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METHODOLOGIES AND PERCEPTIONS TO THEORISING MIGRATION

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ABSTRACT

It has been widely circulated that migration received minimal attention from researchers before the 20th century but a great deal of attention thereafter, thus shedding light on several frameworks underpinning it. The end of the 20th century witnessed a shift from the state-centered framework to highlighting the diversity existing in migration categories such as race, eras, age, and gender. New models of migration have been established since the 1990s, confronting popular fallacies that have dominated migration studies. It is worth stating that migration has progressively evolved into an interdisciplinary subject, and continues to attract contributions from researchers in various fields (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000).

INTRODUCTION

The varied contribution on migration provides interesting perspectives on migration studies and a clearer understanding of the phenomenon, while tackling misconceptions and stereotypes. Fresh facts are emerging using previous studies on migration as a foundation for stronger research output. Widespread notions on migration have experienced a paradigm shift due to new and ongoing studies. Migration norms and models of internal and international migration have also been challenged based on evolving facts. The exclusive emphasis on ‘the west’ or European migration as a model for international migration has shifted to multifaceted global migration patterns and flows.

The significance of the theoretical framework of this study cannot be overemphasized. It enables the reality of a phenomenon to be established while exposing the misconceptions around it. Model building provides the opportunity to make new discoveries and generalize the results of the study to other situations, as well as forming the basis for future exploration. An adequate understanding of the subject can be gained by examining the cause and effects highlighted by previous models. Model building can also support the researcher in predicting future occurrences of the phenomenon and achieve the purpose of science: to cultivate descriptive theories. Models and theories depend on the use of research questions and hypotheses, which are approached through logical analysis to examine the connections between different variables. The result of logical analysis can be used to negate, support or reform the original theories and models.

OBJECTIVE

This study seeks to contribute to a clearer understanding of the internal migration of medical doctors in the South African public healthcare sector by revealing the main reasons behind their migration, its effect, and the means by which it can be reduced through the application of new theories and perceptions.

Gaps in Migration Theory

The perception of the neo-classical theory on migration is that a steady flow of rural migrants will exist as long as there is a high disparity in wages between the rural and urban areas to supersede the fear of temporary or permanent urban unemployment (Todaro, 1969). Even though wage differential is crucial to the decision to migrate, the importance of the costs and risks associated with migration cannot be underestimated. Logically, it is pertinent to state that

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migration research with the focus solely on occupation and wage differential cannot do justice to the study.

The famous push-pull model continues to gain admiration in migration literature. There can hardly be any study on migration without mentioning it. The model has brought about the popular supposition that migration decisions can be swayed by economic, environmental and demographic factors, and this has been supported by several research studies which have applied it. The push-pull theory of migration involves several elements, and the push factor has been widely reported to play a far greater role in doctors' decisions to migrate than pull factors.

However, there are fundamental flaws in the push-pull model. In reality, the model has the tendency to create an infinite reservoir of migration determinants. The model also has the tendency to ignore the internal stratification of various cultures. Common background factors, consistently referred to as either push or pull factors may probably influence people differently, stimulating some to stay while inspiring others to leave. It is germane to state that personal aspirations, mission and vision significantly influence the tendency to migrate, and that this is a crucial factor often disregarded by the push-pull model and other models such as, the neoclassical and the structuralist models (Petersen, 1958).

The new economics of labor model affirms that understanding the various forms of migration and flow only comes from the examination of the broader social units along with individuals and their economic motivations. Todaro (1969) viewed the redistribution of labor from the rural (sending area) to the urban (receiving area) as a vital criterion for economic development. One cannot successfully separate the homes of migrants from migration if the proper understanding of migration study is to be gained; therefore, the household is part of the social entity that is essential for the understanding of migration. Some countries still views migration as a core instrument of domestic economic growth (Betram, 1999) regardless of various measures being put in place by policy makers to curtail movement around the world. The recent rise in terrorism has tampered greatly with the positivism of the development model.

The migration systems and network models center on the dynamics that generate, modify and preserve migration. The network theory essentially assumes that the economic, social, institutional and cultural conditions get modified by migration at the place of origin as well as the destination point. The network theory mostly emphasizes the importance of personal relationships between migrants and non-migrants, and how this social capital enables, maintains and alters migration mechanisms. The migration systems model goes deeper to accentuate the impact of migration in the reformation of the whole societal framework of the actual system in which migration occurs, both at the origin and destination points. Migration systems and network connections go a long way in determining subsequent migration flow from a particular sending area to a particular receiving area.

Nonetheless, the model is not without flaws. According to Massey (1998), the rounded logic of these models gives the impression that migration is perpetual, which gave the impression that migration systems and networks cannot crumble. The migration of labor has the tendency to decrease, or end, in the long run once the major reasons for migration wane. globular

The Bandwagon Theory

This theory took its root from the imitation theory of social psychology. People naturally lean towards a trend not necessarily because they know the rationale behind it or have properly thought it through; since others have done it or are doing it makes the action attractive (Ayeni, 2013). The theory of imitation is the most famous among several efforts at relating psychology to the understanding of social phenomena. The theory was first proposed by Gabriel Tarde (1890) and then autonomously by Prof. Baldwin. Professor Baldwin (1895) concluded from his study on child mental development that the primary method of child's learning is by imitative immersion of the expressions, actions and thoughts of others; hence, imitation is the

technique for personal growth. An individual develops rationally and ethically by imitating the mental attitudes and actions of those around him or her. People want to do things the way others are doing it and most times will not do things outside of the societal norms and be seen as a misfit. The desire to have a sense of belonging is closely tied to the imitation theory.

Tarde (1890) approached the subject of imitation from the sociological angle; he affirmed that the fundamental element in the process of imitation could be generalized. Through the study on social phenomena such as crime, crowds, fashion and trends, Tarde (1890) asserts that imitation can be used as a source of a structure of social philosophy.

Inferences from the Bandwagon Theory

There are two key elements of the bandwagon theory: precedence and the thrill of adventure. Precedence assumes that the fact that others have successfully done something before means that act is possible regardless of the risks involved. Precedence presents an example to follow, what to do and what to avoid, how to go about it, and also how to learn from the mistakes of predecessors (Ayeni, 2013). Tarde (1890) claimed that society in itself is imitation, and assumed that the ‘key to the social enigma’ is the replication of an action previously performed by someone else due to a suggestion or feedback received. The suggestion-imitation process clarifies the impact of one person’s mind upon others, which subsequently explains all migrations and changes in the community (Tarde, 1890). Tarde also attributed the structural and functional harmony of a society to imitation. These assertions by Tarde suggest that, as people engage in actions performed by others before them, they encourage unity and brotherhood. In accordance with the position adopted above, Tarde affirms that all the actions of human beings, from the discovery of art and science to satisfying biological needs, are a result of the imitation process (ibid).

The imitation theory formulated by Professor Baldwin is more systematic. The development of individual lives gives meaning to the development of social life, which reveals that imitation theory can also be applied to social progression. Baldwin (1899) affirmed that imitation is the process of a social group or association, and that every growth within the society occurs through the generalization of the invention of individuals by imitation. This kind of circular method ensures that people progress ethically and mentally by imitating the actions and intellectual outlook of people around them, while the modification of society also occurs through sustained imitation practices.

It is important to state that a reliable theory of social process was developed by Professor Baldwin, which was something Tarde could not achieve. Baldwin’s theory hinges on practical facts and is often regarded as being more rational; he believed that the suitability of our choice for imitative replication and application is the origin of our choice (Baldwin, 1899). According to Baldwin (1899), people imitate solely what they have become habituated to imitate, and that one’s personality becomes structured through this habituated imitation. This theory is in line with some current psychological philosophies on the learning process.

The imitation theory of Tarde and Baldwin was criticized on the grounds that people consciously choose who to imitate and do not just imitate everyone around them. People generally tend to imitate those who have been successful in their area of interest without considering the personal sacrifices, risks and other factors that were involved in that success. This assertion shows that there is selectivity in imitation, even if the person is perceived to be a subordinate or an enemy: so long as the imitator is able to establish the success factor, imitation can occur (Ayeni, 2015). Another major criticism of the imitation theory is that it is preposterous to conclude that a single nature or instinct (imitation) determines the whole process of all individual and societal development (Baldwin, 1894).

The thrill of adventure, the second element forming the bandwagon theory, holds that the excitement of trying something new can sometimes lead people to “join the bandwagon”.

The quest for adventure can push people into action without weighing the pros and cons properly (Ayeni, 2013).

Migration has emerged as one of the solutions for assuaging tangible or alleged psychological and environmental threats against which societies have been defending themselves throughout history. Paradoxically, the number of adventure seekers is on the increase, the thrills of trying something new or engaging in something daring is not peculiar to the madcaps; more ordinary people are getting involved in adventure due to inquisitiveness.

Most adventure seekers are tired of hearsay and reading about other people's experiences. They want first-hand experience of things, and to face the consequences of their action (or inaction). Even when some receive warnings or are exposed to information that could dissuade them from proceeding on migration as in the case of network theory, they will still not change their minds because of the thrill they derive. The thrill of adventure gives a sense of purpose that supplies their much-needed determination (Ayeni, 2015).

In his optimal arousal model on adventure, Duffy (1957) affirmed that people will pursue stages of arousal that are consistent with their expertise, circumstances and past experience. The levels of arousal differ from one person to another. To ensure optimal arousal, according to Berlyne (1960), the location or circumstance must consist of a proper blend of 3 factors: there must be a new task/quest, or an old task done differently; there must be some degree of insecurity with regard to the result; and there must be some level of self-confidence for succeeding in the task. Berlyne summarized these three factors as novelty, dissonance and complexity.

Optimal arousal shows that circumstances surrounding an individual can impact on a migration decision. Circumstances such as an unfavorable environment, poor working conditions, war, and gender inequality create a feeling of uncertainty about the present as well as the future, and can arouse the interest of an individual in moving to another location (thereby depicting the dissonance factor in Berlyne's blend). Naturally, people experience a feeling of insecurity when their survival is threatened, or when they are exposed to something new. This feeling of insecurity usually compels a modification in behavioral patterns which provide information about the success of the modified behavior. Every situation comes with its own demands and, to be efficacious in meeting these requirements, it is necessary to learn new things and behaviors. In this way new inventions are developed, as well as precedence for future growth.

Conversely, the environment might be favorable, but the expertise of an individual and the self-confidence that he/she possesses the ability to succeed in any location might be the arousing factor to migrate. This makes up the complexity factor. The increase in proficiency tends to impact on one's exposure and interest to explore, thereby fostering adventure. The effect of past experiences on arousing the thrill of adventure cannot be underestimated. In some cases, past failures have given people renewed zeal and interest to do things differently to achieve a better result: this is the novelty factor in Berlyne's unique blend.

In his competence-effectance model, White (1959) affirmed that people engage in adventure to establish their capability to affect the environment. This assertion was also supported by Deci (1975), who argued that there is a human need to feel proficient. From the competence-effectance viewpoint, the migration of medical doctors from the public sector to the private may be due to fact that they feel they are capable enough to provide quality medical services on their own without government affiliation. These feelings of proficiency can optimally arouse an individual to delve into alternative courses of action or new terrain and effectively deal with the demands that might arise. Compatibly in proficiency and the demands of the new situation will create a feeling of satisfaction which can boost the interest of an individual to seek more challenging quests as his competence increases.

The concept of specialization promoted by Bryan (1979) with regard to adventure can also be an important pointer for why doctors migrate from the public sector to the private sector. It is common knowledge that a medical specialist gets more financial reward in the private sector depending on the level of demand for his/her services. Could the exodus of doctors from the public sector as soon as they get qualified as a specialist be linked to financial gain? According to the concept of specialization, as people increase in specialty, the desire to try out their dexterity increases; there is an arousal to venture into something new no matter how risky it might seem.

Self-efficacy, as propounded by Bandura (1977), is a key component of the competence effectance model and refers to the self-perception of one's ability to handle tasks or situations, especially challenging ones. It is perhaps one of the most common models of human personality when investigating the impact of adventure. Self-efficacy accounts can be established or improved through individual achievements, verbal encouragement, stimulation levels and meditated experience. The personal perceived level of ability determines the involvement of an individual in adventure, but rational appraisal of one's level of capability in handling expected demands goes a long way in determining this self-perception. Is this theory of self-efficacy relevant to a study on the migration of doctors?

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy entails a personal evaluation of the following aspects:

- Self-perception of one's ability
- Extent of effort needed
- Expected task challenges
- Level of anticipated support
- Type of environmental conditions
- Prior forms of success or failure

All the aforementioned factors might be examined to ascertain the likelihood of success before entering into an adventure. Self-efficacy expectations differ depending on the size of the task at hand, the extent to which the perceived ability can be extended to other tasks and perseverance when faced with an unsuccessful venture. The effectiveness of performance accomplishment in influencing self-efficacy was emphasized by Harmon and Templin (1980) due to the fact that they are based on individual proficiency. It is natural for a feeling of proficiency to develop after achieving a remarkable personal feat. This feeling of proficiency is capable of propelling an individual to embark on more challenging tasks.

Nonetheless, self-efficacy does not entirely explain the participation of people in adventure or the desire to venture into a new terrain. With regards to the migration of doctors, many doctors, specialist and otherwise, have the capability to establish a private practice, but still decide to continue working with the government. The overwhelming assumption of self-efficacy is that success in one area of endeavor is an indication of success in other areas, and this is a fallacy. There are many factors involved in migration decisions that transcend the concept of self-efficacy.

People enter on an adventure with various expectations. While some expectations are sociological in nature, others are either somatic or psychosomatic. Challenge and interest were identified by Progen (1979) as the major expectations of adventure. Sociological expectations may involve conviction, concern and socializing, and the somatic expectations may involve well-being and freedom, while the psychosomatic may involve self-reliance and self-concept enrichment. Self-efficacy contributes in no small measure to our expectations. Self-perception makes people have either realistic or unrealistic expectations. Doctors, like every other individual, have expectations that drive their decisions. These individual expectations can be affected, firstly, by personal belief in their capability to perform specific exercises effectively, secondly, by the degree to which actualizing the goal is difficult, and thirdly, the level of

perceived control that an individual has over his/her accomplishment. Expected benefits are also a major influence on the thrill of adventure. Some of these benefits may include pleasure, the likelihood of realizing a goal, personal experimentation, and socializing.

Imitation, without a doubt, is a process of personal and societal growth. Even though it is a perpetual feature of individual lives and society, other phases of growth should not be ignored to ensure a thorough study. A proper process of development can be achieved through the collaboration of imitation with other factors. The controlled and restrictive nature of imitation, particularly by inherent urges, makes it incapable of sufficiently handling the process of both personal and societal growth.

CONCLUSION

Adventure has played a significant role in various fields of endeavor, bringing about inventions that have made the world a better place to live in. The thrill of adventure in swaying the migration decision might give a fresh clue to migration studies. The thrill of adventure is a complete deviation from the various models that have asserted their views on migration decision and is definitely a foundation for fresh conceptual framework on migration. People have different reasons for behaving in certain ways; therefore, it is time to look beyond the traditional models on migration and explore other factors that might provide us with the necessary solutions.

Despite public opinion, laying the burden of migration on an individual factor such as wages will not do justice to migration studies. A proper blend of both established and fresh models might just be a pointer to the missing clue behind the migration of medical doctors. As needs constantly change, so too do expectations which make individual factors incapable of revealing the main reason behind migration. People get motivated differently, and to ensure a study that can be generalized, there is a need to take cognizance of a combination of factors that will make the realization of the study goal possible. For an effective study devoid of bias, other elements within the wider health context in which the migration occurred will be examined apart from the migrants.

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