

Centralization of Job Opportunities and Increasing Internal Migration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

There exists a burgeoning body of scholarly work that has directed its attention toward the examination of migration-related concerns within the context of career development and mentorship. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the majority of this study has predominantly concentrated on the phenomenon of international migration, with comparatively little emphasis placed on migration occurring within national boundaries. This paper provides an in-depth examination of internal migration within the framework of Saudi Arabia, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of young individuals from rural Riyadh as they navigate the process of entering the labor market. This research highlights the significance of cultural distinctions, specifically in workplace environments, in the context of immigrants' professional advancement. The results of the study highlight the significance of internal migration routes in facilitating career advancement and indicate the necessity of including cultural sensitivity in career counseling interventions for internal migrants.

Keywords: *Centralization of job opportunities, increasing internal migration, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.*

Introduction

The phenomenon of youngsters from poor countries relocating to new areas in pursuit of improved employment opportunities and higher remuneration is a commonly employed technique (Lagakos, 2020). The labor market outcomes of migrants from poor nations have predominantly been associated with international migrants residing in Western countries in economic research. The subject of internal migration inside developing countries has garnered relatively less attention, despite its prevalence and possible significant implications for local labor markets and overall poverty levels (Rodríguez-Vignoli & Rowe, 2018). The concept of internal migration is commonly understood as a form of investment in human capital, where individuals and their households make decisions based on maximizing their overall well-being (Thomas, 2019). This involves assessing the present costs associated with migration and weighing them against the anticipated benefits. The phenomenon of rural-to-urban migration is frequently driven by the anticipation of increased pay and the desire for improved employment prospects (Khanna, 2020).

The factors influencing migration are therefore expected to be found within the significant primary aspects that define the livelihood situations and future possibilities of households in rural communities (Mlambo, 2018). Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that individuals do not uniformly respond to migration chances. Rather, the

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unique attributes and qualities of potential migrants significantly contribute to the understanding of migration phenomena. The selection factors of migration, namely immigration, have been emphasized at the individual level (Tanoh & Osei-Assibey, 2019). The human-capital perspective on migration posits that persons who voluntarily choose to migrate are typically those who anticipate the highest potential wage disparity between migrating and not migrating, and/or have the lowest associated expenses of migration. There has been a scholarly debate over the correlation between selection decisions and the outcomes of immigrant quality. The act of choosing to immigrate is thus regarded as a reflection of an individual's inherent characteristics in comparison to the overall population of their home nation (Alexander, 2021).

The prevailing deduction made by analysts on migration patterns within local labor markets is that employment-related factors serve as a significant motivation for individuals to relocate (Bernard & Kalemba, 2022). Nevertheless, empirical data from surveys indicate that the overwhelming majority of individuals who are employed and relocate between local labor markets do so primarily for social and consumption-related motives, rather than only to improve their job outcomes (Kalemba, et al., 2020). Initially, the seeming incongruity between the micro-level motivations deduced from net migration patterns and the motivations self-reported by the migrants themselves presents a perplexing situation (Karhula et al., 2020). The resolution is derived from a recognition of the distinction between moves that merely facilitate employment relocation and those that genuinely augment employment returns. To effect a change in residence, individuals who are part of the labor force must establish a reliable source of income at the intended destination (Pelikh & Kulu, 2018). This need consequently imposes limitations on the individuals who can relocate, as well as the timing and geographical scope of their relocation. Individuals who perceive limited opportunities for employment abroad or anticipate lower remuneration in real terms relative to their current location are more inclined to remain in their home region. Consequently, only those who possess confidence in their ability to address the employment challenge opt to migrate (Raymer & Baffour, 2018).

Based on the neoclassical perspective, individuals who relocate do so not just to exploit disparities in pay related to their skills, but also to ensure continued employment in different geographical areas (Vidal & Lutz, 2018). However, in the scenario where job opportunities are abundant in many regions and the likelihood of finding employment elsewhere only differs little, factors other than employment will play a more significant role in influencing people's decisions to relocate (Zufferey et al., 2021). In instances of this nature, the act of migrating to improve work opportunities is supplanted by the act of migration to achieve other objectives. Consequently, the augmentation of employment through the elevation of wages or improvement in labor conditions is not an obligatory prerequisite for the occurrence of such migratory patterns (An et al., 2022). In contemporary urban areas, the availability of employment opportunities has reached a level where migration is increasingly utilized as a means to fulfill lifestyle preferences and the corresponding consumption needs (Clemens et al., 2017). In practical terms, it is observed that a minority of individuals relocate with the anticipation of securing employment opportunities that ultimately do not materialize. This situation might lead to several outcomes, such as a decision to return to their original place of residence, pursue another relocation, or adjust their employment status in their new area (El Badaoui et al., 2017).

There is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the performance of internal migrants in the labor market compared to their resident counterparts. This scarcity can be attributed mostly to restrictions in available data. The pursuit of employment serves as the predominant catalyst for internal mobility among young males in numerous Arab nations (Orlov, 2020). Remarkably, there has been a notable lack of emphasis on the job search procedure and the labor market results of internal migrants, particularly within

developing nations. In certain circumstances, migrants may encounter various disadvantages or occupational segmentation within the labor market of their destination (Borjas et al., 2019). The exclusion of migrants from analysis is a common practice among policymakers, despite the potential relevance of their experiences. This exclusion is based on the understanding that the unique outcomes observed in the labor market for migrants can be attributable to variations in their pre-migration characteristics, including factors such as age, work experience, education, and psychological attributes (Sharp, 2020). When examining the youth population, the rate at which they transition into employment serves as a concise indicator of the labor market conditions for young individuals. It also acts as a substitute for gauging the level of ease or challenges that young people may encounter when they enter the labor market (Nzabona et al., 2019). The assessment of the transition trajectory and duration is therefore valuable in identifying potential instances of discrimination among young migrants, going beyond just static data on an individual's employment rate or occupational position (Gurung, 2022).

This research seeks to make a scholarly contribution to the existing body of literature on career development and migration by examining the many implications of internal migration on individuals' career development. This research centers its attention on a particular case study that examines the migration experiences of young individuals from rural Riyadh who relocate in pursuit of employment opportunities. While there exists a substantial amount of literature on internal migration, the predominant focus has been on the topic of university access, rather than examining the broader aspects of mobility about long-term career progression and the transfer into the workforce. The investigation into the impact of immigration on career advancement within the immigrant population holds significant promise, particularly because young individuals represent the most mobile demographic within the Saudi populace and are typically engaged in formulating career trajectories and decisions.

Literature Review

The economic theory lacks clarity in its ability to anticipate whether migrants will experience more ease in accessing the labor market at their destination in contrast to local people. This section provides a more comprehensive analysis of the interplay between migration and labor market outcomes, as elucidated in contemporary scholarly economic literature.

The human capital models of international migration emphasize that migrants are often positively selected in comparison to the native population due to their local ties to the chosen destination (Bryan, G., & Morten, M. (2019). Jia et al. (2023) elucidate the process of migration by employing a theoretical framework proposed by Roy (1951), which involves the concept of self-selection, specifically in the context of international migration. According to the model proposed, rational agents make informed decisions on their participation in various markets by considering their comparative advantages based on both observable and unobservable qualities. Therefore, it may be argued that individuals possess the capacity to migrate, actively choosing employment opportunities and geographical locations that offer the greatest anticipated profits or the most favorable utilization of their skills. The process of internal migration might exhibit comparable mechanisms to those observed in international migration, albeit with variations in terms of the chosen destination (Alvarez et al., 2021).

In addition to the desire to avoid unfavorable economic circumstances and pursue income-maximization strategies, individuals may also be motivated to migrate based on specific psychological traits, including personality, non-cognitive skills, risk aversion, locus of control, and willingness to secure employment (Lagakos, 2020). These traits have the potential to impact labor market outcomes. In recent times, scholarly literature

has highlighted the distinct function fulfilled by informal information networks, such as familial and social connections established at the destination of migration (Rodríguez-Vignoli & Rowe, 2018). These networks have been found to effectively diminish search and information expenses, hence facilitating the successful integration of succeeding waves of migrants into the labor market. Similarly, the opportunity to secure employment can also be enhanced through marriage to a resident, since the native spouse can assist in facilitating entry to the local labor market (Thomas, 2019). In the context of Saudi Arabia, as observed in the SWTS 2015 study, over 70% of migrants were discovered to have acquired their present employment through personal connections such as friends or family members.

In addition to the self-selection process via which migrants choose to migrate based on certain observable or unobservable qualities, disparities in job opportunities between migrants and non-migrants may also be influenced by the immigrants' background and motivations for migration (Khanna, 2020). Not all individuals who migrate are driven by the goal of optimizing their successful absorption into the domestic workforce. Many individuals are fleeing from conflicts or circumstances characterized by severe poverty. In such cases, the migrants' human capital, including their education level, qualifications, and skills, may not align with the requirements for obtaining a first job in the destination region or may be of lesser quality (Mlambo, 2018).

Migration among young individuals possesses distinct characteristics as it serves as a manifestation of transitions across several life stages, spanning from adolescence to maturity. The process encompasses various stages, including formal education, initial job, marriage, and the establishment of a family, which may not be universally encountered by adult individuals who migrate (Tanoh & Osei-Assibey, 2019). According to the SWTS 2015 data, it was observed that a significant proportion of young male migrants in Saudi Arabia, specifically 38 percent, had relocated from their original place of residence with the primary objective of seeking better employment opportunities. The proportion of young male migrants who went for educational objectives was seen to be lower, namely at 15 percent.

Additional factors contributing to teenage migration can be categorized as "coerced" or, at the very least, characterized by a diminished sense of self-determination. Approximately 32 percent of male migrants and 19 percent of female migrants indicated that their reason for relocation was due to their family's decision to move (Alexander, 2021). Only a mere 1 percent of young boys relocated due to the occurrence of marriage. Lastly, it is imperative to take into account an additional cohort of youthful migrants, who regrettably cannot be discerned within the dataset. These individuals pertain to the category of young refugees originating from the protracted conflict in their respective countries, constituting a distinct yet prevalent subset of migrants (Bernard & Kalembe, 2022). Accessing the labor market can pose significant challenges for internally displaced individuals, primarily due to compromised health conditions and the missed opportunity to acquire relevant skills resulting from their exposure to conflict-affected regions (Kalembe, et al., 2020).

Obstacles may emerge that impede the integration of migrants into the labor market when employers residing in the host country lack sufficient information to accurately evaluate the abilities and potential productivity of migrants (Karhula et al., 2020). The presence of uncertainty regarding the productivity of migrants gives rise to incentives for employers to utilize observable qualities, which may serve as discriminatory proxies for productivity (Pelikh & Kulu, 2018). In instances of this nature, employers tend to undervalue the productivity of migrants compared to non-migrants, hence exacerbating the challenges faced by migrants in their pursuit of work. The resultant form of discrimination frequently arises not from deliberate biases, but rather as a logical reaction to deficiencies in available information. However, it is important to acknowledge that employers may

still possess internal biases that contribute to their inclination to shun certain demographic groupings (Raymer & Baffour, 2018).

The potential for extended transition periods resulting from prejudice against migrants might be mitigated by two factors that can expedite employment opportunities (Vidal & Lutz, 2018). The job match model proposed by Zufferey et al. (2021) posits that the rate at which individuals anticipate finding employment, known as the job matching rate, is contingent upon the aggregate quantity of available work opportunities within the labor market. Furthermore, this model suggests an inverse relationship between the job matching rate and the associated costs incurred throughout the job search process. In the context of work stratification, it may be observed that migrants exhibit a greater propensity to accept employment opportunities across various job categories, whereas residents tend to be more selective. Consequently, migrants demonstrate more elevated levels of overall job matching rates (An et al., 2022). Furthermore, the notion of luxury unemployment posits that individuals seeking employment may extend their job search duration to secure a position that aligns optimally with their credentials and aspirations, provided they possess a support system (Clemens et al., 2017). Migrants who lack familial support and do not have access to national unemployment funds or other forms of social protection may face financial constraints that prevent them from affording an extended period of job search. Consequently, they may be inclined to accept the first employment opportunity that arises, regardless of the working conditions or the alignment with their skills or educational background (El Badaoui et al., 2017).

In recent decades, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone a complete economic and developmental movement, resulting in the emergence of numerous chances and prospects for its residents across several domains. Urban centers have emerged as the primary beneficiaries of these earnings, owing to their notable concentration of educational, healthcare, and cultural establishments (Orlov, 2020). Moreover, they serve as significant hubs for attracting immigrants from various regions within the Kingdom. Migration is driven by various factors. One prominent motive is the pursuit of improved employment prospects. Another significant impetus is the desire to engage in higher education at universities. Additionally, individuals may migrate to reunite with their families, constituting a third motivation (Borjas et al., 2019). Furthermore, individuals may be enticed by the allure of a more enhanced quality of life, encompassing amenities, services, entertainment, and contemporary advancements that urban areas provide. This phenomenon is to be expected as cities are widely seen as appealing hubs of culture, commerce, and economic activity (Sharp, 2020).

Previous Studies

Nzabona et al. (2019) examined the factors associated with internal migration and employment among young individuals. The researchers gathered primary data from a total of 1,537 participants. The likelihood of migration and career opportunities are enhanced by advancing in age during the youth stage. Residing in a rural setting was found to be positively associated with a higher likelihood of engaging in outmigration. The unmarried young individuals exhibited a lower probability of engaging in self-employment while demonstrating a higher likelihood of being hired as salaried workers compared to their married counterparts. Women exhibited a lower likelihood of employment compared to their male counterparts.

An et al. (2020) this study investigated the impact of a substantial easing of internal migration restrictions on labor market outcomes for both existing migrants and native individuals, utilizing the 2014 Hukou reform in China as a basis for analysis. The aforementioned legislation effectively eliminated migration obstacles for cities with an urban population below 5 million, while maintaining the existing migration hurdles in megacities. By employing a difference-in-differences approach, our analysis reveals that the earnings of migrants residing in non-megacities exhibited a fall of roughly 7.9% in

comparison to those in megacities after the implementation of the policy shock. The adverse consequences were more pronounced among incumbent migrants with lower levels of education. In contrast, the policy reform had a positive or neutral effect on the incomes and labor market participation rates of the native population residing in non-megacities. The findings of this study indicate that the decrease in wages resulting from an increase in the migrant population predominantly affects migrants who were already residing in the country, rather than the native population.

Alexander (2021) provided a detailed examination of internal migration inside the United Kingdom, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of young individuals from two island communities as they transition from higher education to the workforce. This study is primarily centered on the significance of cultural disparities, encompassing workplace cultures, to the career advancement of students. The results of this study highlight the significance of internal migration routes to the advancement of one's career. Additionally, they emphasize the necessity of incorporating cultural considerations into career advising practices, particularly when assisting individuals who have migrated internally or internationally.

Corbi et al. (2021) This study examines the labor market effects of internal migration in Brazil by employing a shift-share methodology that integrates weather-induced migration with historical settlement trends in each receiving region. The proposal aims to enhance the internal migration rate by a marginal increase of 1%. The findings indicate that there is a decrease in the proportion of formal employment among native individuals by 0.13%, accompanied by a corresponding increase in the proportion of informal employment. Following the concept of downward wage rigidity within the formal sector, our findings indicate a comparatively lesser adverse impact on formal earnings (0.59%) compared to informal earnings (0.75%). However, we also observe a negative influence on the proportion of workers getting nonwage benefits, ranging from 0.31% to 0.69%. This study examines the complementarity of the evidence by utilizing firm-level administrative data on contracts for employer-sponsored health insurance. The findings indicate that companies situated in a municipality experiencing a higher influx of migrants exhibit a 1.5% decrease in the likelihood of offering health insurance coverage to their employees. This effect is primarily observed among larger organizations. Ultimately, persons with lower levels of education experience a disproportionate burden of the negative consequences resulting from migration.

Methodology

The information presented in this paper is obtained from a demographic analysis of the city of Riyadh conducted by the Supreme Development Authority. The study primarily examines the interconnections among location, mobility, and career trajectories for a cohort of young individuals originating from various regions of Saudi Arabia. This study centers around a research project that examines the phenomenon of young individuals migrating from various regions to the urban center of Riyadh. According to King (2009), the capital city possesses unique geographical conditions that make it an advantageous setting for researching migration studies. Capital cities have a discernible social, cultural, and economic framework. Metropolitan areas exhibit notable variations in employment rates, with certain sectors within the industrial, commercial, and service domains offering more robust opportunities compared to others. Specifically, the presence of factories, shopping centers, and medical facilities tends to result in comparatively greater employment rates in capital cities compared to other regions. The urban center of Riyadh offers several opportunities for pursuing higher education, hosting several prominent universities.

Research design

The purpose of this study is to track a cohort of individuals who have migrated to a specific region and examine the various ways in which their professional paths cross over one year. The study employed a longitudinal qualitative interview methodology, which was deemed appropriate for investigating the transitional experiences of young individuals and examining the evolution and progression of their professions.

Participants

A total of 25 individuals were subjected to interviews at the time of job acquisition, as well as one year after their employment commencement. All participants were slated to be offered full-time employment in the year 2022. The potential employees possess the flexibility to work in various locations; nonetheless, they must establish residency in Riyadh before submitting their job applications. The selection of participants was conducted by distributing an online survey and utilizing the services of the Riyadh Region Career Services. A total of 95 valid replies were obtained from the survey, with 41 people volunteering to participate. A total of 28 individuals were initially asked to participate in the interview process. However, three of these individuals chose to partially withdraw their participation, resulting in a final sample size of 25 participants.

The individuals who participated in the project exhibited certain notable attributes, namely, they were lifelong inhabitants of Riyadh. This was observed in 23 out of the total 25 participants. Seventeen out of twenty-five participants did not have parents who had obtained a college education. The immigrants participated in a variety of job-specific training programs. This study gives empirical facts about persons who have relocated due to occupational reasons.

Analysis

Longitudinal qualitative data is suitable for conducting both cross-sectional analysis, which involves comparing data collected at a single moment in time across the sample, and the study of individual narratives over time (Thomson & Holland, 2003). The analytical approach employed acknowledged the inherent longitudinal and cross-sectional significance of the dataset. The chosen analytic approach was influenced by the concepts of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2001), with the analysis centered on the building of theoretical frameworks. More specifically, the study aimed to explore the significance of space, place, and mobility in shaping career paths. The iterative nature of the analysis and data-gathering processes was evident since the initial analytical findings were utilized to guide further data collection during the second round of interviews. Following the interviews, a concise narrative summary was composed for each participant. These summaries were then revised after the second round of interviews, resulting in the development of an individual case profile for each participant. This approach facilitated the examination of both the evolution and persistence of their narratives throughout the study period (Thomson & Holland, 2003).

Results

The study focuses on the examination of cultural disparities, particularly about workplace cultures, between rural and urban settings. It explores the potential consequences of these disparities on the process of persons transitioning into the workplace. Quotations are employed by individuals as a means of clarifying the underlying concepts. It is important to note that caution has been exercised to ensure that no identifying information about the individual is included. From an ethical standpoint, the significance of this issue is heightened due to the large scale of the communities involved and the relative simplicity with which individuals may be identified. Consequently, pseudonyms are deliberately

omitted to prevent the linkage of quotations to specific individuals, and specific participant data such as workplace location and job titles are intentionally withheld.

The data provided in this study does not directly address the process of relocating to Riyadh and the factors influencing individuals' decision-making, as examined in an examination of the city of Riyadh undertaken by the High Authority for Development. Nevertheless, to contextualize the present results, it is pertinent to clarify that, by Corbett's (2007) concept of "learning to leave," a significant number of persons held the belief that they would relocate from rural areas in pursuit of employment opportunities, perceiving such a decision as a matter of practicality. Nevertheless, individuals often opt for locations that are sufficiently familiar to facilitate the transition to the workplace, even when it involves significant spatial relocation. These chosen locations strike a balance between providing novel experiences and avoiding overwhelming unfamiliarity (Alexander, 2016). Indeed, this phenomenon resulted in distinct spatial inclinations, as evidenced by the fact that 12 out of 25 individuals secured employment within the central district of Riyadh. This finding aligns with the statistical data on immigration patterns in the city of Riyadh, indicating that approximately 23.7% of immigrants originate from rural areas within the Riyadh region.

"Distances" between other regions, rural and Riyadh region

The initial discovery to be examined in this study pertains to the notable physical and cultural disparity that individuals have recognized between their rural residences and their work sites. To geographical distance, the implications of transportation durations and expenses result in a situation where individuals, unlike a significant portion of their peers, are unable to return to their place of residence on weekends, as expressed by one participant. For these individuals, the issue of internal mobility posed a greater level of urgency compared to certain forms of foreign mobility. One participant shared their experience of working closely with an Egyptian engineer, who could make spontaneous trips back home for a nominal fee, allowing him to enjoy weekend holidays. During the week when the opportunity arises for me to travel back home on short notice, the associated expenses are expected to be significantly elevated. The findings presented herein indicate that minor disparities in experiences of international and domestic mobility pose a significant concern. These individuals were classified as internal migrants, however, due to the expenses and duration associated with travel, they encountered a higher degree of "distance" compared to certain overseas students.

Moreover, these individuals encountered cultural disparities between their respective rural areas and metropolitan settings. The rural areas are frequently characterized as possessing a sense of "comfort" and "tranquility", offering ample "spatial" resources and fostering a strong sense of community familiarity. Urban surroundings have been characterized as bustling, offering a plethora of options and prospects, but also providing a sense of anonymity. One individual expressed that urban settings are comparatively tranquil, fostering a strong sense of community and a relaxing atmosphere, in contrast to the constant activity and multitude of events that occur in such places. Comparable attributes of the distinctions between urban and rural environments have been identified in other contexts. Nevertheless, this study examines how various surroundings have significant ramifications for migrants to the requisite skills and knowledge required for achieving success. Participants expressed a desire to acquire the necessary skills for utilizing public transit networks. In the context of metropolitan environments, an individual expressed upon securing employment that the task of locating public transport remains challenging.

In addition to acquiring practical life skills, learners also recognize the significance of many cultures to communication and interpersonal abilities. Specifically, there exists a perception that within metropolitan settings, it is important to exhibit a higher degree of self-assurance or assertiveness.

This proposition may appear trivial or nonsensical, nevertheless, [...] If one is dining at a certain establishment and encounters a situation where the food served is notably cold, it has been observed that a majority of individuals tend to refrain from taking any remedial action. However, it is now apparent that I may have gone beyond the appropriate threshold of verbal expression in this matter.

In the context of international migration, the significance of cultural competency becomes apparent in shaping an individual's sense of belonging and comfort within their new urban surroundings. The utilization of the seemingly "absurd" expression by the individual exemplifies the potential subtlety and perceived insignificance of cultural disparities, yet underscores their significance in shaping an individual's sense of belonging within a novel milieu.

Furthermore, it was perceived that routine activities, such as social interactions, exhibit variations within metropolitan settings. Cities have been characterized as favorable locations offering a multitude of options for shopping and dining experiences. The presence of diverse establishments for retail therapy, culinary exploration, and socializing contributes to the appeal of urban environments. As one individual expressed, "The presence of various shops and dining establishments in cities enhances the experience of leisurely strolling through retail outlets and indulging in diverse culinary delights, such as enjoying meals and beverages." Nevertheless, certain individuals, particularly those who were raised in rural regions, have the chance to partake in outdoor pursuits and actively participate in activities such as walking or engaging in manual labor outdoors. When an individual spends a significant amount of time residing in urban areas, there arises a necessity to venture into rural regions to access unpolluted atmospheric conditions. Many individuals frequently contemplate the distinction between their own experiences and those of individuals who were raised in the southern region, sometimes referred to as "the South," due to its association with the remainder of the mainland territory. Participants expressed their perspectives by stating, "One may not have been cognizant of their upbringing's influence on their perception." There was a prevailing perception that individuals who were raised in the southern region of the United States possessed distinct expectations, were familiar with diverse lifestyles, and possessed the necessary abilities and knowledge to effectively navigate urban settings.

The disparities between urban and rural lifestyles, as well as the difficulties associated with the ability to return home, were pronounced to such an extent that persons often expressed the experience as leading "two distinct lives." In this context, it is probable for individuals to cultivate "other" identities, akin to the process observed in the formation of transnational identities resulting from international migration.

Differences in working environments

In addition to overarching cultural disparities between rural and urban areas, individuals have noted distinct differences in work conditions. These considerations typically pertain to the scale of the companies: "I aspire to work for larger corporations, as there may be fewer prospects available in rural areas." Typically, rural communities and other regions tend toward smaller-scale work environments. Individuals often see smaller organizations as less intimidating compared to larger companies. This perception is partly attributed to the formal atmosphere and reduced need for trust in smaller companies. As one individual expressed, "Entering a large company can be quite intimidating, especially for someone shy and reserved." There exists a correlation between cultural norms that prioritize a greater degree of assertiveness in urban settings and the heightened degrees of trust or assertiveness that can be anticipated within expansive business settings.

The urban environment provides social places and opportunities that facilitate the formation of specific professional identities, which are perceived to be less attainable in rural areas.

At [name of company], we had the opportunity to partake in dining experiences at various restaurants, including upscale cocktail shops and similar venues that catered to the preferences of young professionals. In my perspective, there is a limited presence of young professionals in rural areas, and cocktail shops and restaurants are lacking.

Working for smaller enterprises in rural areas also has ramifications for career prospects. To begin with, it is important to note that smaller working settings necessitate the capacity to engage in cross-functional work, as opposed to specializing in a singular specialization.

In rural areas, individuals tend to specialize in a particular aspect of the sector they are involved in, limiting their scope of knowledge and skills. Conversely, in urban areas, companies offer a wider range of experiences due to the smaller workforce, resulting in employees being involved in many tasks and responsibilities.

Participants also articulated the necessity for acquiring specialized abilities that are specifically tailored to their work in rural communities. Notably, this includes the capacity to professionally engage with clients who are either personally acquainted with or familiar with them, a concept that can be conceptualized as "intimacy management".

Transition to the workplace: spatial choices

The examination of cultural disparities between rural and urban lifestyles and work environments has assumed significant importance in the context of moving to the professional sphere. While a significant portion of the existing research on rural migration often assumes that young individuals permanently leave rural areas, it is worth noting that more than one-third of the individuals in this particular sample remained in the countryside upon attaining working age. This finding aligns with the overall rates of return observed in similar studies. The examination of the various elements influencing individuals' decisions to either remain in their current location or migrate is outside the purview of this paper. Nevertheless, the choices made by young individuals were influenced by cultural disparities and their sense of comfort.

The influence of prior job experience played a considerable factor in individuals' preferences for working in urban or rural areas.

After accumulating a four-year tenure, I successfully secured a professional position in the city of [name of city]. Reflecting on my practical experience during this placement, I consider it to be a pivotal moment that solidified my confidence in my ability to thrive in this location. The presence of the corporation is now established, allowing me to secure employment with a prominent organization. This prospect is not anticipated to induce significant trepidation or negative experiences.

Hence, the job experience facilitated opportunities for individuals to gain exposure to diverse work environments and acquire knowledge within these specific contexts. Furthermore, employment experiences have also facilitated individuals' transition to new workplaces by establishing connections with firms, industries, and individuals. Consequently, job experience exerted a significant impact not only on individuals' career trajectories but also on the spatial and occupational directions in which those trajectories unfolded.

One facet of the convenience associated with securing employment in "urban areas" pertained to the exposure to diverse work environments, while the other entailed firsthand encounters during the process of job hunting. The job search process in urban areas is commonly characterized by individuals as being both demanding and anxiety-inducing. This phenomenon was most prevalent among those who possessed prior exposure to major corporations. The pressures associated with official application processes and informal processes in rural areas were examined by individuals.

In essence, I arrived at this location and promptly requested employment, subsequently undergoing a brief interview, which transpired satisfactorily. However, the procedures involved in securing several positions throughout urban regions proved to be time-consuming, necessitating extensive hours and copious documentation to complete, alongside multiple rounds of interviews.

The concept of competitiveness and self-promotion was also foreign to a significant number of persons. In urban environments, one must possess the will to effectively market oneself and establish a notable professional identity to secure employment, as employers may lack awareness regarding one's specific professional capabilities. In the context of familial relationships, it is sometimes the case that family members may lack visual familiarity with an individual. Consequently, it becomes necessary for that individual to present themselves favorably to establish a positive impression.

In instances where students had limited exposure to mainland Scottish workplaces or encountered challenges in securing employment, the thriving labor market in the islands emerged as an attractive option for many. This was particularly true for part-time and seasonal work opportunities, as well as for individuals with pre-existing familial and social connections in the area. Moreover, the familiar and comparatively less arduous job search procedures in the islands further contributed to the appeal, even if the arrangement was only temporary.

Discussion

The findings of this research project unequivocally illustrate the significance of internal migration to the professional advancement of individuals transitioning from rural to urban areas. It is noteworthy to highlight that the significance of travel connections within different regions of Saudi Arabia, in terms of both cost and time allocation, might surpass that of certain foreign destinations. Moreover, this study presents empirical support for the significance of the cultural aspect of internal migration, as well as the challenges faced by migrants in terms of adapting to new social and cultural contexts. This observation aligns with the findings of prior scholarly investigations (Alexander, 2021). However, the present study places particular emphasis on examining the impacts on young individuals and their transition into the workforce. Specifically, the process of internal migration from small communities, such as rural areas, to metropolitan settings has been found to encompass encounters with cultural diversity and necessitate the acquisition of cultural proficiency.

The management of spatial and cultural disparities among rural individuals transitioning to urban work environments aligns with prior scholarly investigations, as shown by the study conducted by Nzabona et al. (2019). Nevertheless, a noteworthy addition to this study lies in the discernment of several distinct consequences of commuting to the urban job. The findings of this study align with the outcomes of prior research conducted by An et al. (2020), which also highlighted the significance of job experience. In the aforementioned study, the researchers discovered the significance of work experience in facilitating the process of acculturation among internal migrants within the workplace, as well as its role in fostering networking opportunities. The authors ultimately concluded that work experience holds greater importance for individual migrants. From members of the local community. This study reveals comparable findings and implications about the significance of work experience, as it serves as a valuable mechanism for shaping both spatial and professional paths. An et al. (2020) have identified variations in work cultures between smaller and larger contexts, particularly in the context of small countries. Nevertheless, their study also highlights the significance of "smallness" to disparities between urban and rural labor markets, which can present difficulties for individuals transitioning between these labor markets.

Furthermore, the existing body of research provides evidence of the impact of broader social and cultural disparities on the progression of individuals' careers, in addition to the unique obstacles encountered within various work environments. Metropolitan regions that include a higher degree of restaurant diversity are associated with the presence of well-defined social spaces, especially those catering to young professionals. Additionally, the qualities of confidence and assertiveness, which are inherent to metropolitan environments, hold significance in the context of job searches. Furthermore, it is important to consider the potential disparities in career trajectories and the requisite career management proficiencies (or employability) between urban and rural contexts. For instance, urban settings may necessitate a broader skill set, emphasizing the capacity to function as a generalist rather than a specialist. Conversely, rural settings may prioritize specialized expertise and the ability to operate as a specialist. Experienced in working with familiar clientele. Previous research conducted by Corbi et al. (2021) has identified the disparity in job search strategies between rural and urban labor markets. However, the present study highlights that immigrants may experience specific pressures or challenges in comprehending and acquiring the necessary skills for diverse employment procedures due to these differences. The present study establishes connections with the existing body of international literature, highlighting the unique difficulties faced by migrants in their job search endeavors. Specifically, the research underscores the challenges associated with communication skills and styles that migrants need to possess.

Guidance implications

While the primary objective of this study project does not revolve around career guidance strategies specifically tailored for internal migrants, the existing evidence of the cultural obstacles associated with internal migration poses significant inquiries for the field of guidance practice. The present study underscores the interconnectedness between space, place, migration, and career development. Therefore, it is quite probable that addressing these concerns directly in the context of career advising will yield significant value, aligning with the points I have previously presented in other works. The issue of international mobility frequently entails practical factors, such as visa requirements and language proficiency, which are more likely to be specifically addressed in guide practices. Nevertheless, the limited amount of scholarly work on the subject of internal mobility and guidance practice suggests that there may be fewer apparent obstacles associated with internal mobility, which could potentially lead to a lack of recognition or discussion of this topic in the field of career guides. Failure to address concerns related to place and mobility may result in a lack of direct discussion regarding pertinent career matters, such as effectively managing transitions to various locations and navigating diverse cultural expectations. The importance of cultural differences and the process of enculturation for these individuals gives rise to broader inquiries regarding the applicability of multicultural approaches that incorporate cultural sensitivity. This pertains not only to individuals from diverse international backgrounds but also to internal migrants.

Limitations and further research

The findings of this study shed light on several overarching factors to be taken into account in the context of internal migration and its impact on career advancement. Nevertheless, the analysis provided in this paper offers a simplified perspective on intricate migration processes. While the selection of work locations by individuals was found to be influenced by work culture, the research findings also indicate that the structure of specific career paths and interpersonal relationships play significant roles. The examination of the intricate interplay among various elements that contribute to the formation of individual trajectories was not within the purview of this study. However, there exists potential for future investigation into these interrelationships.

One significant limitation to consider is that while cities are commonly associated with larger workplaces, this assumption is a generalization. For instance, there are cases where individuals work in large companies but live in rural areas, albeit as part of small teams. Individuals actively seek employment opportunities inside small companies due to their preference for the more intimate and accommodating work environments offered by such organizations, as opposed to the comparatively bigger and potentially less personalized settings seen in larger corporations. While the participants in this study did not engage in remote work, a subset of individuals expressed interest in the prospect of working for an organization located in a rural area but serving urban communities in the future. Hence, it is imperative to conduct further research on how individuals effectively negotiate diverse workplace dynamics and social situations, potentially spanning several geographical locations. This investigation may be grounded in the concept of persons cultivating distinct identities or leading dual lives and may contribute to a more intricate understanding of geographical space. It is influenced by relational viewpoints that recognize the diversity and intricacy of locations and regions.

Conclusion

The research findings reported in this paper emphasize the significance of internal migration processes, namely rural-urban migration, to career growth within the Saudi Arabian context. It is worth noting that this particular field of study has been largely overlooked in the current body of literature. The present argument posits that there exists a connection between the international migration literature and the notion that internal and international migration should be perceived as interrelated phenomena. This connection is based on the observation that these two forms of migration often exhibit comparable dynamics and provide associated challenges and issues in the context of career development. The data given in this research highlight the significance of cultural disparities and adaptive mechanisms in both international migration and rural-urban migration scenarios. This implies that there is considerable scope for further investigation into alternative connections between international and internal mobility and the advancement of careers. Simultaneously, it is imperative to acknowledge that migration is a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon. This paper also briefly examines the significance of diversity in migration experiences, recognizing that certain individuals may gradually acclimate to urban settings and develop distinct personality traits as a result. In many organizational settings. Additional study opportunities were also recognized to investigate the intricacies of the correlation between mobility and career advancement.

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