



# Migration Reporting in Nigeria: Towards an Effective Model

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Received date: Jan 18, 2019; Accepted date: Jan 26, 2019; Published date: Jan 31, 2019

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Citation: Ate AA, Egielewa P, Hasan M. Migration Reporting in Nigeria: Towards an Effective Model. Global Media Journal 2019, 17:32.

## Abstract

Different scholars have developed communication models which have attempted to address micro and macro issues in Mass Communication. However, migration which is a critical component of population change is in dire need of a model which will engender academic and professional paradigm shift from casual approach to more serious approach in dissecting migration issues in Nigeria and indeed Africa. This paper, which is anchored on Knowles (1989) three step building concept, intends to address this grave concern. This study - Ate, Egielewa and Ikerodah's proposed Migration reporting Model (MRM) 2018 recommended that the proposed model be endorsed and approved by relevant stakeholder of migration and be subjected to rigorous intellectual criticisms to make it better and realistic. The discourse recommended that the model be included in the curriculum of all Mass Communication departments in Nigerian Universities, Monotechnics and Polytechnics under a population communication oriented curriculum.

There are also other models like Lewis model of rural-urban migration, Fei Renis model on rural-urban migration, Harris-Todaro model of rural-urban migration among others which attempt to explain some elements and dynamics of migration from the sociological perspective.

To the best of our knowledge, mass communication scholars have neglected the study of migration model despite the fact that migration is an issue that is now attracting serious media attention in terms of coverage and research. Narula [1] noted that "in the last six decades, there has been a great hunt for communication models." There lies the desirability and inevitability of a search towards an effective migration reporting model. This study therefore intends to fill the gap of helping us to visualize, analyze and discuss complex process which otherwise would be difficult to explain [2].

## Objective of the Study

This study is set to develop an effective model for migration reporting in Nigeria.

## Conceptual Orientation

This work is anchored on the three steps model builder concept advocated by Knowles [3]. The steps are as follows:

- Step 1: Define the problem (Boundaries of the environment that the model represents must be defined by studying the decision environment to determine the subset of it to be analyzed).
- Step 2: Construct the decision model (for the subset to be analyzed, construct a model incorporating those factors judged to be important)
- Step 3: "Solve" the model, analyze results. (The model is solved, sensitivity analysis is performed, and the model is manipulated).

## Conceptual Clarification

The two key concepts in this study are migration and model. The concepts are explained for better understanding.

**Keywords:** Migration; Reporting; Nigeria; Effective; Communication; Model

## Introduction

Migration in the 21st Century has become an issue of serious concern to policy makers and scholars of diverse background. Ideas and money are on the move. People, animals, goods and services are also on the move in this era more than ever witnessed in the history of mankind. A combination of factors like urbanization, conflicts, natural disasters, social and economic adventure among others are responsible for both internal and external migration.

Sociologists have over the years attempted to formulate models of migration. The best known and widely used typology of migration was developed by the sociologist William Petersen. (NIJ Integrated Health and Population Communication Curriculum, undated, p.34)

## Migration

Migration is the movement of people from one place to live in another. Migration can be understood from two points of view: Emigration and Immigration: Emigration is the movement of people out of their own country (Emigrants), while immigration is the movement of people into a country that is not their own (immigrants). Migration can be caused by several factors which include; environmental social, economic and political [4].

Other factors are decision making process of individuals that shape their operations and perception of potential places to move to, and social-economic networks that affect migration dynamics [5].

Migration is not a new phenomenon. It is, however, more than ever before, a global phenomenon that is closely related to a number of other globalization process both its causes and effects [6]. There is almost no part of the world that is not importing or exporting labor.

The interplay of the push and pull factors are essential ingredients for migration to occur. Pushes factors are those reasons that make a person (emigrant) decide to leave his own country to another.

Generally, such push factors are negative things and may include unemployment, war, famine, flooding, poor harvest, droughts, poor educational opportunities, absence of amenities and poor services. On the other hand, pull factors are the expectations (or potentials) which attract or lure people to the new place. Unlike push factors which are negative, pull factors are generally positive things which can include: better job opportunities including higher wages, higher standard of living, and ease of doing business, better education and better healthcare.

Migrants are classified based on whether a third party was involved in their leaving their own country to another. Thus, there are migrants who leave their country voluntarily. This type of migration is called voluntary migration. These migrants leave their countries either due to better weather condition such as when Europeans migrate to the countries where there is more warmth or sun.

Some leave to cheaper climes to enjoy their retirements or just principally to learn about other cultures. Some economic migrants are voluntary such as when a migrant leaves his country for better working condition abroad although he/she has a good paying job back at home.

There are also migrants who leave their countries by force, not out of their own will. Such are referred to as involuntary migration. Factors that cause involuntary migration include outbreak of war, natural disasters such as Tsunami, Flooding or wild fires, drought, and outbreak of a communicable disease. Most involuntary emigrants are also called refugees.

Africans demonstrate a higher desire to emigrate than people from other continents as the diagram below shows [7] (Figure 1).

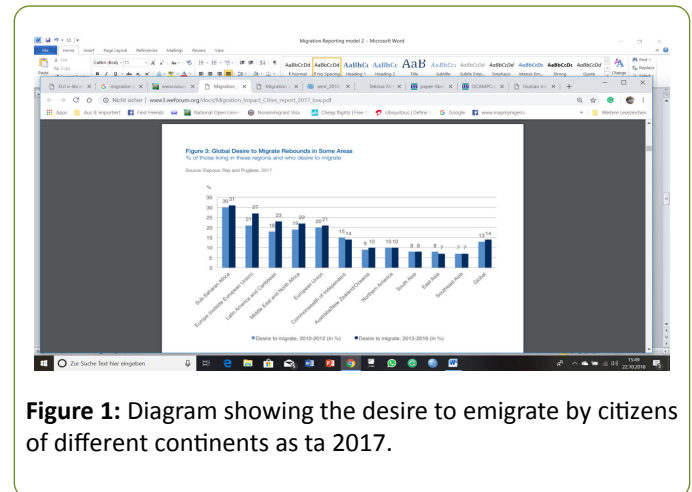


Figure 1: Diagram showing the desire to emigrate by citizens of different continents as ta 2017.

## Review of Migration Reporting

Migration and migrants are encountered in different forms by people. Some people have encountered this either because they have come in contact with migrants in their neighbourhoods or they have heard about migrants and migration from the media through films, newspapers, radio or the internet. How people eventually react to such information depends both on the way and manner they received the information and their personal situations. Unfortunately most information are carried from the point of view of high income countries (or developed countries), what many migrations scholars term as the “destination countries” [8]. What, however, is an incontrovertible fact is that humans have always moved from one place to another mainly due to persecution and seeking to improve one’s economic situation [9].

The interest of the media in migration has been as a result of several factors. “Allen, et al. [8] named two of such factors which are:

- Rising anti-immigration rhetoric in many parts of the world and
- Recent gains by anti-immigration political parties especially in western democracies [10].

In Europe, for example, many voters have in recent times moved to the so-called (challenger parties) because of their strong stance against immigration, propelled in part by negative and sometimes hostile media coverage of immigration issues [11].

In addition to the media’s role in influencing immigration narrative in the society, political debates, demographic changes, actual or imagined socioeconomic impacts, wider economic (austerity) policies are factors that determine how immigrants are seen and discussed in any given society [12, 13].

However, the eventual determinants of the pattern and context of how the media covers immigration discourse and narrative are first the media landscape of the given society that is how free the press operates in such a society. Freedom of the press is the bedrock upon which an ideal society is built.

A free media environment is “where coverage of political news is robust, the safety of journalists is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures” [14,15]. In a society where there is free press, the media can inform voters about current events and hold public officials accountable as well scrutinize institutions without being victimized or influenced by those institutions or individuals”.

In 2017, only 13 per cent of the world’s population lived in countries with a free press, while nearly half (45%) of people lived in countries without a free press and 42% live in countries with a partly free press [16]. Even in countries with free press, there is a level to which the government can influence the narrative because reporters depend to a large extent on government and other power groups and individuals for information [17]. Particularly in autocratic societies, the media coverage of migration issues has the tendency to tilt towards the position of the state or the state’s interest [18].

The second determinant of how the media covers immigration discourse and narrative is to the extent to which the media in such an environment has become digitized. With the increasing accessibility to internet and particularly the growing membership of social media, reporting of migration issues in the news has changed greatly, with some arguing that the social media has become a threat to the traditional media.

For instance statistics show that large portions of citizens of some countries get their news mainly from social media: US (46%), Brazil (70%), Portugal (66%), Ireland (52%) and Canada (48%) [19].

In Africa, migration has been a recalling topic because most of the migrants into Europe and particularly because majority of those whose images have been reported in the media as having being killed in the seas while on their voyages to Europe have been largely Africans [20]. In this sense, Flahaux and Hass [20] would describe Africa as a “continent on the move”.

The general portrayal based on media reporting of migration in Africa and which has come to be accepted over the years is that millions of Africans are waiting to cross to Europe at the first opportunity. The general assumptions from such stereotypes and media portrayals are three, namely:

- Migration from Africa is high and increasing,
- Such migrations are mainly directed towards Europe, and
- African migrations are driven by poverty and violence.

In the supposed European destinations, African migrations are rarely welcomed and have been associated with increase in security problems, international crimes, trafficking and terrorism [21-24].

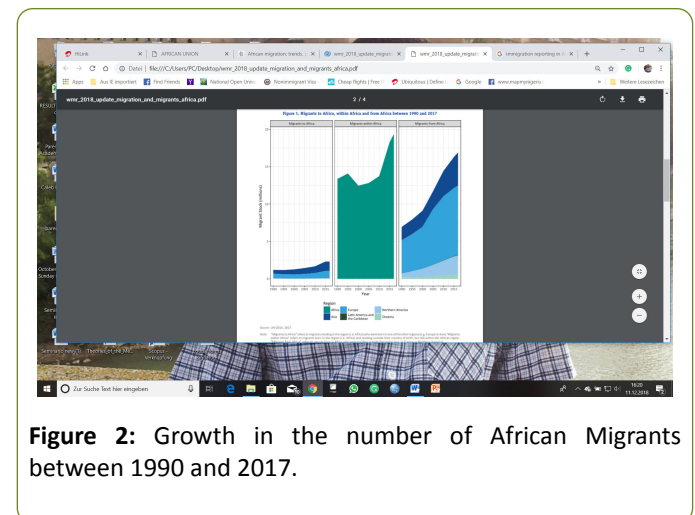
In all this, Flahaux and Hass [20] agrees that the problem derives not only from politicians rhetoric but also from media reporting. However, what is indisputable is that between 1960 and 2000 the number of African emigrants out of Africa has

increased while the number of immigrant from elsewhere into Africa has decreased as the table below shows (**Table 1**).

**Table 1:** Growth in the number of African Migrants between 1960 and 2000.

Year	From Africa to the rest of the world	From the rest of the world to Africa	Within Africa
1960	1 830 776	2 811 930	6 176 385
1980	5 418 096	1 872 502	7 966 359
2000	8 734 478	1 532 746	10 500 000
Total	15, 983, 350	6, 217, 178	24, 642, 744

**Figure 2** below which shows the growth of migrant numbers from Africa between 1990 and 2017 reveals a similar result as in **Table 1**.



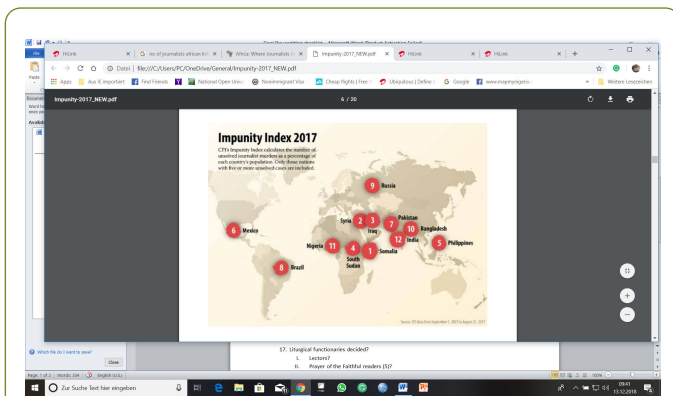
**Figure 2:** Growth in the number of African Migrants between 1990 and 2017.

Consequently, Jaiteh [25] has posited that migration in Africa is as a result of population pressure, communal, ethnic and criminal violence, poverty, political strife and corruption.

Media reporting of migration issues in Africa have always been faced with many challenges, not least because most African Governments consider the reporting of emigration as a dent on their performance and an indirect vote of no confidence on their administrations. African governments, therefore, did not want too many questions asked (by the media) as to why numbers of people, mainly the young, were leaving their countries.

One direct implication of such tensions is that most media in Africa are not free and under serious political pressure they undertake self-censorship. In many cases, journalists are targeted and politically persecuted.

**Figure 3** below shows that the 1st (Somalia), 4th (South Sudan and 11th (Nigeria) were among the leading twelve nations where journalist were killed with impunity in the 2017 Global Impunity Index 2017 [26].



**Figure 3:** Showing positions of countries with the highest number of unresolved cases of five or more journalists killed in the course of their work. Source: [www.cpj.com](http://www.cpj.com).

In Gambia, for instance, media organizations are expected to deposit an obligatory bond sum of \$16,000 before starting operation which is for most media bodies impossible to raise in a country where most people live on less than 1\$ a day [25]. Thus, many journalists in Gambia prefer to report only on “safe topics”. The Government continues to make efforts, therefore to influence the media narrative on migration to its favor. In one instance, Gambia state-controlled “Standard newspaper” had to start running regular stories on the plight of Gambians in Libya and at camps in Italy. The consequence is that, families of relatives abroad started enquiring from the newspaper (by extension the Government) what the fate of their children and relatives abroad was. This strategy was used to show that “home” was better and safe than the migration hazards and this painted the picture that the government was doing all its power to make home “safe” and “enjoyable” for all Gambians.

After the mass migration that was witnessed worldwide in 2015, many people have criticized the way the media reported about migrant and migrations. This prompted the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN), a non-Governmental Organization, to publish “*Moving Stories*” an international review of how media cover migration. This led further to the publication of a five point Guide for migration reporting in 2016 which has now formed the basis for EJN training of journalists around Europe and elsewhere in the last few years. These five points have been summarized under the following headings:

- Facts not bias
- Know the law
- Show humanity
- Speak for all
- Challenge the hate [27]

This document has now become beneficial not just to European journalists but also to African journalists around the world.

## Models

Migration reporting model is desirable and inevitable because there is lack of indigenous models in Nigeria that

address the critical issue of migration. The model will provide a benchmark for professional journalists and equip them to better handle migration reporting. For scholars this model will provide an initial framework for the emergence of other models on the subject matter.

Different communication scholars held their views on the concept of model. Folarin [2] sees a model as “a symbolic representation designed to help us visualize the relationship among various elements of a structure, system or process for purposes of discussion and analyses.” In a similar direction, Hassan [28] describes a model as “nothing but mechanistic perspective of human communication that effectively tells at a glance how it works.” A model is a presentation of the real phenomenon in abstract terms that can be applied at different times [29].

One way to analyze communication is to present it in form of a model [28]. Apostel [30] contends that “a model forms a bridge between the observational and theoretical levels and are concerned with simplification, reduction, concretization, action, experimentation, extension, globalization, theory formulation and explanation.” Models are basic theories concerning the elements of communication and how they operate and interact.

Hassan [28] noted that models are “based on assumption that theorists make as to how communication functions and what effect it has upon individual and society.” The formulator focuses on the aspect of reality that he finds most important for his purpose [2].

Communication models have the ability to demystify complex issues for easy comprehension of scholars. Daramola [31] outlines the strengths of models:

First, models help to clarify the structure of complex events. Second, models provide a frame of reference for scientific enquiry. Third, models are heuristic stimulus that is they crystallize new ideas and new ways of looking at things and lastly, models help to make predictions about the real world.

Irrespective of the advantages of models, some scholars also pointed out the limitations of same. Ate [32] noted that “a model is a means to an end and not an end in itself” In line with Ate’s observation, Folarin, [2] criticized models as “highly selective and do not represent a holistic picture of a reality.”

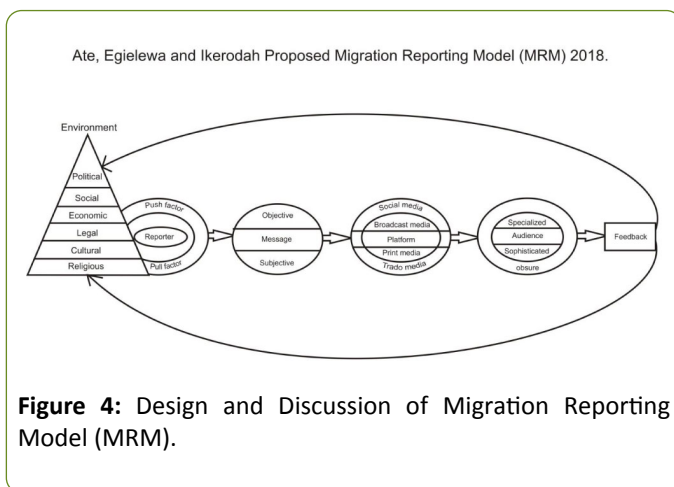
Communication models come in a variety of forms, ranging from catchy summations to diagram to mathematical formulas. This takes us to the issue of clarification of models. Narula [1] argues that the “format of communication models depends on how we define and understand the process of communication and these are applicable to different forms of communication.” She takes us deep into the intellectual excursion of communication models in terms of classification, stages of development and types:

Models are classified in three categories: stages, types and forms of models. There have been four stages in the development of communication models: Action, Interaction, Transaction and Convergence. There are two types of communication models: Linear and non-linear. These can be



presented in forms such as symbolic model, physical model, mental models, verbal models, iconic models, analogue models and mathematical models.

Different experts have over the years formulated diverse models of communication. The earliest communication model was proposed by Aristotle – the Greek philosopher in his book RHETORIC. The model was applicable to public speaking than interpersonal communication. There was Laswell model (1948), Shannon and Weaver model (1949) and Wendell Johnson model (1951). Also there was Berlo's model (1960), Defleur's model (1966) and Kincaid convergence model (1979) among others. Let us consider the migration reporting model under probe in this study (Figure 4).



## Elements of the Model

The key elements of migration models are:

**The Environment:** This is the first component of the model. Environment in this context refers to the domain where the reporter is operating. We have the political, social, economic, legal, cultural and religious layers of the environment which the migration reporter must understand and design his/her message to fit into it. The environmental layers are situated under macro environment defined by Nwosu and Uffoh [33] as the “wider or more general socio-economic and political domains including the ecosystem itself whose factors, forces and actors influence the organization’s internal and micro environments or the changes/developments within these internal and micro environments (e.g economic, cultural, political, technological factors, etc).”

**The Reporter:** The reporter as a second component of migration reporting model is connected to the macro environment that triggers the *push* and *pull* migration factors. Cambridge Dictionary describes a reporter as a person whose job is to discover information about news events and describe them for a newspaper or for radio or television.

**Message:** The third property of this model is message which is an idea, statement, information conveyed from one person or group to another. The message could be objective (straight forward news reports devoid of the writer’s assertion or

embellishments) or subjective (based on reporter’s feelings, opinions, coloration, or embellishments) [34].

**Platform:** Platform is the fourth component of the model. As used in this context, platform referred to media outlets like social media (Facebook, twitter, whatsapp, myspace, instagram, etc), broadcast media (radio and television), print media (books, newspapers, magazines, etc) and trado media (town crier, gong man, horn man, age group, etc).

**Audience:** The fifth element of this model is the audience. The audiences are the people who receive the communication messages. There are different kinds of audience. These include serious minded, sophisticated and intelligent people who go for serious minded articles, politics, editorials, etc. There are less sophisticated people who are interested in light hearted materials (pools betting, entertainment, etc). There are also specialized audiences like sport audiences, business audiences, etc. [35].

**Feedback:** The sixth element of the model is feedback. Feedback is the reaction to the message sent to the audience. Without feedback, communication will be incomplete. It is expected that the message or information which is sent by the reporter through various platforms will get to the audience and their reaction to the message will get back to the migrating environment which the reporter is connected to.

## Discussion

The model shows that the reporter (communicator) lives in a migrating environment and is connected to a political, social, economic, legal, cultural and religious environment that are charged with push factors ( e.g religious and political persecution, discrimination, depletion of natural resources, natural disaster, etc) and pull factors (e.g employment opportunities, favorable climate, tolerance, etc) migrating forces.

The reporter put across his message objectively or subjectively through different platforms of his choice (social media, broadcast media, print media, trado media) to different kinds of audience – the sophisticated audience with high aura of media literacy, the specialized audience (experts in the field of migration) and the obscure or general audience.

The audience receives the message and reacts through a feedback mechanism which goes back to the reporter. The key elements in the models are:

- The environment
- The reporter who is interwoven with the environment
- The message
- The platform
- Audience
- Feedback

The model sees the reporter as a by-product of the environment where he initiates his communication message. His understanding of the environment as well as environmental forces that triggers migration activities and plays a vital role in his reportorial success or failure along with

other determinants like nature of the message, platform, audience and feedback.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

It is an established fact that the times we live in call for more model of communication to explain dynamics of communication on diverse issues of public concern. The proposed model is our hunting initiative to theorize migration reporting for scholarly and professional benefits. We conclude therefore that this model is desirable and inevitable for effective reporting of migration activities in Nigeria and beyond.

For a way forward in migration reporting in Nigeria, the following recommendations are put forward:

The model should be subjected to rigorous intellectual criticisms to make it better realistic.

That this model should be endorsed and approved by relevant stakeholders in order to change the face of migration reporting in Nigeria.

That all departments of mass communication in Nigerian universities, monotechnics and polytechnics should have a component of population communication in their curriculum where this model and other issues of migration could be taught.

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