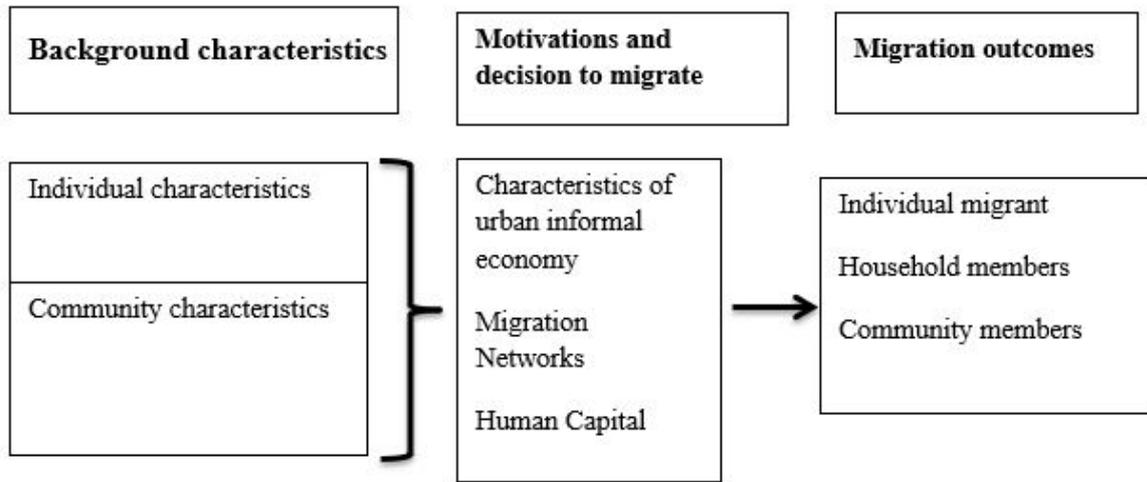


Figure 1: A conceptual framework for migration of young people to urban centres

Source: Author's construct 2018

Study Area

The Cape Coast Metropolis is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, on the West by the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem Municipality, on the East by the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District and on the North by the Twifu Hemang-Lower Denkyira District (Fig. 2). The Metropolis covers an area of 122 square kilometers and is the smallest in the country. The capital, Cape Coast, is also the capital of the Central Region, and the first national capital of the Gold Coast, now Ghana.

The Cape Coast Metropolis has a population of 169,894, comprising 48.7 percent males and 51.5 percent females (GSS, 2012). It is 77.0 percent urbanized and has a 90.0 percent literacy rate, which is higher than the national average of 74.1 per cent (GSS, 2012). The Metropolis is endowed with historical, traditional and cultural resources which have made it a tourism destination of the country.

All parts of the Metropolis are connected by roads that are motorable throughout the year. Over 90.0 percent of the residents have access to potable water and the main source of lighting is electricity from the national grid. The Metropolis has a large daily market and some satellite markets, a wide range of banking, hotel, and health facilities. The main industry of the town is formal education. Besides the University of Cape Coast (UCC), the Cape Coast Technical University and the Our Lady of Apostles (OLA) Training college, it has some of the best first and second cycle institutions in the country. The large population, brisk commercial activities and the numerous educational institutions and tourists attractions in the Metropolis constitute a large market for the shoe-shine business.

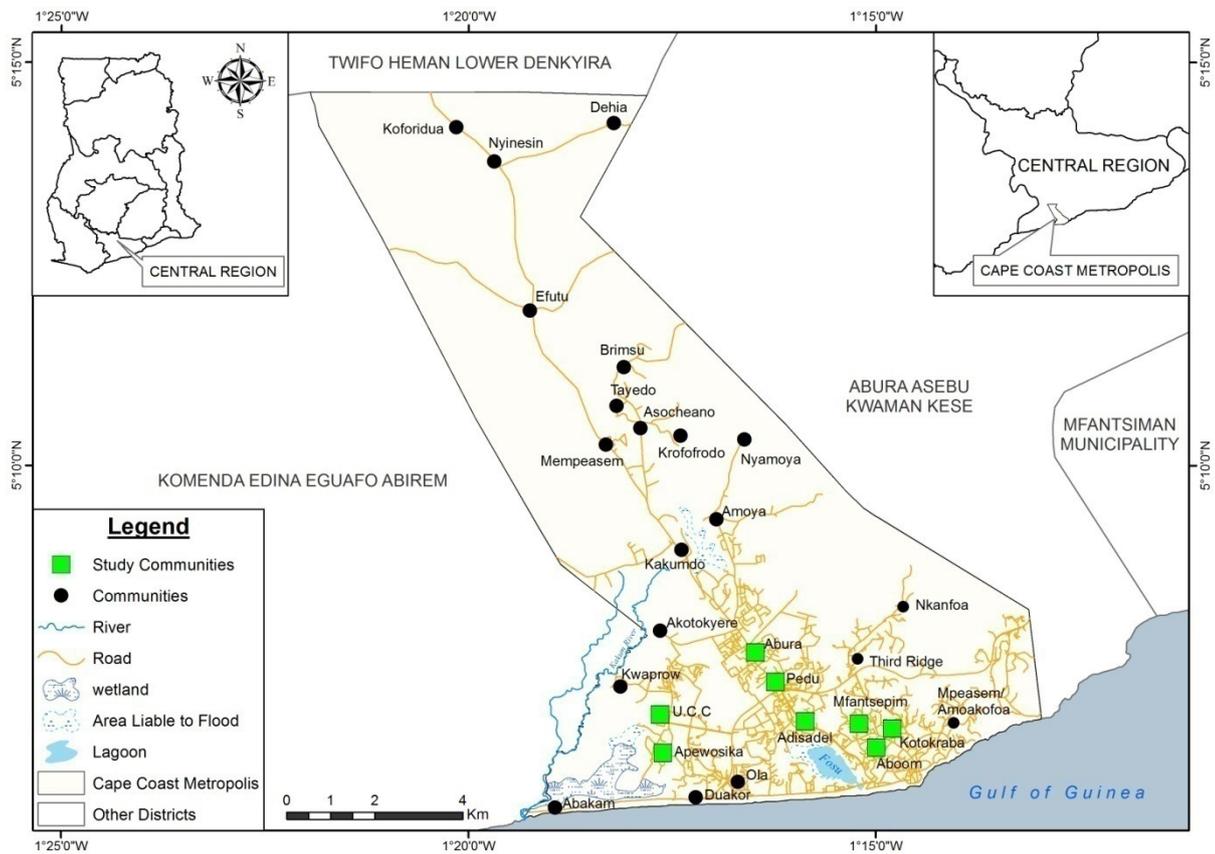


Figure 2: Map of the Cape Coast Metropolis showing the study sites

Source: Geographic Information System (GIS) and Cartographic Unit of the Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast 2018

Data and Methods

The study adopted the mixed method approach to ensure that the weaknesses of one method could be compensated for by the strengths of the other. The primary data, which are both quantitative and qualitative, were obtained from the shoe-shine boys using both a questionnaire and an in-depth interview (IDI) guide. Both instruments covered questions such as background characteristics, motives and patterns of migration, nature of work, health-seeking behaviour, benefits and experiences in the business, effects of migration on households at places of origin and future intentions.

The field assistants were 10 final year students of the Department of Population and Health, University of Cape Coast (UCC), who were fluent in the common local languages (Fante/Twi) spoken in the area and familiar with the suburbs within the Metropolis. They had a day’s training on the instruments which included the translation of the questions into Fante/Twi, and were involved in pre-testing the instruments at the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo- Abrem Municipality before the actual data collection. Since the total number of the shoe-shine boys in the Metropolis was unknown, a sample size could not be pre-determined.

For the data collection, one field assistant was allocated to each of the main areas where most of the young migrants plied their business, namely Abura, Pedu, Adisadel, Kotokuraba, Aboom, Apewosika, Eyefua Estate and the University of Cape Coast campus, while two of them served as field supervisors. The inclusion criteria were that one must be a migrant from outside the Metropolis who had worked as a shoe-shine boy

for at least one year preceding the study. Both the survey and the IDIs were conducted simultaneously at each site. Using the snowball sampling procedure, a shoe-shine boy was first contacted and interviewed, information about his colleagues was obtained from him and through this process others were found and interviewed until it was no longer possible to find a shoe-shine boy who had not participated in the study. In all, 191 responded to the survey questionnaire while 15 others who had been in the business for at least five years were purposefully selected for the in-depth interviews. The choice of the latter group was based on the assumption that the longer one stays in a job, the higher the level of experience and benefits (Thrane, 2008).

The Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 21 was used to input the quantitative data which were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and totals to describe the data, while the chi-square statistical test was used to establish a relationship between some background variables, motives of migration and the shoe-shine business. The interviews, which were tape-recorded, were transcribed verbatim into English by four students who were literate in Twi or Fante. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis based on common themes and direct quotes from the respondents. This paper focuses on their background characteristics, movement to the Cape Coast Metropolis for the shoe-shine business, motives for migration and benefits associated with the shoe-shine business.

Results and Discussion

Background characteristics

The background characteristics such as age, marital status, level of education, ethnicity, income prior to migration and anticipation of higher income after migration were considered in the study, as these could influence one's decision to engage in the shoe-shine business (Table 1). The results showed that the respondents were mostly young adults aged between 20 and 29 years who were single or unmarried. The majority of them (75.0%) were Basic School (Primary and Middle/Junior High School (JHS)) graduates who belonged to the Akan ethnic group. This is consistent with the 2010 Population and Housing Census report which indicates that Akans constitute the largest ethnic group in both the Central Region and Ghana as a whole (GSS, 2012). Prior to migration, about three-quarters of them earned GHC 100.00 (USD25.20) per month or less, but after migration, the majority (67.0 %) earned more than GHC 400.00 (USD 100.76) per month. It has been noted that expectations of higher income at some destinations influenced people to migrate to those destinations (Mberu, 2005; Tanle, 2012; Skelton et al. 2013).

Table 1: Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (N = 191)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
10-19	8	4.2
20-29	126	66.0
30-39	45	23.6
40-49	12	6.3
Marital status		
Single	114	59.7
Married	52	27.2
Separated	10	5.2
Divorced	15	7.9
Level of education		
None	27	14.1
Primary	55	28.8
Middle/JSS	91	47.6
Secondary	18	9.4
Ethnicity		
Mole Dagbani	18	9.4
Akan	153	80.2
Ewe	14	7.3
Ga/Adangbe	6	3.1
Income per month prior to migration		
None	8	4.2
<50	75	39.3
50-100	60	31.4
101-200	36	18.8
>201	12	6.3
Income per month after migration		
<200	19	9.9
201-300	22	11.5
301-400	21	11.0
401-500	51	26.7
>500	78	40.8

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

The Shoe-shine business

From personal observation during the fieldwork, a shoe-shine boy normally carries a wooden box which contains all the materials needed for the work. Most of them work every day in the week and a greater part of the day involves walking and advertising their presence by occasionally hitting the wooden box with one of their tools. The general characteristics of the shoe-shine business show that it is gender biased; it is mainly carried out by young males aged below 30 years, and this is partly because the work involves much

walking throughout the day, which might be too tedious for young females. There are no barriers to entry into the business; newcomers often learn the skills from friends already in the business. A small capital is needed to start the business. For example, with less than GHC 100.00 (USD 25.20) (1 USD to GHC 3.97 in September, 2016) one could obtain the wooden box and purchase the set of brushes and polish, but since they now doubled as cobblers, they also require needles, thread, knives, nails, hammers and other tools, all of which cost less than GHC 100.00 (USD25.20) (Personal communication with one of them).

The following excerpt provides information on how a shoe-shine boy conducts his business in a day:

I have been in this business for about six years now. I start very early in the morning around 6am. I leave home exactly 5:30am for business. I work around Kotokuraba area but sometimes move to other places. In the mornings, for instance, I patrol around Adisadel area and later move to Kotokuraba. On weekends, I do not go to Kotokuraba but work within where I live. I walk from Adisadel to Kotokuraba but sometimes I do pick a taxi, especially when the sun is very hot. I do rest in the afternoons. You know this business involves much walking which is the most tedious part. So I rest a while, get some food to eat and continue. Other times too, the business is slow in the afternoons so I stay at one place to attract passersby. My closing time is not definite but by 8:00 pm I make sure I am at home (28 years, Married, School drop-out).

From the excerpt, it is obvious that the shoe-shine business is tedious. This perhaps explains why most of them are migrants because it is widely acclaimed that migrants are more likely than indigenes to engage in more tedious or risky jobs (Manuel & Aditi, 2001; Tanle, 2014).

Places of Origin, Movements to and Duration of Stay at Destination

This section presents the places of origin of the migrants, frequency of movement to and duration of stay at the destination (Table 2). The results showed that more than 80.0 per cent of the respondents hailed from Asante Bekwai, New Adubiase and Assin areas while about 15.0 percent came from other places across the country. About three-quarters made direct movements from their places of origin to Cape Coast to engage in the shoe-shine business while a little more than a quarter went to Cape Coast once or twice before they finally returned to stay there and engage in the shoe-shine business. The majority of them (eight out of ten) had lived in Cape Coast for between one and five years; a few had lived there for ten years or more.

Table 2: Places of origin, movements to and duration of stay at destination

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Place of origin		
Asante Bekwai and environs	68	35.6
New Adubiase and environs	53	27.7
Assin and environs	42	22.0
Others	28	14.7
Number of movements		
Once	134	72.8
Twice	41	21.5
Thrice	11	5.8
Duration of stay		
< 1 year	9	4.7
1-5 years	158	82.7
5-10 years	17	8.9
10+	7	3.7
Total	191	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

From the qualitative data, some of the young migrants moved to various places in search of jobs before they decided to settle at Cape Coast for the shoe-shine business, as narrated in the following excerpts:

Yes, I have lived in other places before I finally decided to come and stay in Cape Coast. I lived in New Edubease since birth till I completed JHS. Then, I moved to Kumasi to learn how to make shoes for three years. When I returned to Edubease, I started trading at Oda (Akim) but at Oda it was temporary (to and fro) that is, when I go, the maximum duration I stay there was three months then I return to Edubease. I did this for three years then finally, I came to Cape Coast to engage in the shoe-shine business for 13 years now (35 years, Married, JHS). From my hometown, I came to Cape Coast. After staying for some time, the work was not lucrative. So, I moved from Cape Coast to other places and then back to Cape Coast finally (31 years, Single, JHS).

From their narratives, it appears that some of these young men explored job opportunities at other places or learnt some trade elsewhere before settling down at Cape Coast for the shoe-shine business. The shoe-shine business could thus be described as a last resort for some young people because they settled on it only after they had failed to secure their desired jobs.

Migration Networks among the Shoe-shine Boys

The main tenet of migration networks is to facilitate the migration process among the actors involved. It is an important form of social capital among the shoe-shine boys. From the qualitative data, it was observed that the presence of a friend, close relation or person from the same village or town already in the shoe-shine business in the Cape Coast Metropolis influenced others to also migrate to engage in the same business.

I came to Cape Coast because most of the boys from Asante-Bekwai are here already so at least I knew someone in Cape Coast, like my best friend who invited me to join him in Cape Coast for the shoe-shine (31 years, Single, JHS).

Studies have shown that through migration networks, new arrivals are often given the initial support in the form of accommodation and training by their friends at the destination to also establish themselves in the business (Elkan et al., 1982; Synnove, 1999; Geest, 2005; Tanle, 2007; Tanle, 2012). For instance, in a study on the economics of shoe-shining in Nairobi, Kenya, Elkan et al (1982) found that the shoe-shine business was dominated by the Kikuyu tribe because those already in the business invited and trained their friends or relatives in it. This is also consistent with the findings of this study, which indicate that the Akans constitute the majority in the shoe-shine business in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The influence of friends or close relations on potential migrants to migrate to the same destination is not uncommon in the literature (Synnove, 1999; Kwankye et al., 2007; Tanle, 2007; Tanle & Awusabo-Asare, 2007; Awumbilla & Arddayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Thorsen, 2009; Tanle, 2012).

Motives for Migration

The results in Table 3 reveal some relationships between migration and the motives for migrating. The main motive for migration was economic, particularly for those aged between 20-29 years, married, Middle/JHS graduates and Akans. A third of the unmarried migrated for purposes of adventure. The economic responsibilities involved in marriage might explain why a higher proportion of those married migrated for economic reasons, compared with their unmarried counterparts. The results further showed marked differences across the different income cohorts as regards motivation for migration ($p < 0.01$), but in general, the motivation to migrate was associated with income levels: generally, those with low incomes were more likely to migrate than those with higher incomes. This ties in with most studies which have concluded that the main motive for migration is economic (Synnove, 1999; Kwankye et al., 2007; Tanle & Awusabo-Asare 2007; Awumbilla & Arddayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Tanle, 2012).

The income after migration also showed that about 80.0 percent of the young migrants now earned at least GHC 300.00 (USD 75.57) per month (i.e. GHC3,600.00 (USD 906.80 per annum), more than twice the GHC 1,314.00 (USD330.98) per annum stipulated as the poverty line, and also above the minimum daily wage of GHC 8.00 in 2016 (GSS, 2014; Ministry of Finance, 2016). This means that most of the shoe-shine boys were earning more than they would have earned in a regular unskilled wage employment in the formal sector (Elkan et al., 1982; Tanle, 2018).

The results further showed that aside economic reasons which were predisposing factors for all migrants of the various ethnic groups, the Mole-Dagbani group were also more likely to migrate due to the need to escape domestic conflicts (20.0%). In Ghana, the need to escape conflicts has been widely documented as one of the motives for migration, especially in areas noted for regular ethnic or communal violence such as the northern sector of the country (Awedoba, 2009; Tanle, 2010; Kendie et al, 2014). However, the Ewes did migrate because of adventure (29.7%). A significant difference was also observed between motive for migration and income after migration ($p = 0.000$), confirming the economic motive for migration already noted in other studies (Songsore, 2003; Mberu, 2005; Geest, 2005; Awumbilla & Arddayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Adepoju, 2010; Tanle, 2010; 2012; Dungumaro, 2013; Ikuomola, 2015).

Table 3: Shoe-shine boys’ motives for migration by socio-demographic characteristics

Characteristics	N	Economic	Escape Conflict	Adventure	X ² Statistic (p-value)
Age					
10-19	8	77.8	0.0	22.2	
20-29	126	84.1	6.9	9.0	10.9 (.281)
30-39	45	81.3	6.3	12.5	
40-49	12	73.3	6.7	20.0	
Marital status					
Single	139	63.4	5.1	31.5	
Married	52	80.0	10.0	10.0	21.7 (.003*)
Level of education					
None	27	83.9	0.0	14.5	
Primary	55	77.4	8.1	14.5	14.3(.111)
Middle/JSS	91	86.3	6.9	6.9	
Secondary	18	77.3	9.1	13.6	
Ethnicity					
Mole Dagbani	18	75.0	20.0	5.0	
Akan	153	84.9	5.7	11.4	10.2(.327)
Ewe	14	70.3	0.0	29.7	
Ga/Adangbe	6	83.3	16.7	0.0	
Income per month prior to migration					
None	8	80.8	0.0	20.0	
<50	75	86.9	6.0	7.1	
50-100	60	80.6	7.5	11.9	31.7(.000*)
101-200	36	66.2	17.1	16.7	
>201	12	55.7	37.2	7.1	
Income per month after migration					
<200	19	82.5	6.7	10.8	
201-300	22	80.0	0.0	20.0	34.2(.000*)
301-400	21	82.5	6.5	11.0	
401-500	51	84.2	6.5	9.3	
>500	78	86.3	3.6	10.1	

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Note: Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

From the qualitative data, there was also some evidence that the main motive for migration was economic, as indicated in below:

In my village, after JHS, your parents do not take care of you anymore. You need to look for a job, work and save money so that you can learn a trade (31 years, Single, JHS). I came here purposely for economic reasons. There are no jobs in my hometown. I wanted a job as a driver when I came to Cape Coast but it's hard to get a vehicle so I opted for the shoe shine which my friend was already engaged in (28 years, Married, Primary School). I came here to work in order to save some money to maintain my oil palm farm, for my future plans and to support my mother (25 years, Single, JHS).

The migration of young unemployed school leavers from mostly rural areas to the cities in search for jobs is widely documented in the literature (Songsore, 2003; Adepoju, 2004; Mberu, 2005; Kwankye et al., 2007; Tanle, 2012). For instance, it has been noted that every year, more than half of the JHS graduates are unable to continue their education to the Senior High School level for a number of reasons which include financial problems (Bonney & Attram, 2010; Tanle, 2012). Since most of such graduates lack employable skills, have limited or no academic or professional qualifications and are not prepared to engage in agriculture at their places of origin, migration to the cities to engage in informal sector business such as shoe-shining becomes one of the obvious options, as explained under the conceptual framework.

The results further suggest that the shoe-shine job provides avenues for young people to earn some income, without which some of them would have been unemployed. Although it is not advisable for JHS leavers to join the shoe-shine business because of its precarious nature, young unemployed school leavers are more likely to depend on their parents for socio-economic support, and this could increase household vulnerability (Tanle, 2010).

Benefits Associated with the Shoe-shine Business

Migration is generally regarded as a livelihood strategy for the poor or low-income households (Heering et al., 2004; Geest, 2005; Young, 2006; UNDP, 2009; Tanle, 2014). However, whether or not migrants are able to improve upon their economic status is context dependent. The benefits involved in the shoe-shine business were captured qualitatively from the perspective of the participants. From the responses, the main benefit was increased income which *has enabled some shoe-shine boys to send remittances to their relations for household upkeep, children's education and for other purposes*. Also, some of them have invested in farming and drinking bars, as narrated in this excerpt:

I am satisfied with the money I make from this business because as compared to when I was in Edubease, it is far better here in Cape Coast. (25 years, Single, JHS). I do send money home every month for my children's upkeep, school fees and other basic things they will need (28 years, Married, Primary School). I have established a drinking bar and also maintain my cocoa farm with the savings I made from the shoe-shine business. I pay the salaries of my workers; a bar attendant and two labourers on my cocoa farm (28 years, Single, JHS).

Remittances to relations at their places of origin affirm that in traditional societies wealth flows from the younger to the older generation (Caldwell, 1976b). The investments that some of them make could assure them of regular incomes and make them more resilient against unemployment in future since the shoe-shine business is quite precarious (Elkan et al., 1982; Tanle, 2018). It is worthy to note that through their investment in a range of economic activities, some of them claimed that they had been able to provide jobs

for others at the places of origin, which was not possible previously.

Conclusions

The rising levels of unemployment among young people in Ghana, coupled with the fact that agriculture is not attractive to most of them, have compelled some to create their own jobs in the urban informal sector. The shoe-shine business in the Cape Coast Metropolis is one of such jobs dominated by young male migrants, mostly basic school graduates from rural areas within the Central and Ashanti regions of Ghana. The main motive for migrating is economic: to obtain a job and escape from unemployment at their places of origin. However, this has implications for rural development, particularly agriculture, as the elderly people are left behind at the places of origin.

There is evidence of migration networks among the shoe-shine operators which makes it possible for new members to join the business through the influence and initial support from those already engaged in this activity. Moreover, they operate in the informal sector where there are no barriers to entering the business and very little capital is needed to start the business. With the rising levels of unemployment among young people in the country, some of them could continue to migrate from the communities of origin to join their counterparts in the Cape Coast Metropolis to engage in the shoe-shine business.

Most of them claim that through the shoe-shine business they are able to cater for their households better now than before. Additionally, some of them reported that they had invested part of their earnings in buildings and a range of livelihood activities at their places of origin—feats which most of them could not achieve at their places of origin because they were unemployed. Moreover, through the investments, some shoe-shine operators claim that they had created jobs at the places of origin for others who otherwise would have been unemployed. However, it is important to note that some of them oscillate between Cape Coast and their rural communities of origin because of their investments at these places. This means that some policies and programmes that target young people at specific locations, especially the NYA which has specific modules for young people in urban and rural areas, might not cover some shoe-shine boys since the livelihood activities of some of them are not confined to specific locations.

Given the precarious nature of the shoe-shine business and the fact that it has absorbed some young people who otherwise would have been unemployed, the government should not only focus on addressing unemployment among the youth through the NYA, but also organize entrepreneurship training for others such as the shoe-shine boys who are not on the NYA to enable them sustain their business. In doing so, the government would be addressing Target 8.8 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which, among other things, requires governments and other relevant stakeholders to protect migrant workers engaged in precarious jobs.

References

- Abebe, T. (2007). Changing livelihoods, changing childhoods: Patterns of children's work in rural southern Ethiopia. *Children's Geographies*, 5 (1–2), 77–93.
- Ackah, C. & Medvedev, D. (2010). *Internal migration in Ghana: Determinants and welfare impacts*. Background paper for the 2010 World Bank Ghana Poverty Assessment. WB.

- Adepoju, A. (2004). *Patterns of Migration in West Africa*. A paper presented at International Conference on Migration and Development in Ghana. Accra, September 14 -16.
- Awedoba, A.K. (2009). *An ethnographic study of northern Ghanaian conflicts: Towards a sustainable peace*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Awumbilla, M. & Arddayfio-Schandorf, E. (2008). Gendered Poverty, Migration and Livelihood Strategies of Female Porters. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 62 (3), 171-179.
- Baffour-Awuah, D. (2013). *Ghana Country Report for the 2014 Ministerial Conference on Youth Employment*. Country Report Final Draft, Ghana.
- Besharov, D.J. & Lopez, M.H. (2015). *Adjusting to a world in motion: Trends in global migration and migration policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bonney, E & Attram, M. (2010). *Placement of Senior High School Out: 178,529 miss the boat*. Daily Graphic, August 28, p. 1 and 3.
- Bunnell, T. & Harris, A. (2012). Re-viewing informality: perspectives from urban Asia. *International Development Planning Review*, 34, 339-347.
- Caldwell, J.C. (1976b). Toward a restatement of demographic transition theory. *Population and Development Review*, 2, 321-366.
- Chigunta, F. (2002). *The Socio-Economic Situation of Youth in Africa: Problems, Prospects and Options*. Paper presented at the Youth Employment Summit, Alexandria, Egypt, September.
- Chigunta, F. (2012). *The youth and labour market needs in Zambia*. Final Report to the British Council.
- Darkwah, A. K. (2013). Keeping hope alive: An analysis of training opportunities in the emerging oil and gas industry. *International Development Planning Review* 35 (2), 119-134.
- Dungumaro, E.W. (2013), Consequences of Female Migration for Families in Tanzania, *African Review of Economics and Finance*, 5(1), 46-58.
- Elkan, W., Ryan, T.C.I & Mukui, J.T. (1982). The Economics of Shoe Shinning in Nairobi. *The Royal African Society*. Retrieved November 21, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/721730>
- Geest, V.D. K. (2005). *Local perceptions of migration and livelihood in Northwest Ghana: The home community perspective*. Retrieved March 18, 2008. www.iss.ni/ceres/vdgeest.pdf,
- Ghana Statistical Service, (2012). *2010 Population and Housing Census Report*. Ghana Statistical Service, Accra.
- Ghana Statistical Service, (2014). *Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 6 (GLSS6)*. Ghana Statistical Service, Accra.
- Geographic Information System (GIS) and Cartographic Unit, (2016). *Map of the Cape Coast Metropolis showing the study sites*. University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
- Gough, K. V., Langevang, T., & Owusu, G. (2013). Youth employment in a globalising world. *International Development Planning Review*, 35, 91–102.
- Heering, L., Van der Erf, R. & Wissen, L. V. (2004). The role of family networks and migration culture in the continuation of Moroccan emigration: A gender perspective. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30 (2), 323-337.
- Ikuomola, A.D. (2015) An exploration of life experiences of left behind wives in Edo State, Nigeria, *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, 6(1), 289-307.
- ISSER (Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research)
(2010). *The State of the Ghanaian Economy in 2009*. ISSER, University of Ghana, Accra.

- Izzi, V. (2013). Just keeping them busy? Youth employment projects as a peace-building Tool. *International Development Planning Review*, 35 (2), 103-117.
- Langevang, T. (2008). We are Managing! Uncertain Paths to Respectable Adulthoods in Accra, Ghana. *Geoforum*, 39, 2039-2047.
- Langevang, T. & Gough, K. V. (2012). Diverging pathways: young female employment and entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa. *The Geographical Journal*, 178, 242-252.
- Langevang, T., Namatovu, R. & Dawa, S. (2012). Beyond necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship: Motivations and aspirations of young entrepreneurs in Uganda. *International Development Planning Review*, 34, 242-252.
- Langevang, T., Gough, K. V., Yankson, P.W.K., Owusu, G. & Osei, R. (2015). Bounded Entrepreneurial Vitality: The Mixed Embeddedness of Female. Entrepreneurship. *Economic Geography*, 91(4), 449-473.
- Kendie, S. B., Osei-Kufour, P. & Boakye, K.A. (2014). *Spatial analysis of violent conflicts in Ghana: 2007-2013*, National Peace Council: Mapping conflicts in Ghana.
- Khotkina, Z. A. (2007). Employment in the informal sector. *Anthropology & Archaeology of Eurasia*, 45(4), 42-55.
- Kristensen, S. & Birch-Thomsen, T. (2013). Should I stay or should I go? Youth and rural employment in Uganda and Zambia. *International Development Planning Review*, 35 (2), 175-202.
- Kwankye, S.O., Anarfi, J.K., Tagoe, A.C., & Castaldo, A. (2007). *Coping strategies of independent Child migrants from Northern Ghana to Southern Cities*. Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization and Poverty, Working Paper T-23, Retrieved April 11, 2009. [http:// www.migrationdrc.org](http://www.migrationdrc.org)
- Manuel, C. & Aditi N. (2001). Migration, Refugees, and Health Risks. International Centre for Migration and Health. Vernier, Switzerland, *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 7 (3), 556-560, Supplement, June 2001.
- Massey, D., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J.E. (1993). Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 19 (3), 431-466.
- Mberu, U. B. (2005). *Internal Migration and Household Living Conditions in Ethiopia*. African Population and Health Research Center. Working Paper No. 31,
- Ministry of Finance, (2016), The 2016 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2016 Financial Year. Retrieved June 16, 2017. <https://www.mofep.gov.gh/budget-statements/2016>.
- Okojie, E.E. C. (2003). *Employment Creation for Youth in Africa: The Gender Dimension*. A paper prepared for Expert Group Meeting on Jobs for Youth: National Strategies for Employment Promotion, Geneva, Switzerland, 15-16 January.
- Olwig, M. F. & Gough, K. V. (2012). Basket weaving and social weaving: young Ghanaian artisans' mobilization of resources through mobility in times of climate change. *Geoforum*, Retrieved August 22, 2012. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.11.001>
- Pinnawala, M. (2009). *Gender Transformation and Female Migration: Sri Lankan Domestic Workers Negotiate Transnational household relations*. A PhD Thesis submitted to the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

- Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Abane, A., Tanle, A., Esia-Donkoh, K., Aamoako-Sakyi, R. O., Agblorti, S. & Owusu, S. A. (2011). Mobility, education and livelihood trajectories for young people in rural Ghana: a gender perspective. *Children's Geographies*, 9, 395-410.
- Skelton, T. & Gough, K. V. (2013). Young people's im/mobile urban geographies: introduction. *Urban Studies*, 50, 455-466.
- Songsore, J. (2003). *Regional Development in Ghana: The Theory and The Reality*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Synnove, B.S. (1999). Migration and human development: A case study of female migration to Accra, Ghana. *Bulletin of Geographical Association*, 21, 157-164.
- Tanle, A., & Awusabo-Asare, K. (2007). The kaya yei phenomenon in Ghana: Female migration from the Upper-West region to Kumasi and Accra. *The Oguaa Journal of Social Science*, 4 (2), 139-164.
- Tanle, A. (2010). *Livelihood status of migrants from the northern savannah zone resident in the Obuasi and Techiman Municipalities*. A Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of Population and Health, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana.
- Tanle, A. (2012). Everybody has his/her luck: Irregular migration of young people from Ghana to Libya and beyond. *Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 43-64.
- Tanle, A. (2014). Assessing livelihood status of migrants from northern Ghana resident in the Obuasi Municipality. *GeoJournal*, 79 (5), 577–590, DOI 10.1007/s10708-013-9514-x
- Tanle, A. (2018). Concerns and intentions among young migrants in the shoe-shine business in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies*, 15(1), 37-54.
- Taylor, J.E. (1999). The new economics of labour migration and the role of remittances in the migration process. *International Migration*, 37, 63-88.
- Thrane, C. (2008). Earnings differentiation in the tourism industry: Gender, human capital and socio-demographic effects. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 514-524.
- Thorsen, D. (2009). *Mobile Youth with Little Formal Education: Work Opportunities and Practices*, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, Paper presented at a workshop Organized by the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization and Poverty, University of Sussex and Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, Accra. 9 -10 June.
- UNFPA, (2011). *Sate of African Youth Report*. African Union, UNFPA.
- UNDP, (2009). *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*. New York: UNDP. Retrieved June 12, 2011 <http://hdr.undp.org>,
- Van Blerk, L. (2008). Poverty, migration and sex work: youth transitions in Ethiopia. *Area*, 40 , 245-253.
- White, B. (2012). Agriculture and the generation problem: rural youth, employment and the future of farming. *IDS Bulletin*, 43, 9-19.
- World Development Report, (2013). *Youth Unemployment and Vocational Training, Background Paper for the World Development Report*. World Development Report.
- World Bank (2012). *World Development Report 2013: Jobs*, Washington: The World Bank.
- Young, H. (2006). *Livelihoods, migration and remittance flow in times of crisis and conflicts : Case studies for Durrfur, Sudan*. Feinstein International Centre, Retrieved August 19, 2008. 1-33. [http:// www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/295.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/295.pdf)