

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SCALE ENTERPRISE OPERATORS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Although, the number of international migrants is estimated to reach about four-hundred and five (405) million by 2050, however, in spite of the magnitude of people moving across borders, empirical studies on international migration have evolved very slowly in comparison with the theoretical literature and policy debate. In the meantime, low level of entrepreneurial skills among SMEs operators has been attributed as one of the factors that contribute to the incessant decline of the performance of SMEs in Nigeria. However, since migrants are assumed to exhibit greater entrepreneurial skills as a result of their accumulated knowledge in the

diaspora, there is a need to ascertain whether international migration has any significant effect on the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria. This study examines the effect of international migration on the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study and the population of the study comprises of five hundred and ninety-three (593) selected SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria. Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted to test the reliability level of the study and the result of the test indicates that the research instrument has an acceptable reliability coefficient that is suitable for the study. Simple regression analysis was used to analyze the data at 5% significance level. The study found out that international migration has a strong positive effect on entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria.

Keywords: International migration, Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship skills, Small and medium scale enterprises, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

International migration has traditionally been considered a driving force behind the economic development of some countries, such as the United States where migrants were instrumental in the industrial transformation of the nation's economy in the nineteenth-century (Rodríguez-Pose and von Berlepsch, 2014). Currently, the importance of international migration for its economic and social implications is widely acknowledged both in the academic literature and advocacy reports (Maurel and Tuccio, 2016). In the same way, issues on entrepreneurship and international migration are at the very top of many national and international agendas (Peroni et al., 2016; Ogbari et al., 2016). Although, the development impact of both migrants and entrepreneurs is attracting increasing interest from academic and policy-makers alike, however, empirical findings in this area are limited (Wadhwan 2011; Hohn et al., 2012; Peroni et al, 2016).

Migrants are assumed to be excellent entrepreneurs who are more able to spot opportunities for new businesses as they already spotted opportunities for migration (Hart and Acs, 2011). Equally, it is also assumed that migrants have access to supplementary sources of support, training and financing, based on the knowledge that they have acquired in the diaspora (Naudé et al., 2015). In the light of this, the numbers of international migrants have increased considerably over the years, from seventy-five (75) million in 1960 to one-hundred and fifty (150) million in 2000, to one-hundred and ninety (190) million in 2005 and about two-hundred and fourteen (214) million in 2010 (Docquier and Rapoport, 2011). They opine further that the

number of international migrants is estimated to reach about four-hundred and five (405) million by 2050. However, in spite of the magnitude of people moving across borders, empirical studies on international migration have evolved very slowly in comparison with the theoretical literature and policy debate.

According to Peroni et al. (2016), the IT boom of the 1990s, and in particular the emergence of highly innovative, fast expanding and highly profitable IT firms, has largely contributed to revive the attention of policy makers and academics on entrepreneurship. Nowadays, entrepreneurship is regarded as an important contributor to innovation and technological progress, a driver of productivity and ultimately of economic growth. Hence, governments of several countries have become increasingly active in designing policies to foster the entrepreneurial efforts of people within their jurisdiction. Efforts are also made by entrepreneurs to improve their skills through continuous learning and self-development based on the notion that weak entrepreneurial skills is likely to affect entrepreneurs market analysis, marketing and product innovation, as well as business planning and financial management, thereby causing serious consequences on product output and market acceptability (Kerosi and Kayisime, 2013).

Docquier and Rapoport (2011) reiterate that the movement of highly-skill migrants from developing to developed countries can be regarded as one of the major aspects of globalization. Likewise, Sukh (2013) asserts that the recent trend in international migration is noticeable among highly skilled workers, such as; academics, medical practitioners, engineers and scientists who migrate to developed nations for better jobs, incomes and professional recognition, as well as, technical and managerial personnel who obtained education, training and experience in the foreign land before returning to their home countries for work, or to create competitive and new business ventures.

In the meantime, low level of entrepreneurial skills among SMEs operators in Nigeria has been attributed as one of the factors that contribute to the incessant decline of the performance of SMEs in Nigeria (Muritala et al., 2012; Ben-Caleb et al., 2013; Anudu, 2013). However, since migrants are assumed to exhibit greater entrepreneurial skills as a result of their accumulated knowledge and skills they have obtained in the diaspora, there is a need to find out if the movement of workers from one country to another, in search of advanced knowledge and skills has an effect on the entrepreneurial skills of such workers. In the light of this, the objective of this study is to ascertain the effect of international migration on the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria, using one of the countries thirty-six (36) states as a case study.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first section presents the background of the study, the second section focuses on the literature review and the development of the study's

hypothesis, the third section presents the methods and analyses that were used to test the hypothesis, the fourth section presents the results, the fifth discusses the findings of the study, while the concluding part of the study is elucidated in the sixth section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International Migration

The debate on the implications of international migration has continued to generate heated argument among scholars. Some assumed that international migration an adjustment mechanism for all countries, while others refute such claim. According to Rodríguez-Pose and Berlepsch (2014) posits that migrants represent a return to colonial era forced labor patterns as the export of cheap labor becomes seen as viable and legitimate pathway to development. He asserts further that the remittances sent home by migrants, which is seen as a major contribution to development, is just the human face of a thoroughly inhumane system that condemns millions to an increasingly difficult struggle for survival, which makes them subject to exploitation and criminalization. Kerosi and Kayisime (2013) also opines that international migration leads to loss of young, able-bodied, well-educated and otherwise economically valuable citizens in many developing nations.

Similarly, Fratesi and Percoco (2014) posits that international migration is not an adjustment mechanism, because the people who move out of the poorest areas are often the most skilled, so that the poorest regions and countries lose considerable portions of their human capital stock to the richest areas, a phenomenon known as brain drain. They argue further that brain drain phenomenon has been widely investigated, especially at national level between developed and developing countries and its effect has been generally considered as negative for sending countries. Similarly, critics of globalization assert that poorly informed policies on international migration have created and continue to create harm to migrants. Stricter border controls to prevent irregular migration from Africa to Europe, for example, have not stopped migration flows but instead led to a diversification of migration routes and to a much more dangerous migration journey (de Haas, 2010).

Conversely, some scholars considered international-migration as an important mechanism for raising the welfare of individuals and households in developing countries (Gibson and McKenzie, 2012; OECD, 2014). They opine further that migrants contribute to the economy of a country through their entrepreneurial activities, knowledge transfers, job creation, remittances, tax payment, as well as through other social contributions. Naudé et al. (2015), also asserts that the decision to migrate is seen as both a decision an individual makes, as well as a decision that is taken at the household level to deal with risks, market imperfections and

obstacles in the environment. Equally, Rodr'iguez-Pose and von Berlepsch (2014) believe that the concentration of migrants in certain places has contributed to the transfer of the dynamic entrepreneurial character of migrants to some territories that have helped such communities to become richer and more dynamic over the last century.

Similarly, some authors posit that the presence of immigrants may be linked to innovation development through the provision of management and entrepreneurship skills (Hunt and Gauthier, 2009; Kerr et al., 2013). In addition, Peroni et al. (2016) also reiterates that higher share of immigrants provides diversity, a wealth of experiences and know-how, which feed creativity. They opine further that when applied to economic activities, creativity becomes an engine for new solutions to old problems, for the identification of unexploited market niches, for product and process innovation which ultimately increases the chances for entrepreneurial activity.

Entrepreneurial Skill

A firm's efficiency largely depends on the ability and knowledge of both the employer and the employees, that is, its human capital. Educated workers are not only more productive, but they have more learning and innovative abilities. Therefore, entrepreneurial skills may be developed through training and education (Hendee, 2010, Okeowo, 2015; Ajagbe and Ismail, 2014). According to Kerosi and Kayisime (2013), the myth that entrepreneurs are born, no more holds, rather it is well recognized now that the entrepreneurs can be created and nurtured through appropriate interventions in the form of entrepreneurship skills development programs. Umaru and Chinelo (2014) also assert that good entrepreneurial skills of workers enhance the growth and development of SMEs in developing economies. Meanwhile, notable scholars have identified a wide range of competences as entrepreneurial skills, these include; the ability to multi-task, adapt, manage time and people, take responsibility and make decisions, take risks, persevere, make contacts, sell ideas and persuade others, work both as part of a team and independently, work under pressure, innovate, carryout a thorough research, plan, coordinate and organize effectively (Lipsmeyer and Zhu, 2011; Hendee, 2010, Ajagbe et al., 2015).

Some scholars opine that firms with a literate and well educated workforce are thus likely to be more efficient because of their greater capability to absorb and effectively utilize new technology (Skeldon, 2005; Freeman, 2006; Hendee, 2010; Lipsmeyer and Zhu, 2011; Kerosi and Kayisime, 2013; Umaru and Chinelo, 2014; Ajagbe et al., 2016). However, others assert that the entrepreneurial skills of most SMEs operators and workers are weak. They believe that these weaknesses are basically in terms of their knowledge and skills of market analysis, marketing and product innovation, as well as business planning and financial management

(Kerosi and Kayisime, 2013). They argue further that many entrepreneurs who own and manage SMEs lack the appropriate management skills. Therefore, because of the lack of adequate capital or sheer ignorance of technological advances, such entrepreneurs purchase obsolete and inefficient equipment, thereby setting the stage for lower level of productivity and poor product quality with serious consequences on product output and market acceptability (Skeldon, 2005, Freeman, 2006; Hende, 2010; Lipsmeyer and Zhu, 2011).

International Migration and Entrepreneurial Skills

International migration and entrepreneurship are regarded as drivers of economic growth (Hunt and Gauthier, 2009; Kerr et al., 2013; Peroni, et al., 2016). Recently, wide range of competences are identified as entrepreneurial skills, these include; the ability to multi-task, adapt, manage time and people, take responsibility and make decisions, take risks, persevere, make contacts, sell ideas and persuade others, work both as part of a team and independently, work under pressure, innovate, carryout a thorough research, plan, coordinate and organize effectively (Lipsmeyer and Zhu, 2011; Hende, 2010).

Over the years, several studies have been carried out to find out the nexus between international migration and entrepreneurship skills. Batista and Vincent (2014) analyze the relationship between risk preferences and migrant entrepreneurship in Dublin. The study utilized data from a survey on immigrants in Dublin and found out that the willingness to take risks is one of the significant predictors of entrepreneurship among immigrants. Also, Piergiovanni et al. (2012) investigates on the link between immigration and entrepreneurship in Italy and the findings of the study revealed that the share of immigrants in Italy is among the explanatory factors of the outstanding performance of firms in Italy, as well as the overall economic performance. This shows that a positive link exist between international migration and entrepreneurship in Italy. Equally, a similar study carried out by Kerr et al. (2013) shows that international migration of skilled workers expands skilled employment and firms innovation rates. Similarly, Hunt and Gauthier (2009) discovers in their study that international migration of skilled workers actually improved innovation performance in the United States of America from 1990–2000.

In contrast to the assertion in the preceding paragraphs, in spite of the growing rate of international migration among Nigerians, SMEs in Nigeria have been performing below expectation. In the same way, low level of entrepreneurial skills among SMEs operators has been attributed as one of the factors that contribute to the incessant decline of the performance of SMEs in Nigeria (Muritala et al., 2012; Ben-Caleb et al., 2013; Anudu, 2013). They opine further that entrepreneurial skills of most SMEs operators in Nigeria are weak in terms of their

knowledge and skills of market analysis, marketing and product innovation, as well as business planning and financial management, thereby causing serious consequences on product output and market acceptability. Hence, in the light of the observation in the preceding paragraph, this study hypothesize that international migration has no significant effect on the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria.

Ho: International migration has no significant effect on the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research design is the overall framework of a research that explains the direction and the method that was used in the study to collect the information needed (Hair, 2000). Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey research design will be employed for this study. Descriptive survey research design requires a systematic and scientific collection of data or information from the population or sample of the population, through the use of personal interview or scale opinion questionnaire, or direct observation or a combination of the stated methods (Asika, 2009; Truscot, 2010; Fielding, 2010). This research design was chosen because the study required a systematic and scientific collection of data from the population, through the use of structured questionnaire. The population of the study was drawn from five hundred and ninety-three (593) SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria. A non-probability sampling method in form of convenience sampling was used for the study. Likewise, the study utilized primary source of data collection to obtain relevant information. The primary data was collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire for this study is categorized into six sections. Section A covered the respondents' demographic data while section B to section F contained thirty (30) items for measuring the view of respondents on a six (6) point rating scale, with options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (6 = strongly agree, 5 = agree, 4 = fairly agree, 3= fairly disagree, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree).

A total number of five hundred and ninety-three (593) questionnaires were administered to respondents, out of which five hundred and seventy-five (575) questionnaires were properly filled and returned (representing 97% response rate). Thus, the study was based on the 97% of the retrieved questionnaire, which is considered sufficient for the attainment of the objectives of the study. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was used to test the reliability level of the research instrument with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0. The value of the alpha coefficient ranges from 0-1. A higher score of 0.70 and reliability coefficient is generally accepted as a reliable generated scale. Table 1 shows the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the variables under study.

Table 1. Analysis of Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
International Migration	0.976
Entrepreneurial Skills	0.869

The value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for international migration is 0.976, while that of entrepreneurial skills is 0.869. The Cronbach's alpha value of all the variables indicates that the research instrument has an acceptable reliability coefficient that is suitable for the study. This study employed descriptive statistic and simple regression analysis, with the aid of IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected from respondents, while simple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship that exists between the dependent and independent variables of the study.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

H₀: International migration has no significant effect on the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria.

Table 2. Model summary of international migration and the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.922 ^a	.850	.841	10.846	.850	12.621	1	573	.003	1.901

a. Predictors: (Constant), International Migration b. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Skills

The results from the model summary Table 2 reveal that the extent to which the variance in entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises can be explained by international migration is 85% i.e. (R-square = 0.850).

Table 3. ANOVA of international migration and the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	102.191	1	102.191	12.620	.003 ^b
	Residual	4639.937	573	8.098		
	Total	4642.129	574			

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Skills b. Predictors: (Constant), International Migration

The ANOVA Table 3 shows the F-cal of 12.620 at 0.003 significance level. This means that international migration has significant impact on entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria.

Table 4. Coefficient of international migration and the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
	(Constant)	10.521	.353				29.812	.000	9.828	11.214
1 International Migration	.522	.041	.022	7.520	.003	.060	.103	.022	.022	.022

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Skills

The coefficient Table 4 shows the simple model that expresses the extent to which international migration influences entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises. The model for this study is shown mathematically as follows:

$$y = a + bx$$

Where y = Entrepreneurial skills

x = International migration

a = Constant factor

b = Value of coefficient.

Hence, Entrepreneurial skills = 10.521 + 0.522 International migration.

From this equation, there is a linear relationship between international migration and entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises. The relationship is confirmed from the regression coefficient (0.522). This indicates that for every 100% change in entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises, international migration is responsible for 52.2% of the change. The significance level of international migration 0.003 below 0.05 implies a statistical confidence of above 95%. This implies that international migration affects entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises. The t-statistics (7.520) is significant, showing how strong international migration affects entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises. To ensure that there is no serial correlation between the residuals, a DW statistics was obtained (1.901). This shows no serial correlation. It means that International migration is truly an independent variable. Thus,

the decision would be to reject the null hypothesis five (H_0), and accept alternative hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between international migration and the entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises in Ogun State. The result is confirmed from the value of correlation coefficient (0.922 or 92.2%). Hence, there is a strong positive relationship between international migration and the entrepreneurial skills of operators of small and medium scale enterprises in Ogun State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results from the model summary table revealed that the extent to which the variance in entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs of SMEs can be explained by international migration is 85% (R-square = 0.850). The ANOVA table showed the F-cal of 12.620 at 0.003 significance level, which means that international migration has significant impact on entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs. The coefficient table showed the simple model that expresses the extent to which international migration influences entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs. From the tables therefore, entrepreneurial skill is equal to $10.521 + 0.522IM$. From this equation, there is a linear relationship between international migration and entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs. The relationship is confirmed from the regression coefficient (0.522). This indicated that for every 100% change in entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs, international migration is responsible for 52.2% of the change. Hence, the significance level of international migration 0.003 below 0.05 implied a statistical confidence of above 95%. This implied that international migration affects entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs. The t-statistics (7.520) is significant, showing how strong international migration affects entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs. To ensure that there is no serial correlation between the residuals, a DW statistics was obtained (1.901). This showed no serial correlation, thus, international migration is truly an independent variable. Thus, the decision would be to reject the null hypothesis four (H_0), and accept alternative hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, the study concluded that there is a significant relationship between international migration and the entrepreneurial skills of entrepreneurs of SMEs in Nigeria. The result is confirmed from the value of correlation coefficient (0.922 or 92.2%).

The findings of the study correlated with other empirical studies that established that a positive relationship between international migration and the level of SMFs entrepreneur's entrepreneurial skills exist (Hunt and Gauthier-Loiselle, 2009; Lipsmeyer and Zhu, 2011; Sukh, 2013; Piergiovanni et al., 2012; Kerr et al., 2013; Kerosi and Kayisime, 2013). As internationalisation creates new opportunities for SMEs, it also creates new challenges for them. Sukh (2013) states that two general trends are noticeable for the migrating workers, one trend relates to the highly skilled workers, such as academics, medical practitioners, engineers and

scientists who migrate to the West for better jobs, incomes and professional recognition. While the second trend consists of technical and managerial personnel, who obtained education, training and experience in the West and who return to their home countries for work or to create competitive and new business ventures.

The study will enable SMEs operators to compete in markets that are traditionally dominated by the large enterprises. Similarly, the study will enable SMEs to strengthen their customer relationships, reach new markets, optimize business processes, reduce costs, improve business knowledge, attract investments and create new products and services. This study will also enhance the ability of international organizations, such as, the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) to set up appropriate policies that will benefit SMEs operators in the developing countries. Also, this study will enable the Nigerian government to consider the plight of SME operators by implementing policies that will improve their entrepreneurial skills.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effect of international migration on entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria and found out that a strong positive relationship exists between international migration and entrepreneurial skills of SMEs operators in Nigeria. The findings of the study correlate with other empirical studies that established that a positive relationship between international migration and the level of SMEs operators entrepreneurial skills. Hence, the level of exposure of SMEs operators in Nigeria, through knowledge obtained from foreign countries as a result on international migration, has a positive effect on their entrepreneurial skills. The study recommends that the policies set up by the Nigerian government should strengthen the need for SMEs operators to engage in international business and also develop their entrepreneurial skills by providing resources to study abroad, giving them effective marketing information networks, organizing international training and providing joint marketing network with other SMEs globally. The scope of the study was limited to one of the enterprising states in Nigeria, that is, Ogun state. Since data from this study was obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires it was difficult for respondents to express their personal opinions on some of the issues raised. However, to minimize this limitation, the measuring instrument was structured without any ambiguity, in order to capture the respondents' perspectives on issues raised in this study. For a more robust findings and generalization future study should examine in other developing countries, most especially those within the Sub-Saharan African region whose citizens are more prone to migrate to developed countries. In particular, there is a need to test whether the link between immigration and

entrepreneurship follows similar patterns across developing and the developed countries. This study augments the findings of other researchers in the area of international migration and entrepreneurship.

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