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ARTICLES

Full Length Research Paper

Drivers of north-south migration in the Wa West District: Economic returns or migrants' sub-culture

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In Ghana, three regions (Upper West, Upper East and Northern) have the highest proportion of voluntary out-migrants but the percentage share of the population of these regions together has been less than 20.0% since 1970. This phenomenon is due to north-south migration which has been widely attributed to low socio-economic development and unfavourable physical characteristics in these regions. The study examines the main drivers of out-migration from the Wa West District (WWD). Using mixed method approach, 120 respondents were surveyed while 12 key informants were interviewed in six selected communities. The results showed that both economic returns and migrants' sub-culture were the factors that determine out-migration of young people from the WWD. In particular, sub-cultural values/attributes such as quest for modern lifestyles, improved physical appearances, adoption of day/popular southern names and enhanced family/self status were the key factors shaping out-migration in the study area. The study further revealed that job availability and modern lifestyles were the main factors that influenced migrants' choice of destinations in southern Ghana. The government, through the Wa West District Assembly, the Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) and other development partners should rigorously promote socio-economic development in the north to reduce out-migration in the WWD.

Key words: Economic returns, migrants' sub-culture, north-south migration, Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) interprets migration as a livelihood strategy that households from sending countries adapt in an attempt to spread income risks and overcome market constraints. The concept of labour migration often conjures up an image of people travelling across international borders to take up employment either as skilled or unskilled labour.

However, this term is not limited to transnational migrant workers lured by the pull factor of employments from large scale construction projects and industries that hire the bulk of the labour force, but also diversity of ecology, resource abundance and land tenure arrangements. For example, shifting cultivation for farmers and movement in search of arable land for grazing by pastoral nomads, all

contribute to migration. Fulani herdsmen in the West African sub-region are some of the best known examples of internal migrants motivated by the need to gain access to natural resource abundance (Adepoju, 1991).

Nevertheless, there are also other less known migrants equally motivated by the abundance of natural resources. Migration in Ghana, like migration anywhere else in the world, is in response to imbalances in development existing between origin and destination areas (Kwankye et al., 2007). It is also a strategy for survival. Migration within West Africa, and between the region and the rest of the regions of the continent goes back a long way (Arhin, 1978). The trans-Saharan caravan routes were among the earliest evidence of major interaction between West and North Africa for trading and exchange of scholars (Boahen, 1966). Migratory movements in Ghana have always been strongly determined by the distribution of economic opportunities.

According to Songsore and Denkabe (1995), Awumbila (2007) and Van der Geest and Dietz (2010), the consequence of uneven development between northern and southern Ghana has been that 'the north' has constituted a major source of labour supply for the industries and agriculture in the south. As a result, there has been the impoverishment in the north and the relative buoyant urban economy in the south. This was partly due to the British colonial administration which initiated forced labour recruitment from the northern territories of the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) to satisfy the need for cheap labour in the mining, timber, cocoa and oil palm plantation areas in the south (Songsore, 2003).

This pattern of migration (north-south) has attracted a number of academic scholarship in Ghana (Oppong, 1967; Nabila, 1975; Zeng, 1993; Abur-sufian, 1994; Synnove, 1999; Mensah-Bonsu, 2003; Sulemana, 2003; Abdul-Korah, 2006; Kwankye et al., 2009; Wouterse, 2010; Agyemang and Raqib, 2013; Hashim, 2007; Meier, 2005; Kubon, 2004; Tanle, 2010), particularly on the patterns, determinants and implications of north-south migration on both areas of origin and destination. Other studies on north-south migration have focused on the migration of young females from the northern sector to the southern parts of Ghana to engaged in various economic activities such as the '*kaya yei*' (head porterage) business (Tanle, 2003; Riisøen et al., 2004; Whithead and Hashim, 2005; Tanle and Awusabo-Asare, 2007; Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008). These young females of the north find their ways particularly into Accra-Tema, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi.

Although the aforementioned studies have shed light on the north-south migration pattern in Ghana, these studies are mostly centred on the economic dimension of north-south migration without systematically examining the socio-cultural milieu within which the phenomenon occurs. In particular, issues regarding return migrants' sub-cultural values (such as modern lifestyles and higher status upon return) as predictors of north-south migration are seldom considered in most migration studies in Ghana.

The few studies (Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995; Awumbila et al., 2009; Keest, 2010; Bosiakoh et al., 2014) which have attempted to examine the drivers of rural out-migration in northern Ghana have also been traditionally centered on destination pulls and origin push factors. These studies, however, failed to investigate the critical role of migration feedbacks (in the form of sub-cultural values) from destination areas in the south. It is against this backdrop that this study assessed the drivers of north-south migration in the Wa West District and investigating whether economic returns or migrants' sub-cultural values determine recurring out-migration of youth from the Wa West District of the Upper West Region of Ghana. Hence, it is anticipated that this study will provide some policy directions on how to support such affected communities to manage sustainably the north-south migration phenomenon in Ghana. Based on the objective of this study, it was hypothesized that there is no relationship between the background characteristics of respondents (age, sex, marital status, education, religion, ethnicity and destination) and their main reasons for migrating to southern Ghana.

Theoretical considerations

According to Goldscheider (1971), migration is defined as any permanent change in residence; it involves the detachment from the organization of activities at one place and the movement of the total round of activities to another. This study adopted the definition from Goldscheider for the purpose of this investigation. This is because most people who migrate from the Wa West District to southern Ghana move their total round of activities as well as change in their usual place of residence from one region to the other. The term north-south migration in the study was described as a temporary, semi-permanent or permanent change of residence to any place outside the three northern regions (Upper West, Upper East and Northern) but within the country.

From the perspective of Ackah and Medvedev (2010) and Adepoju (2009), the movement of people from places of origin to areas of final destination is a natural phenomenon in human society. Chakravarty and Chakravarty (2012) also asserted that migration does not occur under a common condition; rather the causes of migration are related to specific contexts in which they take place. For example, the reasons for migration may include the desire to seek employment, acquire skills and to improve upon one's social status (Lee, 1966; Yendaw et al., 2013). However, available literature on rural-urban migration seems to suggest that the decision to migrate involves primarily economic returns from the envisaged destination (Harris and Todaro, 1976; Adegoke et al.,

2011, Ahmadian and Shah, 2011; Jedwab, 2013).

On a contrary view, Crawford's (1973) cognitive model argued that rural-urban migrants make a conscious decision to migrate based on more than just economic considerations but depend on values of migration outcomes and expectations (known as migration feedbacks). Crawford (1973), therefore, defined values as specific goals such as prestige, wealth and autonomy of return migrants. These issues provide some insights which are explored in this study.

According to the conceptual framework for this study (Figure 1), the factors which underpin the decision and the process of every out-migration can be classified into four main broad factors: The background characteristics of potential migrants, the deteriorating push factors at origin, migration feedbacks from return migrants and the pull factors at the destination. The deteriorating push factors are the poor socio-cultural, economic and environmental conditions at origin. The feedbacks of returnees are the factors within the origin that expose rural dwellers to other localities through the return of former migrants which could be in the form of sub-cultural returns (e.g. modern lifestyles, physical appearances, influence and prestige of return migrants, acquisition of southern languages and names etc) and economic returns such as consumer durable goods.

In the context of this study, therefore, migration outcomes of return migrants mediated by individual characteristics of potential migrants such as level of education have been hypothesized as the key determinants shaping current north-south migration patterns in the Wa West District, Ghana. As observed by Rogoff et al. (2003), just as people acquire their genes from their parents, the same way they are triggered to learn a variant culture from the people they encounter and adapt to the change for a successful interaction. Among their peers or friends, the desire to acquire sub-cultural "models" such as languages, terminologies, and lifestyles of returned migrants usually rises among non-migrants (Rogoff et al., 2003).

The pull factors are also the socio-economic and cultural attractions at the destinations that potential migrants are less exposed to. They include industrial jobs, good incomes, languages, modern lifestyles and social amenities at the destination. These destination pull factors together with the origin push factors are described in this study as weak propelling factors for rural out-migration. The factors that determine the actual out-migration are the migration feedbacks from returnees. As shown in Figure 1, an individual migrant who is confronted with precarious cultural, economic and environmental factors at the place of origin begins to compare his or her current conditions to the socio-economic gains expected at the destination. Though a comparison of this nature is critical to the out-migration decisions of non-migrants, however, it is not strong enough to impel the actual out-migration. Rather, the strong desire to migrate among non-migrants becomes urgent when they come into contact with return migrants (Tanle and Awusabo-Asare, 2007).

STUDY AREA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in six purposively selected communities namely: Bamkpama, Beriyase, Disesi, Nyoli, Siriyiri and Zanko) in the Wa West District (WWD) of the Upper West Region of Ghana. These communities were chosen for the study because they are the communities in the WWD noted for out-migration (Ghana Statistical Service-GSS, 2012; Wa West District Assembly-WWDA, 2014) and also these communities have over the years embraced southern cultures (e.g. southern names, languages and terminologies) in the district. Geographically, the WWD is bordered to the north by the Nadowli-Kaleo District, east by Wa Municipality, South by Sawla-Tuna-Kaliba District and west by Burkina Faso (Figure 1). The district also lies between Longitude 9º 40" N and 10º 10" N and between Latitude 2º 20 W and 2º 50" W (GSS, 2012). According to 2012 projection census report by the Wa West District Assembly, the WWD has a total of 81,348 inhabitants comprising 40,227 males and 41,121 females with its main livelihood activity being agriculture (World Food Programme, 2012). This is reflective of the region-wide statistics of which over 90% of active workforce are into agriculture which accounts for about 80% of the region's economy (World Food Programme, 2012). It is worth noting that agricultural activities in the WWD are rain fed. Only a few privileged communities engage in dry season farming mostly powered by reservoirs and mini-dams constructed by development partners (Kusakari et al., 2014). Thus, most of the farming communities have limited livelihood options during the long dry season (About seven months), compounding poverty conditions in the area (World Food Programme, 2012). It is thus not surprising that the WWD was declared nationwide as the district leading in food insecurity and frequent youth out-migration (World Food Programme, 2012).

The mixed method approach was adopted in the study in order to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. The approach was relevant since the study examines whether economic returns or migrants' sub-cultural values determine out-migration of young people from the Wa West District. Both primary data and secondary data/information were used in this study. The primary data were derived from the field using in-depth interviews and interview schedule (researcher administered questionnaire) while the secondary information was obtained from records of the WWDA, Ghana Statistical Service reports and published and unpublished research materials.

The study targeted return migrants and non-migrants in the study areas who were 18 years and above. This age was adopted in the study because it is regarded as the age of majority and consent in Ghana. In this study, a return migrant was defined as any person born in any part of the WWD who owes allegiance to that place but has migrated and resided in any part of southern Ghana for at least one year or more and have returned to the WWD prior to the survey.

As it is with most migration researches in sub-Saharan Africa, there was no existing data base (sampling frame) on return migrants in the study areas. Consequently, a sample size for the study could not be easily determined. However, using the snowball sampling technique, 373 returnees were identified with their contact details profiled during a reconnaissance survey. A sample size of 120 return migrants was arbitrarily decided on based on resources available for the study. This number was then systematically sampled from the 373 returnees identified.

In addition, 12 key informants (opinion leaders) comprising 6 non-migrants (one from each of the six selected communities) and 6 returned migrants (one from each community) were purposively sampled and interviewed to enrich the study. A non-migrant within the context of this study was defined as any person born in any part of the WWD who owes allegiance to that place and throughout his or her working life has never resided in any part of southern Ghana except for temporary visits or vacations. The selection of these key informants was based on their knowledge and experiences of out-migration in the study communities.

The instruments used in the data collection exercise covered the

socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, their destination choice criteria, the migration decision-making process, motivations for their out-migration and their re-migration intentions. The instruments were pre-tested at Nakore, a community in the WWD which had similar characteristics as the study communities. Twenty respondents were selected for the pre-test which enabled the researcher to ascertain the face and content validity of the instruments before the actual data collection commenced. The data collection lasted for a period of one month beginning from 1st April to 1st May, 2014. This period was chosen for the fieldwork because it coincided with the beginning of the rainy season where most migrants had returned to their communities of origin to begin their farming activities.

Data from the interview schedule was checked for accuracy and completeness. The interview schedule was then numbered serially, edited, coded, and keyed into the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) version 21. Mainly, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The descriptive analyses were presented in tables using frequencies and percentages. The Binary Logistic Regression Model was used to analyse the relationships between motivations for migration and the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The socio-demographic characteristics of the returnees were treated as the explanatory variable while their main motivations for migration were captured as the outcome variable. Data from the in-depth interview (IDI) guide were also edited, cleaned and manually transcribed verbatim. Afterwards, they were organized thematically and analyzed manually. The narrative approach (direct quotations from the patterns that emerged from the analysis) was adopted in the presentation of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Table 1 indicate that the majority of the respondents were males (63.3%) who were young (72.5%) and were never married (61.7%). This supports the literature on migration that most migrants in sub-Saharan Africa are young adult males (Caldwell, 1968; Reed et al., 2010; Anarfi et al., 2003; Adepoju, 2004; European Union, 2006). The respondents were mostly without formal education (47.5%) and most of them belong to the Wala ethnic group (50%). The study further revealed that more than half (54.2%) of the respondents were Christians (54.2%) and this affirms data from the 2010 Population and Housing Census report that the majority of Ghanaians are Christians (over 70%) (GSS, 2012).

Influence on the decision to migrate to southern Ghana by sex of respondents

Table 2 shows that more than a third (37.7%) of the respondents were influenced to migrate by their parents/guardians followed by friends (34.2%) who had already migrated while nearly a quarter (22%) migrated on their own. Females were more influenced to migrate to cities in southern Ghana by their parents (40.3%) as compared to their male counterparts (33.3%). The study further showed that nearly about three out of ten males (28.6%) compared to about two out of ten females (18.1) decided on their own to travel to cities in the south.

The fact that a higher percentage of males migrated on their own could be due to the fact that males are generally more adventurous than females or perhaps women in the study area are still socio-culturally stereotyped which often limits their ability to take decisions on their own. The current evidence, to an extent challenges the general view that migration in Africa is feminizing where women migrate independently as men without socio-cultural restrictions. In general (Table 2), parents or guardians and friends mostly influence the youth to migrate to the south in the Wa West District. However, the fact that most of the respondents in the Wa West District migrated because of some influence could be mainly due to the element of ignorance on the part of potential migrants about the advantages and disadvantages of the destination as observed by Lee (1966). In this context, feedbacks from the destination are essential for the migration decisions of future migrants as opined by Mabogunje (1970).

In an in-depth interview session held with a female non-migrant on how non-migrants in the study area get influenced by relatives to migrate to southern Ghana was reported:

"*You see my son, some of our young children migrate because of parental influences just because others have traveled and brought with them electronic gadgets and new bicycles. Apart from that, some of the young people in this community migrate on their own with the main aim of going out to gain exposure. They want to learn new lifestyles which are not in this village. Example, if someone returns from south and looks polish and acquire a lot of consumer durables with their lifestyles and appearance changed, you see others would want to be like them by migrating as well. But what they do not know is that everyone has his/her luck".* [A female non-migrant aged 58 years from Siriyiri community].

Destinations and reasons for choice of destinations

Table 3 shows that the most preferred destination of the respondents was Ashanti Region (56.6%) followed by Brong Ahafo region (35%). This confirms what Geest et al. (2010) had observed that migrants from Northern Ghana predominantly settle in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions. However, with regard to those respondents who migrated out of their localities because of jobs or better living conditions, Ashanti Region (57.5%) was their preferred destination followed by Brong Ahafo region (32.5%). The main reason for this exodus as found corroborates with Caldwell (1968), and Anarfi et al. (2003) who observed that the incentives for most north-south migrants is the desire to enjoy better livelihoods at their destinations. For those who traveled out because of modern lifestyles and prestigious considerations, the results showed that Ashanti (60.8%) and Greater Accra (35.2%) were their ideal destinations while no respondent considered Eastern Region.

The fact that Ashanti and Greater Accra regions

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents.

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	76	63.3
Female	44	36.7
Age		
15-24	30	25.0
25-34	57	47.5
35-44	21	17.5
45-54	8	6.7
44-64	4	3.3
Marital status		
Single	74	61.7
Married	45	37.5
Divorced	1.0	0.8
Educational level		
None	57	47.5
Primary	19	15.8
JHS/MSL	13	10.8
SHS/VOC/TECH	25	20.8
Tertiary	6	5.0
Religious affiliation		
Christianity	65	54.2
Islam	47	39.2
Traditional	8	6.7
Ethnicity		
Dagaaba	44	36.7
Wala	60	50.0
Briefo	11	9.1
Others	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

Table 2. Influence on the decision to migrate to southern Ghana by sex of the respondents.

Sources of influence	Sex of respondents (%)		
	Male	Female	Total
Parents/guardians	33.3	40.3	37.7
Friends already migrated	31.0	36.1	34.2
Siblings	7.1	5.6	6.1
Self	28.6	18.1	22.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

featured as the most preferred destinations for gaining modern lifestyles or prestige was expected because they are the two most developed regions in Ghana noted for all modern infrastructural facilities (GSS, 2012). Overall, the study has shown that a destination is worth migrating to only when there is a higher surety of modern lifestyles and jobs than their origin.

A 30 year old female returnee and a 28 year old male returnee made the following revelations about migrants' destination selection criteria. According to them, the respect and prestige accorded returnees from their destinations is what informed future migrants' choice of

Table 3. Destinations and reasons for choice of destinations.

Selection criteria	Region of destination (%)				
	Ashanti	Gt. Accra	Brong-Ahafo	Western	Eastern
Jobs/better conditions	57.5	5.0	32.5	5.0	0.0
Friends/relative	55.0	0.0	30.0	15.0	0.0
Social amenities	33.4	33.3	33.3	0.0	0.0
Modernity and prestige	60.8	35.2	2.0	2.0	0.0
Total	56.6	1.	35.0	5.0	1.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

destinations saying that:

"*If you go elsewhere and come back people will not respect you at all. All what they usually say is that you did not get to Kumasi so you are still a "Kurasini[1]". If someone returns from a destination and grows lean, you do not go there, you are always interested in people who have brought bicycles, tape recorders, mobile phones, sewing machines, bed and mattress and have their lifestyles changed and their physical appearances improved". [A female returnee aged 30 from Bamkpama; and a male returnee aged 28 from Beriyase community].*

Drivers of north-south migration in the Wa West District

Table 4 reveals that three main underlying factors account for frequent out migration of youth in the study area namely: Immediate deteriorating factors at origin, intermediary pull factors at destination (bright lights) and aftermath origin push factors (known as migration feedbacks of return migrants). Further analysis showed that both males and females migrated largely because feedbacks of returnees from southern destinations (42.6%) followed by immediate deteriorating push factors at origin (33.7%). In terms of sex, however, the results indicate that more females (47.6%) than males (40%) migrated due to migration feedbacks of return migrants. This evidence controverts the argument by the new economics of labour migration model (Harris and Todaro, 1970), that migrants compare their potential economic gains vis-a-vis their losses and migrate when the gains outweigh the losses. Losses do not seem to play a role in this context perhaps because economic gains at the destination can only be perceived by living there but not by mere calculation at origin.

The study supports what has been articulated in the conceptual framework (Figure 2) where immediate deteriorating push factors at the places of origin(e.g. environmental conditions, erratic rainfall etc.) are the first and foremost factors that stimulate out-migration intention

but lack the ability to propel the actual out-migration. According to this model, the immediate deteriorating factors at origin are less significant compared to migration feedbacks of returnees because migrants might have adjusted to accept these situations at the origin as normal, or develop adaptive strategies towards these conditions with the view that they are everywhere. This finding further goes to buttress what Manuh (2001) had intimated in his study that migration is a "tried and tested strategy" for dealing with the deteriorating economic and social conditions at origin but contradicts Lee's (1966) observation that the main drivers for rural out-migration is due to deteriorating origin factors and perceived destination pull factors (known as bright lights).

An in-depth interview held with a 21 year old female returnee from Bamkpama community reinforce the magnitude of the level of influence migration feedbacks (such as showcase of economic returns, and sub-cultural values) play in the migration decisions of non-migrants:

"*My friends who migrated to Ashanti region returned with many nice things like new towels, sandals, cups, spectacles and watches. When they returned they were no longer sitting with us as we used to sit together and talk. They called each other by names 'bora' and whenever they met they were always speaking the 'Twi' Language. So I was impressed and also joined them when they were going. I also returned with a six battery tape, now they also call me 'bora'. I can also speak the 'Twi' Language now so my house people do not allow me to even fetch water by myself to bath. I sit down only to be told to go in and bath".* [A 21 year old female returnee from Bamkpama community].

This was the remarks another male returnee aged 29 years made about migration feedbacks of return migrants:

"*The first people who went to Brong Ahafo to farm came with bicycles and everyone in this village gave them praises. I got up one day and said I will show them so I also went to Techiman farmed and had money and bought two 'Phoenix bicycles' and brought them home, gave one to my uncle and kept one for myself, then my uncle advise me to marry and I got married that year,*

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[1] A villager in this study is someone who has never migrated out of the village to a recognized urban area*

Table 4. Drivers of north-south migration in the Wa West District.

Sex	Deteriorating factors at origin	Pull-factors at destination	Migration feedbacks of returnees
Male	33.5	26.9	39.6
Female	34.1	18.3	47.6
Total	33.7	23.7	42.6

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

Table 5. Specific migration feedbacks by demographic profile of respondents.

Socio-demographic	Migration Feedbacks from destinations (%)					
	Modern lifestyles and appearances	Language and southern names	Influence at return	investment at return	Consumer durables	Total
Sex						
Male	43.3	6.0	10.3	5.6	34.8	66.2
Female	48.7	6.7	11.8	2.5	30.3	33.8
Marital status						
Single	40.3	5.0	10.8	3.6	40.3	39.5
Married	5.3	7.2	11.1	34.1	42.3	59.1
Divorced	19.0	0.0	21.0	0.0	60.0	1.4
Age						
15-24	42.8	5.0	10.1	5.7	36.4	45.2
25-34	42.4	6.5	13.1	4.3	33.7	26.1
35-44	34.8	4.8	12.7	5.7	42.0	17.9
45-54	0.0	8.3	4.2	54.2	33.3	6.8
55-64	5.1	21.4	7.1	30.7	35.7	4.0
Education						
No education	42.9	7.1	10.7	4.8	34.5	47.7
Primary	44.1	4.2	6.9	1.7	43.1	16.5
Junior high school	42.6	0.0	14.9	8.5	34.0	13.4
Senior high school	46.1	10.8	7.7	4.6	30.8	18.5
Tertiary	23.6	0.0	28.6	0.0	47.8	4.0
Ethnicity						
Brifo	36.1	2.8	19.4	2.8	38.9	13.1
Wala	47.9	7.7	8.9	5.9	29.6	48.0
Dagaaba	35.0	5.8	10.9	3.0	45.3	38.9

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

piece the and even everybody is of meat in my soup has increased because they used to give me the heads or the legs anytime they killed a fowl" [A 29 year old male returnee from Beriyase community].

Specific migration feedbacks by demographic profile of respondents

From the results (Table 5), it was generally observed that both socio-cultural values of return migrants (modern lifestyles/improved physical appearances, acquisition of southern names/languages and returnees' influence at return) and migrants' economic returns (such as consumer durables goods and investment of former migrants) are among factors shaping north-south migration pattern in the Wa West District. However, it was discovered that the main reason accounting for frequent youth out-migration in the study area was mostly due to the quest for improved modern lifestyles/improved physical appearances followed by the desire to acquire consumer durables goods exhibited by return migrants. For instance, among respondents aged 15-24 and 25-34 years 42.8 and 42.4% respectively indicated that modern lifestyles of return migrants was the main motivating factor for their out-migration. This was followed by 36.4

and 33.7% respectively who noted that the desire for consumer durable goods were the main reason for their migration to the south.

In general, age demonstrated some level by influence on the respondents' reasons for migrating where respondents who were young were influenced by the desire for modern lifestyles compared to those who were elderly. In the above revelations, young migrants' desire to experience modern lifestyles contradict findings of Harris and Todaro (1970), Nakosteen and Zimmer (1980), Mills and Hazarika (2001) and Todaro and Smith (2003). They established that economic incentives (e.g. higher income differentials between stagnant rural sectors and urban sectors) are the main forces driving rural out migration in many parts of the world.

This finding, however, confirms the basic assumptions of the conceptual framework (Figure 1) and Zelinsky's (1971) observation that the majority of people who migrate out of their communities are driven by socio-cultural returns. This buttresses the mobility transition hypothesis that migration is part of the economic and social changes inherent in the modernization process. The implication is that rural dwellers yearn to catch up with the rapid transforming world. That is desire to do away with a lifestyle they perceived as "village life" to adopting the so-called "urban/city life" (Urban fashions, mode of interaction, hair styles etc.) which also inform migrants' choice of a particular destination (Table 3). The finding further validates the argument by Crawford's (1973) cognitive model that rural-urban migrants make a conscious decision to migrate based on more than just economic considerations but depends on values of migration outcomes and expectations. This notwithstanding, it was not also surprising that a comparatively large number of the respondents who were young (15 to 44 years) also migrated because of clamour for consumer durable goods. This might be because it is within that age category that marriage is considered ideal in most societies, in particular Ghana (Anarfi et al., 2003). It is, thus, possible that these respondents might have migrated with the primary aim of obtaining the required consumer durable goods for marriage.

With respect to sex, however, it was found that young females (48.7%) were more likely to migrate to cities in southern Ghana to gain improved modern lifestyles/physical appearances as compared to their male' counterparts (43.3%) who migrated mostly with the sole aim of acquiring consumer durable goods (34.8%) such as bicycles, farm implements and the like. This was obviously expected because young girls are usually noted for their flair for body beauty and modern lifestyles in most Ghanaian societies. Also, regarding the fact that a large number of young males were largely pushed to migrate to southern Ghana because of lust for consumer durable goods was further anticipated since in the Ghanaian social structure, males are mandated by tradition to be the breadwinners of their families, and this

could be the reason why most males migrated for nothing but to acquire consumer durable goods.

Furthermore, these revelations are firmly supported by some qualitative evidence obtained from some key informants regarding the role of migration feedbacks in their out-migration decisions. The excerpts below are some of the most common views expressed by the respondents. In an in-depth interview, a female informant aged 23 reported how her desire to learn modern lifestyles and acquire consumer durable goods lure her to migrate to Kumasi:

"*When the girls return, they are always looking fresh and coloured, some even curl/perm their hair and look very nice. You will see them always walking together and be speaking the 'Twi' language and when you don't understand, they will tell you the meaning of what they have said in our local language (Wali), because of that I was encouraged to also migrate because when you migrate out and return you always become a new person in the community*" [A female returnee aged 23 from Disesi community].

In another in-depth interview session, a male returnee had this to say about his first migration to the south:

"*For me, the lifestyles and the property my school mates displayed when they traveled and returned made me go there. You see my friends whom I completed junior high school with took the bold step and migrated to cities in the southern parts of Ghana and everybody was impressed in the village. They came back with things like mattresses, mats, carpets and gadgets with their names changed to the days they were born (southern names). Sir, when my friends returned, I look odd each time I was with them in the village square. They catch so much attention from people than me. So what I did was I discussed with my father and he supported me to leave for Techiman. But I was not lucky like my friends. I was seriously sick so I could not get enough money to buy a bicycle but I was able to purchase room carpet and few clothes for my family. But today my friends respect me too. I was born with the name 'Tong' but when I went to the south I was named 'Kwaku' in line with the day I was born and now my friends call me by that name till date*" [A male returnee aged 25 from Beriyase community].

The study further revealed that a higher number of the never married category (40.3%) migrated mainly because of their search for modern lifestyles/improved body appearances showcased by the 'have ever gone' return migrants. This implies that young unmarried people are most likely to pursue modern fashions and improve physical appearances than married couples perhaps as a way of helping them to get suitable life partners. It was also discovered in the study that respondents' reasons for migrating varied with their level of education. As
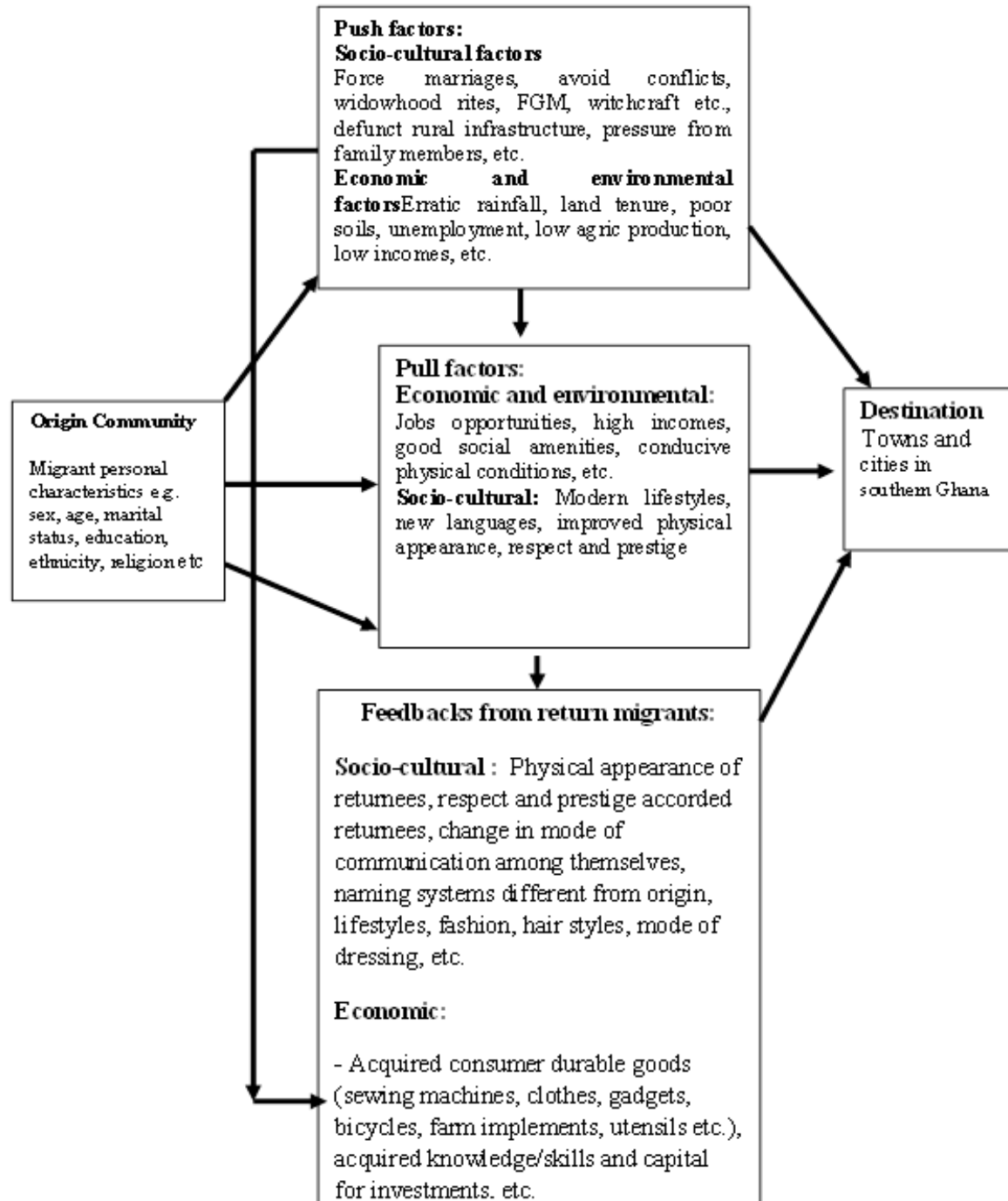
Figure 1. Conceptual framework for rural out-migration. Source: Adapted from Lee (1966) and Harris and Todaro (1976).

shown in Table 5, while a large proportion of those without formal education (42.9%), primary (44.1%), junior high (42.6%) and senior high (46.1%) migrated to cities in the south mainly because of their desire to gain exposure to modern lifestyles and improve their physical appearances, it was found that those with tertiary level education (47.8%) did so because of consumer durable

goods. In terms of ethnicity, it was revealed that respondents who were of Wala origin migrated to southern Ghana because of modern lifestyles/facilities/ improved physical appearances (47.9%) followed by the Brifo tribe (36.1%) as compared to the Dagaaba tribe (45.3%) who migrated mainly because of their desire to acquire consumer durable goods which were

Table 6. Relationship between migrants' socio-demographic characteristics and motivation for migration.

Background characteristics	Coef.	Odds ratio	Z	P>|z|
Sex (ref. female)				
Male	0.037	1.090	0.18	0.858
Marital status (ref. Singles)				
Married	-0.252	0.664	-0.57	0.566
Age (ref.15-24)				
25-34	-0.033	0.954	-0.06	0.949
35-44	0.333	1.679	0.60	0.551
>45	0.114	1.201	0.19	0.850
Education (ref. formal education)				
Basic	-0.118	0.793	0.497	0.232
Secondary	-1.173	0.141	-2.16*	0.032*
Religion (ref. traditional)				
Islam	0.489	2.198	0.73	0.461
Christians	0.147	1.292	0.29	0.788
Ethnicity (ref. Brifo)				
Waala	-0.298	0.900	-1.90*	0.057
Dagaaba	-0.047	0.139	-0.31	0.757
Destination (ref . Brong Ahafo)				
Ashanti	-0.447	0.456	-0.77	0.439
Greater Accra	-0.405	1.354	-1.90*	0.058

R^2 = 0.1249; P =   0.034; Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: χ^2 = 6.127; P = 0.633; Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients: χ^2 = 10.55; P = 0.045; *P≤ 0.05.

demonstrated by return migrants.

Relationship between migrants' socio-demographic characteristics and motivation for migration

The study further employed a more robust technique, the binary logistic regression model, to estimate the relationship between internal migrants' motivation for migration and their background characteristics (Table 6). The outcome variable which is the motivation for migration was deconstructed into a dummy outcome, socio-cultural values of return migrants (which included modern lifestyles/improved physical appearances, acquisition of southern names and languages, and level of influence/respect at return) and economic returns of returnees (measured by consumer durable goods and investments of returnees). The former was coded as 0 and the latter 1, given that economic reason is deemed the main push factor for migration (Harris and Todaro, 1976). The estimates of the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficient [χ^2 = 6.127; P = 0.633] and the Hosmer and Lemeshow test of goodness- of- fit [χ^2 = 10.55; P = 0.045] established that the logit model is a good predictor of the phenomenon under investigation (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2010). Specifically, the results showed that level of

education, ethnicity and destination are the significant determinants for North-South migration among the people of the District. As regards level of education, the study established that those with secondary education were 0.141 times less likely to migrate because of economic reasons compared to those with no formal education. This suggests that secondary school graduates were more probable to travel because of socio-cultural reasons as opposed to economic motives.

A similar pattern was observed for those with basic education, though not significant. An inverse relationship was observed between ethnicity and internal migration with the Wala ethnic group having higher odds of not migrating due to economic drivers (odds = 0.141; Z = -1.90) compared to the reference category, the Brifos. Contrarily, migrants whose destination was Greater Accra were by a factor of 1.354 more probable to visit because of social cultural motives unlike those who migrated to Brong Ahafo. The evidence denotes that variation exists in motives for migration as regards to destination. Unlike past studies (Adepoju, 2004; European Union, 2006; Anarfi et al., 1999) that have observed significant relationship between sex of migrants and motivation for migration, this study found no significant association between the two. However, it is worth noting that the regression coefficient points out that males were likely to migrate because of economic drives relative to their

Table 7. Reasons for re-migrating in future.

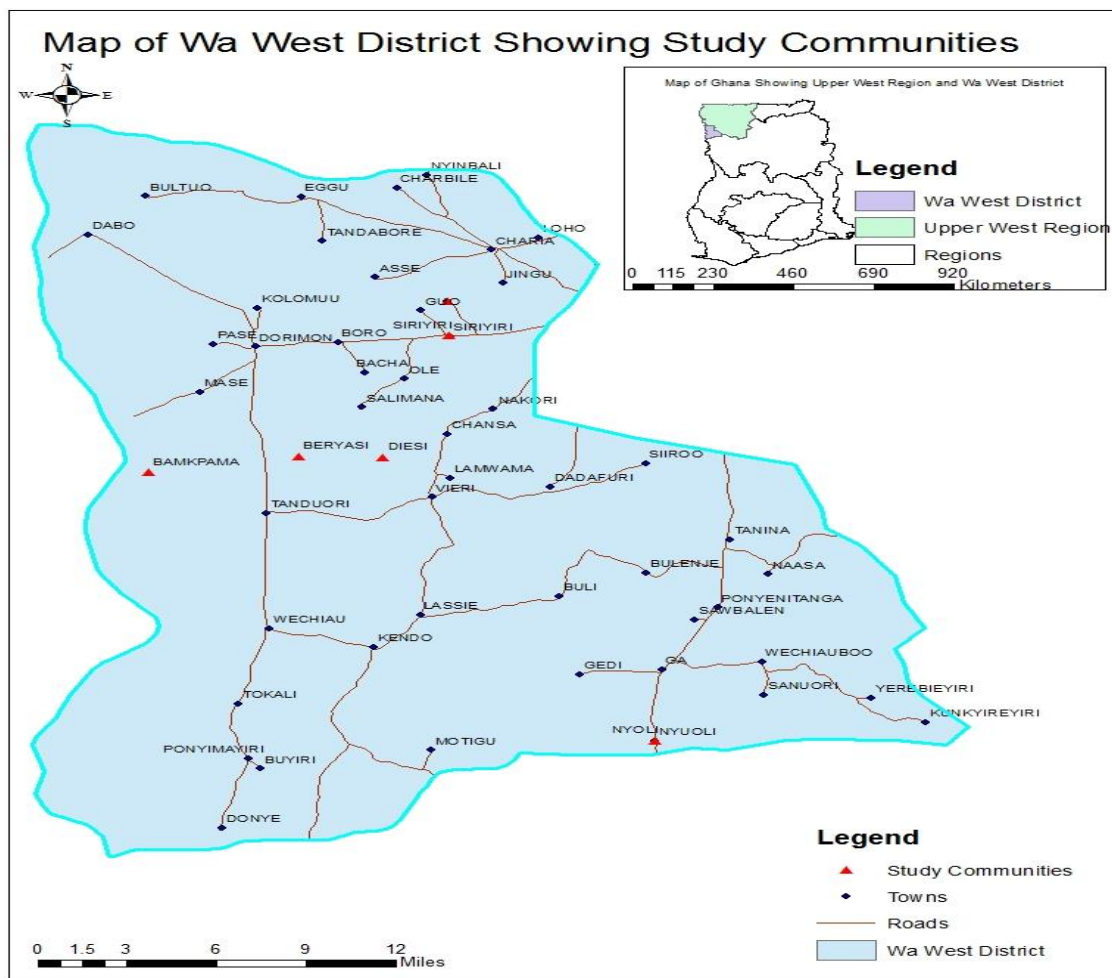| Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Seasonal nature of production	56	46.7
Low incomes	12	10.0
Gain exposure (see the world)	45	37.5
Pressure to get married	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

Figure 2. Map of Wa West District showing the study areas. Source: Wa West District Assembly (2014).

female counterparts which confirm the findings obtained in Table 5.

Intentions to migrate again in future and reasons

The last objective of the study was to interrogate the re-migration intentions of the respondents. This was important to do because it has serious policy implications particularly for institutions responsible for managing migration issues in Ghana. From the analyses, it was observed that most (69.2%) of the respondents although they have already migrated before, still express their desire to re-migrate in future. When asked about their main reasons for re-migrating (Table 7), nearly about half (46.7%) of them lamented over the seasonal nature of agricultural activities (single rainfall maxima) in the area followed by the desire to gain more exposure (37.5%).

This implies that the WWD will continue to lose its productive youth to rural out-migration if steps are not taken by duty bearers to address youth unemployment arising from the seasonal nature of agricultural activities. However, this could be checked if substantial investments are made by government to provide irrigational facilities and incentives to attract the youth into agriculture.

Conclusions

This study attempts to resolve the controversy on whether economic returns or migrants' sub-cultural values determine the frequent out-migration of young people from the Wa West District of the Upper West region of Ghana. The results reveal that most rural out-migrants in the Wa West District are influenced to migrate by their parents/guardians but females are more likely to migrate than males. This was expected because in recent times socio-cultural norms are no longer restrictive on female migration. However, the implications of autonomous migration of females from rural to urban centres have been widely documented in the literature (Ardayfio-Schandorf and Awumbila, 2005; Tanle and Awusabo-Asare, 2007; Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008).

The study also indicates that Ashanti Region (56.6%) followed by Brong Ahafo Region (35%) are the two preferred destinations for most migrants from the Wa West District and jobs availability as well as modern facilities are the two factors migrants consider in choosing their respective destinations. This has implications on the total populations of these two regions (Ashanti and Brong Ahafo) and the use of natural resources, particularly farmlands since most seasonal migrants from the Upper West region engaged in farming in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions (Geest et al., 2010; Yelsang, 2013). The study further shows that exhibit of migration feedbacks by return migrants (notably sub-cultural values) are the main drivers shaping current north-south migration patterns in the Wa West District. Specifically, the results indicate that the strong desire of non-migrants to experience modern lifestyles/facilities, improved their physical appearances and acquire consumer durable goods are the overriding factors determining the persistent out-migration of youth in the Wa West District.

Results from a binary logistic regression model showed that level of education, ethnicity and destination are the significant determinants of north-south migration among the people of the District. The implication is that as far as the development gap between the north and the south continues to persist, people from the Wa West District and elsewhere in the underdeveloped north will continue to migrate to cities in the south to enable them have a feel of modern lifestyles/facilities and to acquire some consumer durable goods required for sustenance.

Sadly, the study revealed that most of the respondents interviewed intended to re-migrate to cities in Southern Ghana and the main reason cited was unemployment resulting from seasonal agricultural productivity. This paper contributes to the growing discourse on rural out-migration in Northern Ghana, and concludes that the current drivers of north-south migration, unlike other studies are mainly due to migration feedbacks of return migrants, in particular feedbacks emanating from socio-cultural values such as modern lifestyles.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

To reverse or minimize the current north-south migration pattern from the Wa West District, there is the need for conscious efforts by government and other relevant NGOs to make investments in Northern Ghana to bridge the gap in development between the northern and southern Ghana. For instance, the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) which seeks to transform the north could be repackaged with the needed technical and capital resources to execute its mandate of narrowing the development gap between the north and the south. One key area which needs to be addressed immediately is modernization of agricultural activities in the study area through all-year-round irrigation farming, supply of all needed agricultural inputs and ready market for farm produce. This is critical because most of the respondents interviewed in the study expressed a strong desire to re-migrate in future due to the seasonal nature of agricultural production in the study area. This implies that the current north-south migration pattern will continue to persist if concrete measures are not taken to modernize agricultural activities.

Moreover, there is the need for intensive education (behavioural change communication programmes) for both return migrants and non-migrants particularly regarding the dangers and risks associated with north-south migration. This can be done by promoting the formation of Youth Clubs among migrants and non-migrants since this will serve as medium for sensitizing potential migrants regarding the risk involved in migrating to the south. This could be strategically implemented through partnerships between state and non-state actors such as the National Population Council, the National Youth Employment Ministry and the International Organization for Migration.

Finally, the study recommends that rigorous academic studies on this topic should be replicated throughout the three northern regions to actually ascertain the underlying drivers of current north-south migration in Ghana. This will help generate sufficient empirical evidence to guide development planners in addressing the north-south migration phenomenon sustainably. This is needed since the loss of rural populations from northern Ghana to urban centres in southern Ghana is often bemoaned (in

both political and academic circles) for its implied adverse effect on rural and urban development management.

Conflict of interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

A survey of university students' views on the nature and significance of nicknames to the Shona people of Zimbabwe

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Nicknames are an integral part of human experience in many cultures in the world over, and some scholars believe that they have a cultural significance to the relevant society. This study is a report of a survey of a purposively sampled group of fifty Great Zimbabwe University students' views, gathered through a questionnaire, on nick-name usage among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe. The group of respondents comprised students, in their first semester at university, drawn from across the Zimbabwean social and dialectical divide. In this study, only nick-names used by the Shona people were predominant because the researcher's first language is Shona and it was, therefore, felt that interpretation would be easier. Some people may think that nicknames are a trivial phenomenon of human existence but this survey revealed that they are significant to both bearers and users and are an indispensable aspect of human existence. Some may be used for convenience of usage while others may reflect the bearer's behaviour, physical appearance, social status in life or simply an important incident in a person's life. Yet others have personality traits of their carriers embedded in them. It could also be argued that some of these names are used arbitrarily while others are an important reflection of and offer important insights into the relevant people's norms, values and history and the cultural intrusion of the West, particularly with short forms of actual names which bearers were given at birth.

Key words: Nicknames, semiotics, onomasticon, dialectical, significance, Shona-speaking.

INTRODUCTION

Nicknames, like the first names that human beings acquire at birth, are an inherent characteristic of human existence. Kuranchie (2012) asserts that it is an incontrovertible fact that nicknaming has been a common practice in various arenas of human endeavour in many societies since ages. The scholar further argues that

researchers consequently have long studied the practice in various arenas of human experience, and have observed that people use varieties of them, depending on their norms and values.

A significant number of other studies have been carried out on naming in various communities (Neethling, 2005;

De Klerk and Bosch, 1997, 1998; Mehrabian and Piercy, 1993; Phillips, 1990), and this study seeks to augment such studies by focusing on university students' views on the nature and significance of nickname usage among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe. The open-ended questionnaire used to solicit data from fifty student informants yielded interesting insights into how the Shona people of Zimbabwe use nicknames. About 70% of the Zimbabwean population speaks Shona (which also has many dialects) (Hachipola, 1998) hence the researcher's interest in an aspect relevant to a population of this magnitude.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Naming is an important phenomenon of human experience, and has mainly acted as an integral aspect which enables people to identify others and make distinctions between individuals in a society. In Zimbabwe, and many other societies, every human has a name, a birthright, given to them at birth and, these are normally registered with the Registrar of Births and Deaths, a department under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Kuranchie (2012) observe that "In all cultural settings, every individual is accorded a name after birth, perhaps, to give a unique identity to the child. At birth, parents or senior members in the family give personal names to the new born baby which he/she may retain throughout his/her life, unless, for some reason, they opt to officially change them through marriage or some other social factor". Kuranchie (2012) concurs, saying true names are acquired at birth through culturally-accepted arrangements.

Many studies have been carried out on naming in different societies, which include Morgan et al. (1979), Afful (2007), Alleton (1981), de Klerk and Bosch (1997, 1998) and Liao (2006). Neethling (2005) posits that:

"…one could ostensibly generalize and say that some sort of motivation always exists whenever any entity, human or non-human, is named . . . where the motivation is somewhat obscured, the meaningfulness of the name makes it easy to trace: the name carrier (or his family or friends) has an explanation at hand."

Neethling (2005) further observes that "A nickname is considered to be a derived form of Old English *eacan* meaning 'also', relating to its role as an additional name evolving subsequent to the assigning of the first name. In the English speaking world, a 'nickname' has certain connotations, often dealing with a characteristic feature, physical or, of the name bearer. The nickname may also be pejorative. Neethling (2005) further contends that these are additional first names that could replace or function in place of the bestowed first name at birth.

Phillips (1990) defines a nickname as a subset of informal or unfixed names for someone, usually addressed by acquaintances and asserts that since such names are unofficial, only familiar people call the nicknamed by those names. Lin (2007) also observes that, unlike personal names (first name and surname), nicknames may vary from time to time and even from group to group, depending on familiarity and relations between interlocutors or amongst group members. Liao (2006) states that nicknames are informal names that are not registered at the Civil Registration Office in Taiwan. Other scholars argue that nicknames are also viewed as 'little names' and 'milk names' which are not the official name (Alleton, 1981; Blum, 1997). Fang and Heng (1983) share a similar view of nicknames and consider them as milk names which are only used within a family or among intimate friends. Lin (2007) concurs that a nickname is an informal term for an individual, often used by members in a particular community of practice. In a study carried out in Ghana, Afful (2007) states that address forms which include nicknames are used in various social domains such as politics, workplace and academia. According to Neethling (2005), a nickname is a name added to those names the name carrier already has. He postulates that they are often developed among acquaintances and that nicknames represent familiarity, intimacy and solidarity. Nicknames serve a range of functions over and above the typically referential function of the first names; they are frequently semantically transparent and their usage reveals insights into the characteristics (personal and physical) of their bearers, as well as into their role in society (Leslie, 1990; McDowell, 1981; van Langendonck, 1983; de Klerk and Bosch, 1998). It is clear, from the earlier mentioned observations, that a significant defining aspect of nicknames is that they are unofficial or additional and, unlike first names, they are bestowed upon their bearers not only by parents but also by peers and other members of the respective community of the bearer.

In this study, the term 'nickname', referred to in Shona as *zita remadunhurirwa*, is used broadly as an umbrella term referring to whatever unofficial or additional names given subsequent to the official, which individuals acquire (for various reasons) as they progress through life. The names given here should be treated as a mere sample, never claiming to be exhaustive or subject to generalisation.

Theoretical framework

The research is rooted in the field of semiotics which is considered as best encapsulating this culturally-significant phenomenon of nicknaming. According to Eco (1977), every cultural entity becomes a semiotic sign. It is, therefore, argued here, that nicknames are a cultural convention and interpretation of such is key to unraveling the values of people of a given culture. Semiotics (or

semiology, according to one of the founding fathers of semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure), is a field of study that is concerned with signs and/or signification (the process of creating meaning). It is the dominant term used for the science of signs (http://www.visual-memory.co.uk). This study is guided by de Saussure's semiology; the relationship between the 'signifier' (nickname) and the 'signified' (nickname bearer) as opposed to Charles Sanders Peirce and other prominent semioticians. This study focuses on the meanings generated by use of nicknames and their significance to the relevant users. It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to pursue the semiotic debates by various scholars.

Statement of the problem

Naming is an important human phenomenon, particularly meant to give bearers an identity. Likewise, each society finds it significant to give nicknames to certain members, which also act as a form of identifying them within the relevant social groups, serving different purposes as a result. From a sociolinguistic point of view, nicknaming represents a process of constructing individual identities within a group (Lin, 2007). It is the aim of this study to find out the nature and significance of nicknaming among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe, and draw insights into the cultural trends in a world where globalization is a stark reality. Literature is replete with nicknaming among various communities across the globe; the literature review in this study bears testimony to this. However, as far as it could be ascertained, there is very little literature, if any, on the nature and significance of nicknaming among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe. Hence this study is an attempt to add to the onomasticon and the existing literature on nicknames, with specific reference to the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe.

Objectives

The study sought to:

1. unpack the nature of nicknaming among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe; and
2. explore students' views on the meanings and significance of these nicknames and their social consequences.

Research questions

The research sought to answer questions which include:

3. How prevalent is the tradition of nicknaming among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe?
4. What significance do Shona nicknames place in the social lives of the people concerned?

METHODOLOGY

Fifty undergraduate Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) students' views were gathered through an open-ended questionnaire because it was considered the fastest and most convenient in view of the number of respondents involved. The students came from across Zimbabwe's social and dialectical divide. In design, the study is a survey, which sought to solicit for views on the nature and significance of nicknaming among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), "Survey research is an appropriate mode of inquiry for making inferences about a large group of people based on data drawn from a relatively small number of individuals in that group." The researcher also engaged an interpretive analysis of the nicknames given, in an attempt to find their semiotic significance to the relevant people.

Population

The population comprised of undergraduate students at GZU from the Faculties of Arts, Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Commerce, Education and Social Sciences.

Sample

Fifty students from the Faculty of Education, specializing in Bachelor of Education Degrees and aspiring to become teachers, were sampled. Their ages ranged between eighteen and forty years, and were in their first semester. They were asked to give the nicknames they used, or heard others use and their meanings. They were further requested to comment on their possible significance to the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe. Only Shona-speaking students were purposively sampled because they were able to understand the meanings of the nicknames given by the relevant people and the researcher had easy access because he taught them the module Communication Skills then. The researcher found these students conveniently placed to cooperate and contribute significantly to the success of the study. Thus, Punch (2006) asserts that purposive sampling is the term often used; it means sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind. Punch (2006), argues that all research, including qualitative research, involves sampling; no study, whether quantitative, qualitative or both can include everything: "you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything." As such, this research focused on the views of students on the dynamics of nicknaming among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study generally indicate that the Zimbabwean society at large, just like many others, is in flux due to globalization and, as such, its citizens' attitudes and nick/naming trends have been infiltrated mostly by Western cultures, particularly the English (bearing in mind that Zimbabwe is a former colony of Britain and even after independence in 1980, one of the remnants of colonial domination is that the country continues to use the English Language both as the official language and language of instruction in the classroom). The data, in this study, comprise a sample of

nicknames used among the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe. Whereas most of the nicknames are Shona, others are English. Only the nicknames reported by fifty Shona-speaking informants from Great Zimbabwe University, drawn from across the country's dialectical and social divide, were included in this analysis.

This study makes an interpretive analysis of nicknames given in an attempt to find their semiotic significance. The researcher's perceived distinction of nicknames which were reported into two broad categories of the negatively and positively. This is supported by Kuranchie (2012) who says, certain names are generally considered desirable and have positive feelings associated with them while others are humiliating and are looked down upon. Wilson (1998) concurs that, while some students cherish their nicknames, others hate and cannot stand them. Kuranchie (2012) contend that, some nicknames have strongly negative meanings, and are often disliked by their bearers while users insist on their usage to mock or tease their peers. According to Neethling (2005), "Certain names are generally considered desirable and have positive feelings associated with them while others are humiliating and are looked down upon as being undesirable and carry negative connotations." Focus is on the nature and meaning/significance of such nicknames with some derived from base forms (as indicated in this study) while others are a miscellany of unique creativities of their users. Table 1 present the nicknames obtained from respondents and either give their origins or offer their meanings in English where Shona names are involved. After each table, the researcher interprets and discusses the results, an approach that was considered more economical and focused.

The respondents gave various reasons for the use of such short forms (as given in Table 1) which include that they are used as short forms of original names for endearment when children were young. The other reason given was that they were used for convenience of calling and that at a particular time, the use of the suffices such as /s/ and /y/ (as in *Welas, Chinos, Tigs* on one hand and *Tady,* Benjy and Toby) on the other were considered as trendy and people would use them, perhaps, to maintain group cohesion and were generally positively perceived by their bearers and users. These findings confirm the observations by other researchers, as highlighted earlier on in this report, that some nicknames were found desirable (Wilson, 1988; Neethling, 2005; Kuranchie, 2012). De Klerk and Bosch (1998) argue that some nicknames might be regarded as fairly reliable indicators of trends and attitudes. It was observed in some studies that such names were meant for convenience of texting in this day of constant typing and texting (http//b.scorecardresearch.com).

It could also be argued that such short forms, while they could be used for convenience of calling, may also have a historical antecedent in the form of the indigenous people's contact with their colonial 'master' from the west, and the consequent cultural infiltration. Hence, it is argued, we give our newborn children names that used to be nicknames; Jack (a nickname for John) is a very popular boys' name, Emma (the variation of Emily) was number two on the list (in a study) of popular girls' names (http//b.scorecardresearch.com). De Klerk and Bosch (1998) argue that, in defining nicknames, many writers choose to exclude from their analysis those names which are obvious short forms or derivatives of their first names but it is these forms which offer important insights into the social relations within a cultural group. As such, this study has attempted to address this gap in researches on naming and nicknaming in society. In the earlier mentioned examples, some nicknames evolve linguistically from first names while others display users' ability to coin a referent for example, *Tinto* for *Tendai*, *Tini* for *Tinotenda, Toby* for Tobias, *Tadi* for *Tadiwa*, *Tamas* for *Tamanikwa*, *Kudzy* for *Kudzanai* and *Chinos* for *Chinongo*. Thus Kuranchie (2012) observes that some names develop affectionate forms with an endearment effect. Such nicknames, confirm the observation that their use depends on familiarity and relationships between interlocutors (Fang and Heng, 1983; Lin, 2007). Neethling (2005) concurs that they represent familiarity, intimacy and solidarity. The respondents reported that these nicknames were positively perceived and their bearers liked them, thus confirming findings obtained in other studies. The researcher attributes this liking to the fact that these were short forms of actual names used by the bearers and were found on their identification particulars.

Some scholars further argue that some names are related to the job one does or a physical condition or even to shorten a real first name; they can be situational (http//b.scorecardre.com). For example, when young children learn to speak, their speech is awkward and they cannot pronounce certain words correctly and whatever becomes apparently interesting may stick as a referent. Table 2 gives examples of such names and nicknames, which help to confirm this observation made elsewhere by other researchers in this field.

In Table 2, nicknames like *Ajoli, Ati, Titi* and *Umbo* evolved from bearers' defective speech abilities when they were young while *Mazhambe, Mukoko, Makwindi, Bope* and *Zobha* were found to be situational, attributed to some character traits of the bearers as explained in the Table 2. Thus, they became additional names that evolved subsequent to the bearers' first names (Neethling, 2005). In the latter case, bearers were reported to dislike the referents because they were considered derogatory, established by users to mock certain character traits of the bearers. In support of this outcome, Neethling (2005) observes that some nicknames have connotations. Table 3 gives some names given to allude to some attributes of bearers.

The nicknames in Table 3attempt to illustrate the observation by some scholars that nicknames cannot

Table 1. Nicknames that evolve linguistically from or are derivatives of first names (trendy) or have a cohesive significance.

Original name	Sex	Short form
Tapiwa	M	*Taps*
Chiwera	M	*Welas*
Tigere	M	*Tigs*
Mapako	M	*Pakos*
Tamanikwa	M	*Tamas*
Chinongo	M	*Chinos*
Kudzanai (Respect each other)	M	*Kudzy*
Tobias	M	Toby
Garikai	M	*Gary/Gatso*
Benjamin	M	Benjy
Tadiwa (We are loved,perhaps by God)	F	*Tady*
Tendai (Be grateful)	F	*Tindo/Tendy*
Delight	F	*Deela*
Tatenda (We are grateful)	F	*Tate*
Tinotenda (We are grateful)	F	*Tini*
Dambudzo (The troublesome one)	F	Dee
Desire	M	Dee
Tavonga (We are grateful)	F	*Tavo*
Tomukudza (We are grateful to the Most High)	M	*Tomu*

Table 2. Nicknames derived from childhood tendencies, e. g. pronunciation.

Name	Sex	New name acquired
Tsitsi	F	*Titi*
Lovejoy	F	*Ajoli*
Makwindi	M	The arrogant one (when he was young)
Mazhambe	M	Cry baby (when he was still a baby)
Bope	M	Quarrelsome/easily provoked
Zobha	M	His voice is as hoarse as that of Power FM Radio presenter Dr. Zobha
Mukoko	M	Means bee-hive: at a tender age, this boy developed a passion for harvesting honey from bee-hives.
Ratidzo	F	*Ati*
Ruvimbo	F	*Umbo*

only shorten a name but can also identify a characteristic about a person (http://scorecardresearch.com). According to Neethling (2005), "A nickname might have been bestowed because of a particular event, the physical appearance of the name carrier or other social and personal traits." Nicknames like *Masvina, Pfuko, KaDora, Vakurida, Mukoko, Chikwepa, KaDora and Tepi* were found to have a derogatory effect hence their bearers tended to dislike and detest them. Table 3 also shows that males have a stronger inclination, than females, towards giving each other nicknames. These nicknames offer important insights into social relationships within a cultural group (Kuranchie, 2012). Kuranchie (2012) observe that some of these nicknames have positive, neutral or negative connotations. Nicknames like *Monya*, *Muchinda*, Big and Brown were found to have neutral effects and their bearers were found to like them. The meanings of these nicknames are an important indicator of users' perception of the bearers. Thus Holland (1990) and Alford (1987) argue that another important aspect of nicknames is their role in influencing the perceptions of their users. The translations given in Table 2 were an attempt to get as nearer as possible to the English meanings of the names, for the benefit of non-Shona-speaking readers. Neethling (2005) observes that nicknames have personality traits embedded in them and have uniqueness peculiar to a particular family or society. Shona nicknames like *Tepi* (One who is thin, not slim, a derogatory term for a girl who defies the African conception of positive attributes of a girl) and *Masvina*

Table 3. Some nicknames are given to allude to the personal attributes/habits of the bearer.

Name	Sex	Meaning
Tenda	M	Derived from the name of a bus company plying the Bulawayo-Mutare Highway (in Zimbabwe) in the late 1990s, renowned for speeding. The bearer would traverse the local villages, in search of local alcoholic brew, as if he was 'on wheels'
Masvina	M	One who is always dirty and would rarely take a bath
Pfuko	M	A type of clay pot used to store local beer brew. The bearer was known for his insatiable appetite for liquor and would take large quantities of it
Mhondoro	M	A spirit medium because he would rarely take a bath in spite of the abundance of it and would only bath, perhaps, when it rained and he fails to get shelter
Mhepo	M	A known sprinter who is as fast as the wind itself (borrowing from the Shona idiom *kuita ushamwari nemhepo* (running very fast)
Monya	M	Physically fit (giant)
Tepi	F	One who is thin, not slim (derogatory for a girl who defies the African conception of positive attributes of a girl)
Gararirimo	M	A person who drinks so much that he would be uncomfortable without some alcohol in his stomach
Vakurida	F	Old woman who likes beer too much
Gororo (ngonono)	M	One who could easily fall asleep at a gathering and would attract attention by producing these nasal sounds
Chikwepa	M	Chain smoker
Muzvamba	M	One with a very big male organ
KaDora	M	One with a very small male organ that equals a caterpillar
Big	M	Born very big
Brown	M	The bearer is light in complexion
Shorty	M	The bearer is very short
Jakachaka (plenty)	F	One who claimed to be rich in every respect one could think of
Yondo	F	Woman named after Yondo Sister, a Rhumba artist of Congolese origin because of her gyrating antics, especially when drunk
Muchinda	M	Means 'a guy'; was given to someone who had the mannerism to refer to anyone as *muchinda* as a sign of solidarity

(One who is always dirty and would rarely take a bath) have the potential to linger longer in users' minds and influence attitudes of dislike, with the effect of alienating the bearers from the groups they would be expected to associate with under normal circumstances. They could also serve as constant reminders for the bearers to reform. Thus, nicknames were found to play a significant role in the socialization process of an individual throughout his/her life.

The last group of nicknames is that of those given after television personalities/actors and other well-known individuals from the Zimbabwean society, and beyond, like *Sabhuku Varazipi* (a popular Zimbabwean comedian who took Zimbabwe by storm in 2013 and 2014, famous for his corrupt tendencies as a kraal head)*, vaMayaya* (a popular police officer in the Sabhuku Vharazipi Comedy mentioned earlier, who solicited for bribes in order to release offenders facing prosecution)*, Parafini and Mr. Bean*, also famous clowns who were very popular with children in the 1990s. In the majority of cases, the respondents said that bearers did not have anything in

common with the possessors of the names but that they were used for fun. Normally, they were found not to last very long, largely depending on how long the personality (their namesake) remained popular in social circles. They were found to be significant in as far as they constantly reminded users of these important social events and personalities.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that nicknaming is prevalent in the tradition of the Shona-speaking people of Zimbabwe and offers important insights into their cultural beliefs and values. The findings seem to confirm Neethling's (2005) observation that "Nicknames, because they act as an avenue for creativity and the expression of some of the pure enjoyment that the sounds and meanings of words can give, provide name-users and name-bearers with considerable freedom in manipulating and bending linguistic resources." While

some names are shortened forms of official names given at birth, used for convenience, some are used in such a way that they give insights into certain characteristics or behaviour traits of bearers yet others evolve from the way children pronounce their names when they are young, due to limitations in speech abilities.

The study also confirms De Klerk and Bosch's (1997) findings that all sorts of nicknames are used by people in different environments and that while some people may cherish these 'fab' names and would like to be identified with them, others may abhor and shy away from theirs. These scholars further argue that, in defining nicknames, many writers choose to exclude from their analysis those names which are obvious short forms or derivatives of their first names yet, it is these forms which offer important insights into social relationships within cultural groups. Such nicknames, used sometimes for endearment and group solidarity, have been discussed under findings, in this study, showing that nicknaming is not peculiar to Zimbabwe; it is prevalent in many other cultures in the world over as discussed under literature review.

In this study, nicknames were found to be more prevalent among males than they were among females, perhaps demonstrating the intimacy among men who, in the Zimbabwean context, seem to converge more frequently than women for various reasons for example, *dare* (a traditional gathering, in the evening, around a fire for men only) and beer-drinking parties. While the findings reveal such a discrepancy in the use of nicknames among males and females, it is beyond the scope of this study to explore gender relations. So, this leaves a gap worth pursuing in future.

This research revealed that nicknames were significant in a number of ways: they indicate users' attitudes towards bearers; they may originate from bearers' personal attributes or habits; or they may be shortened forms of bearers' official names and normally become expressions of affection and endearment. Since these are additional names, it could be argued that they appear as individuals progress through life and become unofficial referents used by those who are socially close to the bearers, thus confirming findings from other studies cited in this discourse.

All in all, nicknames should not be trivialized as they are significant in that they are used to express affection, to describe someone's appearance (with positive and negative connotations), to disparage their bearers' behaviour or simply because it is trendy to do so and also for mere fun, like when bearers are given names for popular television personalities.

Conflict of interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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