

AALBORG UNIVERSITY



**The Faculty of Humanities
Department of Culture and Learning**

Thesis Topic:

**Critical Reflections of the Economic Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on
Migration and Mobility Among the Youth in Africa**

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Abstract

Purpose: The thesis critically reflects on the economic impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on migration and mobility among the youth in Africa in terms of labor market mobility, exacerbating inequalities, and impoverishing economic wellbeing. It unearthed how these grand impacts ballooned into mental health issues and possible national security concerns.

Methods: Mixed research methods was used. It enables the strength(s) of each method—QUAL, Quan—to compensate the weakness(es) of the other. In terms of research design, the concurrent embedded strategy of mixed research methods was deployed. Both QUAL and Quan data collection and analysis was done simultaneously. However, the secondary method (Quan) is embedded within the principal method (QUAL). For data analysis approaches, thematic analysis and descriptive statistics were used for the QUAL and Quan aspect respectively.

Findings: I discovered that the patterns of migration and mobility in Ghana have been affected greatly by the pandemic. The changing migratory/mobility patterns snowballed to influence labor market participation as well as economic wellbeing of people. Besides, inequalities—both in labor market, educational and other milieu—have been intensified with the advent of the pandemic. Coupled with the above obvious impacts of the corona crisis in Ghana, mental health problems and national security concerns were other indirect effects of the pandemic this thesis uncovered.

Keywords: Covid-19, Migration/Mobility, National Security, Youth/Women, Africa

Table of Contents

Abstract	II
Table of contents.....	III
Acknowledgments	VI
List of Abbreviation	VII
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background	1
Research Gap and Study Rationale	2
Research Objectives and Questions	4
Table 1.1: Research Questions and Objectives	5
Research Hypothesis.....	5
Table 1.2: Research Hypotheses	5
Study Context - Africa/Ghana: Why Migration, Mobility and Covid-19?	5
Structure of the Thesis	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
Research Methodology and Methods	7
Chapter Outline	7
Methodological Framework.....	7
Figure 2.1: General outline of the Research Project	7
Philosophical Underpinnings: Pragmatism Paradigm	7
Purpose for Mixing	9
Research Design/Strategy: Concurrent Embedded.....	9
Figure 2.2: Concurrent embedded mixed method research design	10
Data Sources and Data Collection Methods	10
Population and access to the study participants	11
Sampling Technique: Concurrent Mixed Method Sampling	11
Data Validity/Quality: Inside-Outside Legitimization	13
Justification for the Choice of Literature Theory.....	14
Data Analysis.....	14
Major themes for analysis.....	15
Figure 2.3: Twenty-five (25) Recurrent words from the dataset using the voyant tools	16
Figure 2.4: Trends – Graph of recurrent words using the voyant data analytic tools	17
Some phrases extracted from interview’s data using the voyant analytic tools.....	17
Table 2.2: Some phrases highlighted by the research respondents	17
Constructed themes	18
Table 2.3: Constructed categories	18
Figure 2.5: Major themes	19
Position of Researcher	19

Ethical Considerations	20
Research Audience.....	20
CHAPTER THREE	21
<i>Contextual Overview</i>	<i>21</i>
Preamble	21
Migration & Mobility in Ghana Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic	21
Precarious Livelihood Conditions in Ghana Necessitated by the Covid-19.....	24
Policy Regimes of Youth Employment and Intervention in Ghana	27
Why Youth Employment Policies and Programmes in Ghana?	29
Regimes of Economic/Social Exclusion and Inequality in Africa/Ghana	30
The Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Poverty and Gender Inequality	32
CHAPTER FOUR	34
<i>Theoretical Underpinnings.....</i>	<i>34</i>
Preamble	34
Integration of Theory/Concepts – further theory building.....	34
Figure 3.1 Theoretical/Conceptual Integration	35
Concept of Precarity.....	36
What precarity?	36
Overview of precarity concept.....	36
Main issues and strength of the concept of precarity to the study	37
Critique of precarity concept.....	38
What is the concept of social exclusion?	38
Historical overview of the concept of social exclusion.....	39
Relevance and application of the concept of social/economic exclusion to this study	40
Critique of the concept of social/economic exclusion	43
What is segmented labor market theory?.....	43
Brief historical of the segmented labor market theory	43
Relevance of the segmented labor market theory to this study	43
Critique of the segmented labor market theory	45
Justification and application of theory/concepts in the thesis	46
CHAPTER FIVE.....	48
<i>Data Analysis: Findings and Discussions</i>	<i>48</i>
Introduction of chapter	48
Demographic characteristics of the study participants.....	48
Age distribution of the study participants.....	48
Table 5.1: Age distribution of respondents	48
Educational background of the study participants	49
Table 5.2: Educational background of the study participants	49

Sex distribution respondents.....	50
Table 5.3: Sex of study participants	50
Marital status of the respondents.....	50
Table 5.4: Marital status of the study participants	50
Occupational status of respondents.....	51
Figure 5.1: Occupational status of respondents.....	51
Employment type of the respondents.....	51
Table 5.5: Respondents' employment type	52
Residence status of the study respondents.....	52
Table 5.6: Residence status of the study participants.....	52
Annual income levels of the study participants.....	52
Figure 5.2: Annual income of the participants	53
Summary of Major Findings	53
Table 5.7 Summary major findings	54
Altered Movements and Labor Market Mobilities in Ghana Amidst the Pandemic ..	56
Figure 5.3: Patterns of migration and mobilities in Ghana amidst the pandemic	60
Figure 5.4: Covid-19 pandemic impacted labor market mobilities.....	61
Covid-19 Crisis and the Economic Wellbeing Among Youth/Women in Ghana	61
Figure 5.5: Income generation activities impacted	65
Figure 5.6: People's basic needs (livelihood) affected by the pandemic	65
Inequalities Among the Youth/Women Labor Market Space Amidst the Covid-19 Crisis	66
Table 5.8: Prevailing inequalities in Ghana's labor market space	69
Figure 5.7: Covid-19 deepened inequalities in Ghana's labor market space	70
Mental Health Concerns Among the Youth/Women Amidst Corona Crises.....	72
Table 5.9: Gender biased nature of the covid-19 pandemic.....	74
Discussions – Transversal perspectives.....	75
Conclusion	77
Policy Recommendations	79
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>81</i>
Appendix 1: Interview Guide.....	91
Appendix 2: Survey/Questionnaire.....	93
Appendix 3: Screenshot of the spreadsheet of Raw data in Kobo toolbox.....	95
Appendix 4: Screenshot of the spreadsheet of Data Reporting in Kobo toolbox.....	95
Appendix 5: Screenshot of Data spreadsheet on voyant tools.....	96
Appendix 6: Screenshot of Data spreadsheet on SPSS.....	96

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List of Abbreviation

ADB	African Development Bank
AR	Accra Respondents
ECOWAS	Economic Committee of West African States
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
UNICEF	United National International Children Emergency Fund
USD	United States Dollars
WHO	World Health Organization
TR	Tamale Respondent

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

The novel coronavirus was detected in China, Wuhan and quickly spread to other parts of the world in a short while (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). By 11th March 2020, the covid-19 was officially declared a pandemic by the Director-General of WHO (WHO, 2020). Interestingly, in the early weeks of March 2020, the theatre of covid-19 infections moved from China to Europe: Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and France. And, on 12th March 2020, Ghana recorded its first covid-19 virus case, supposedly imported by two foreign travelers from the European countries of Turkey and Norway (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

The pandemic has significantly modified mobility and migration prospects globally, especially for West Africa due to the imposed restrictions (Coz & Hooper, 2021). For example, various sectors—the education, service, construction, sports, tourism, entertainment, health, manufacturing—of the world’s economy have been impacted significantly by the covid-19 pandemic (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020; Shachar, 2020; Schleicher, 2020). Again, different countries and/or diverse sectors of the global economy have experienced the consequences of the pandemic in dissimilar breadth and magnitude due to their respective resilience, preparedness, and readiness levels (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020).

Migration is a global occurrence characterized by mobilities both within countries and international borders. There are approximately **244 million** transnational migrants routing the globe (United Nations, 2016). In the same continuum of movements, there are about **763 million** internal migrants globally (United Nations, 2013). This implies that an approximately **1 billion** of the world’s population—that is one-seventh of the world’s population—are migrants (World Economic Forum, 2019). Additionally, 1 out of every 30 people of the **7.7 billion** global population are on the move, representing **3.5 per cent** of the world’s population (McAuliffe, Bauloz, & Qu, 2020).

As pointed out, majority of migrants do not move across their national borders but move around within their countries of citizenship. This represents a guesstimated **740 million** internal migrants in 2009 (McAuliffe, Bauloz, & Qu, 2020; United Nations, 2013). Remarkably, migration is being deployed as a vehicle for creating livelihood and income-earning diversification within or across borders of nations states (Awumbila &

Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008). Further, financial, and in-kind remittances by migrants to their families and communities rose from USD **126 billion** in 2000, to USD **689 billion** in 2018 as a windfall of migration (IOM, 2020).

Contrariwise, migrants have been negatively perceived for swamping into cities, increasing joblessness and labor redundancy, exerting pressure on the existing limited social amenities of the host cities, and contributing to social turbulence and civil chaos in some cases (World Economic Forum, 2019; John & Ababio, 2009). Approximately, there are **1.2 billion** young people aged 15 to 24 years globally, representing **16 per cent** of the world's population (United Nations, 2018). The World Economic Forum documents that African countries boasts of the youngest, fastest-growing populations in the world. For example, out of the ten youngest populations in the world (taking median ages of 14 to 17 into consideration) are all in Africa (Myers, 2016).

Thus, African employment challenges readily lend themselves to being labelled as youth challenges. However, the causes of Africa's unemployment are far from straightforward in their youth-specificity. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, the youth constitute nearly **20 percent** of the total population. In other regions, however, the relative proportion of youth is less compared to sub-Saharan Africa (Filmer & Fox, 2014). In Ghana, nearly **32.2 per cent of** Accra's population is aged between 15 and 29 years (Cudjoe, Sepah, & Anarfi, 2013), and are also constantly on a move in search of livelihood - opportunities and quality life (Edwin & Glover, 2016).

Research Gap and Study Rationale

Different scholars have written extensively on the covid-19 pandemic and its broad impacts, migration, mobility, youth, and women livelihoods (Anas, Salifu, & Abdulai, 2022; Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Coz & Hooper, 2021; Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020; Schleicher, 2020; Beegle & Poulin, 2013; Svabova & Gabrikova, 2021; Martino, 2021). For instance, Anas, Salifu, & Abdulai, (2022) argues how the switch to online classes affected people's mobility decisions and mental health.

Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf (2008) reveals how young girls from the northern regions migrate to Accra to work as head porters popularly known as "*kayaye*" in our local parlance, mostly lived and worked under precarious and inhumane conditions, often exposed to physical and reproductive health risks. Martino (2021) also argues that the covid-19 pandemic has signified great changes in human mobility. Because of the pandemic, gender-based inequalities have increased existing gender gaps both in migration and return, thereby aggravating women's vulnerability and precariousness.

Furthermore, Coz & Hooper (2021) found out that the pandemic has dramatically decreased migration globally especially in West Africa. Finally, Svabova & Gabrikova (2021) concludes that unemployed youth are vulnerable and disadvantaged group. And during the covid-19 pandemic, their situation becomes complicated or even impossible to start a career in certain industries. To this end, the economic assessments of the covid-19 pandemic on migration/mobility and its effects on the livelihoods of the African youth have not had fair share of academic research. It is this gap this research seeks to fill and make policy recommendations afterwards. Also, looking at how big Africa is, it is impossible to research the whole continent due to time and financial constraints. Therefore, Ghana will be the research area with Accra and Tamale (representing the north-south divide) being the research specific geographical area.

Accra and Tamale are worthy of consideration as study areas because: Accra is the capital city of Ghana with lots of employment and other opportunities as well as social amenities. These attract most youth from the northern Ghana, places from the southern and middle belt as well as the neighboring countries of Burkina, Togo, Benin, Mali into Accra. And some of the youth—head porters, street hawkers—from the north searching for livelihoods in Accra have reportedly returned due to the covid-19. It will be interesting to interrogate how they are surviving/coping due to less economic opportunities in the north.

In the education sector for example, the pandemic has changed the mobility patterns of students in both the developed and underdeveloped economies (Choudaha, 2021). In the case of Ghana, remote-learning environment—as a makeshift educational platform amidst the pandemic—has broadened inequalities in education relative to access to and engagement due to school closures (Wolf, Aurino, Suntheimer, Avorny, & Tsinigo, 2021).

Indeed, this research area is worthy of investigation because data suggests that almost **32.2 per cent** of Ghana's population are considered youth, and they constitute a chunk of the labor-force and migratory block in Accra and Tamale. Prior to the covid-19 pandemic, youth unemployment is a cancerous canker swirling around government, private sector employers and other policy makers. In fact, the public sector is allegedly full, impossible to employ the youth and government may even lay off more workers to free the huge wage bill so that the economy will not collapse (Bokpe, 2017). Again, the private sector is very challenged in relation to employing the army of unemployed youth in Ghana which is a national security threat (Hoedoafia & Akosua, 2019).

Francis-Xavier Sosu, Member of Parliament in Ghana argued that twin challenges of youth unemployment and economic hardship, exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic, should be an issue of huge concern for our governments, particularly the lack of opportunities available to the Continent's Youth due to the insecurity it might breed (Sosu, 2021). According to the African Development Bank (ADB) report on "Jobs for Youth in Africa", most of the youth in Africa do not have stable employment opportunities. Out of nearly **420 million** youth between the ages of 15-35, one-third are jobless and discouraged, another third is vulnerably employed, and only one in six is in wage employment.

The problem is not just unemployment but underemployment, which peaks at just over half of youth in the labor force in low income countries (ADB, 2016), which could lead to **263 million** young people deprived of economic participation in the system by 2025 (Ibid). Further, "the rampant cases of corruption and show of opulence by cronies, family members and friends have resulted in a general lack of sympathy and support for recent coups and other unfortunate developments on the continent, as demonstrated by joyful celebrations and excitement on the streets of major towns and cities by Africans after such occurrences (Sosu, 2021).

With these abundant uncertainties due to unemployment/underemployment, economic hardships, the youth often migrate to the cities of Accra, neighboring countries, Gulf regions and Europe (legally or illegally) in search for livelihoods, and to further their education which sometimes exposes them to precarious conditions. With the covid-19 pandemic, the mobility of youth has been restricted, some lost their jobs, some could not have job/promotion interviews, and their inhumane and precarious conditions rather got worsened. It is against this backdrop this study would be interesting to expose to the scholarly world the precarious state of the Ghanaian youth amidst the covid-19 pandemic and its accompanying repercussions—social exclusion, mental health concerns, and national security threats.

Research Objectives and Questions

The overarching purpose of this thesis is to critically assess and evaluate the economic impacts of the covid-19 on migration and mobility. The research objectives and questions that would guide this thesis are presented in the table below.

Table 1.1: Research Questions and Objectives

Research Questions (RQ)	Research Objectives (RO)
I. How has the covid-19 pandemic affected the pattern of migration and mobility among the Ghanaian youth?	I. To examine the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on migratory and mobility among Ghanaian youth
II. In what ways have the covid-19 pandemic affected labor market mobilities for the youth in Ghana?	II. To explore the effects of the covid-19 pandemic on the labor market mobilities of youth in Ghana
III. What are some of the inequalities in Ghana's labor market space, and how the covid-19 pandemic deepened these labor market inequalities?	III. To investigate some of the gendered inequalities in Ghana's labor market space, and the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic towards heightening these labor market discriminations.

Research Hypothesis

In connection with the above research questions and objectives, the hypotheses the thesis seeks to test are presented in table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: Research Hypotheses

Research Hypotheses	
H1	The covid-19 pandemic has impacted migration and mobility in Ghana.
H2	The covid-19 pandemic has influenced labor market mobilities in Ghana.
H3	The covid-19 pandemic deepened labor market inequalities in Ghana.

Study Context - Africa/Ghana: Why Migration, Mobility and Covid-19?

In the case of Africa, migration embodies considerable numbers of people navigating both within and from the region. For instance, more than **21 million** Africans in 2019 were staying in African countries other than their countries of origin (McAuliffe, Kitimbo, Abe, Sawyer, & Klatt, 2020). Imperatively, intraregional migration within Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been enhanced by labour mobility, with seasonal, temporary, and permanent migrant workers migrating mostly from countries such as the Niger and Mali to Ghana due to the free movement of people and goods protocol enshrined in the ECOWAS charter (Ibid).

About two-thirds of West African migrants dwelled in other West African countries due to work purposes, family unification, study, civil wars, regional displacements, among other reasons. However, the covid-19 activated border closures and the prevailing travelling restrictions to balancing health and economy have constrained

migration and its accompanying opportunities for many West Africans now and for the unforeseeable future (United Nations, 2019; Coz & Hooper, 2021). Indeed, the challenges, risks, rights, vulnerability, and social apprehensions associated with mobility and migration have been heightened by the covid-19 pandemic (Coz & Newland, 2021).

In Ghana, internal migration has north–south inclinations (John & Ababio, 2009), characterize by considerable migration from the northern regions of Ghana, with about **40.72** per cent substantial movements into Ghana’s regional capital, Accra (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013c). Moreover, migrants residing in Accra become long-term migrants. Data from Ghana Statistical Service indicates that nearly 1 in every 10 migrants in Accra have moved back to their hometowns a year before the 2010 Census (Cudjoe, Sepah, & Anarfi, 2013). Of the **1.6 million** migrants living in the Greater Accra Region as of 2010, roughly 10% are natives of the northern regions of Ghana—where some/most of the head porters, street hawkers and other laborers hail from (Ibid).

Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the dissertation is as follows. I began with the introductory chapter with my research questions, objectives, research hypotheses and study context embedded underneath it. A methodological chapter highlighting how data was collected and analyzed followed. Then a contextual overview to help readers understand certain historical and contemporary matters aligned to the research questions and objectives. Next, a theoretical underpinning chapter explaining the theories/concepts used to evaluate the formulated problem is presented. Chapter five presents how data was analyzed. In conjunction with chapter five, discussions, conclusions, and policy recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Research Methodology and Methods

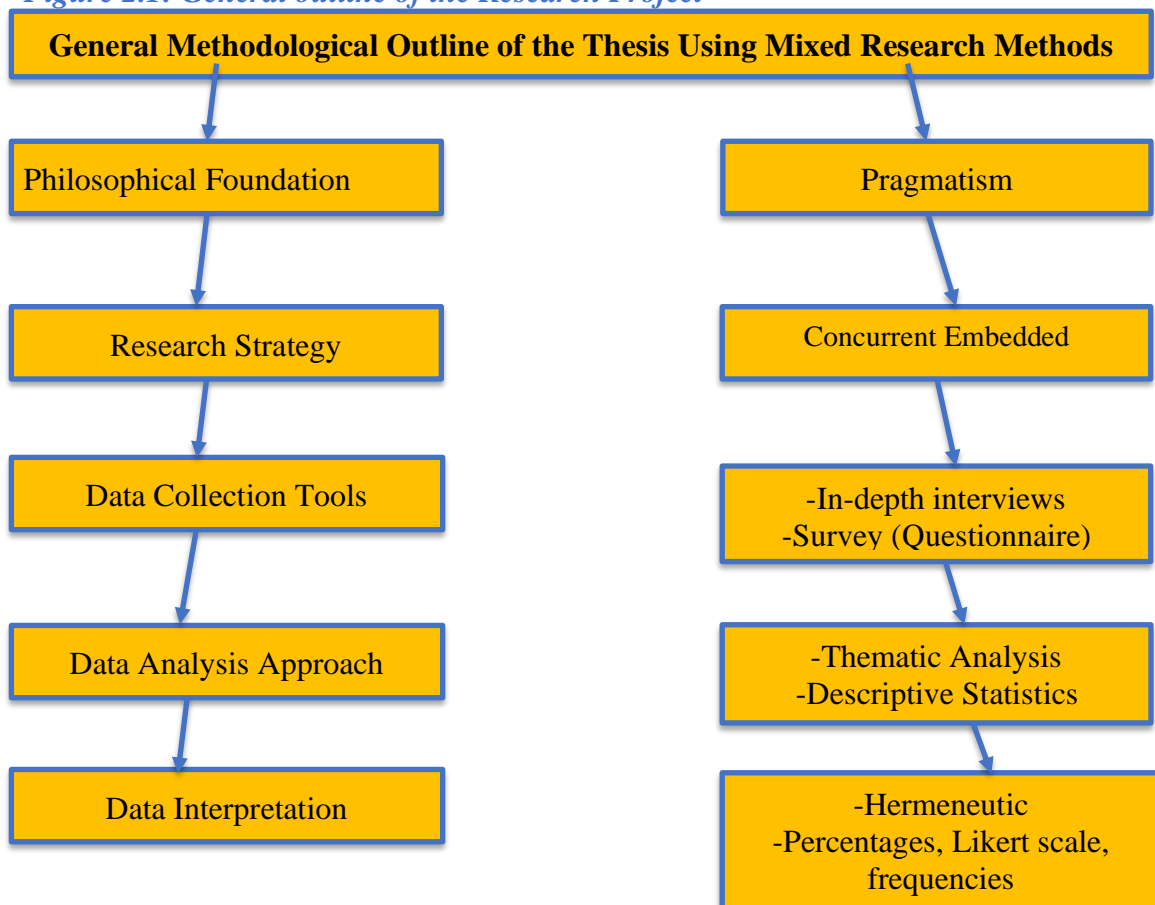
Chapter Outline

This section describes the research methods and methodology applied in the study. It explains how data would be gathered and analyzed. In a sequential order, the chapter is delimited below.

Methodological Framework

The methodological framework highlights the logical sequence the entire thesis is dovetailed—from the introductory chapter, methodological unit, contextual overview, the theoretical foundations, and discussion of research findings. This is to facilitate and guide readership comprehension of the thesis.

Figure 2.1: General outline of the Research Project



Philosophical Underpinnings: Pragmatism Paradigm

Ontology and epistemology are the two broad philosophical leanings in the conduct of scientific/social science research (Bryman, 2012). To begin with, ontology refers to the worldview(s) researcher(s) seek(s) to figure out. This implies the kind and form of existence in terms of the “knowable” or “reality” from a researcher’s standpoint, giving

cognizance to the relationship between man and the environments (Kuada, 2012). Thus, the nature of the reality to be discovered is ontology (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). In this thesis, “critical reflections of the economic impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on migration and mobility among the youth in Africa” becomes the worldview/ontology to be understood. Contrarily, epistemology is the approach the researcher(s) adopt(s) to understanding the worldview/reality/ontology in a particular setting. It gives credence to the relationship and knowledge construction between the study respondents and the researcher(s) (Bryman, 2016).

Dialectical position (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989), pragmatic paradigm (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2021), dialectical pluralist position (Johnson, 2017), transformative position (Mertens, 2007), and the critical realist position (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010) are some philosophical considerations guiding mixed research methods. However, this thesis is built on the pragmatic epistemological paradigm (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2021). It is situated within the pragmatic philosophical perspective because it posits that the most essential determinant of the research philosophy adopted is the research question, arguing that it is possible to work within both positivist and interpretivist leanings. It involves integrating different approaches to help gather and analyze data prudently (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

The pragmatists reject the incompatibility thesis that qualitative and quantitative research are completely incompatible—due to the different philosophical underpinning: positivism and interpretivism—and cannot be merged in social or behavioral research (Creswell J. W., 2009). Pragmatism provides an epistemological rationalization and logic—by blending approaches that enable researchers optimally outline, examine, and offer tentative answers to research questions—for mixing approaches and methods (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

According to the pragmatists’ position, knowledge is produced through person-environment interaction, and it is both constructed and based on the mind-independent reality and underscores the influential characteristics of theories in inquiry (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Thus, both the mind-independent material world and the socially and psychologically constructed world exist, and the worldview is complex and numerous (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2021). Therefore, the overarching motive of social science research is to provide solutions to societal ills (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In fact, pragmatists subscribe to the philosophy that the research question formulated should be the major determining factor for the method(s) used. They argued that

epistemological purity does not necessarily get research accomplished (Miles & Huberman, 1984). With the above argument in mind, pragmatists posit that researchers have the freedom to decide on the effective methods, data, and processes of conducting research that best satisfy their needs and purposes and can deploy both quantitative and qualitative methods and/or data when investigating a particular social phenomenon (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2021). From the pragmatists' point of view, a social inquiry is useful only if it realizes its intended objectives (Hothersall, 2019). Based on the research questions in this thesis, pragmatism paradigm will guide the usage of both interview guide and questionnaire to collect relevant data as well as deploy an analytic tool to satisfy their analysis. It will give me the freedom to approach the research questions qualitatively—and quantitatively—whiles respond to the research hypothesis purely quantitatively.

Purpose for Mixing

Triangulation, development, complementarity, initiation, and expansion are the five fundamental reasons, purposes, and rationales for conducting mixed research method studies (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). In this thesis, the purpose for mixing is complementarity geared towards explaining, augmenting and clarifying the QUAL results with the results from Quan.

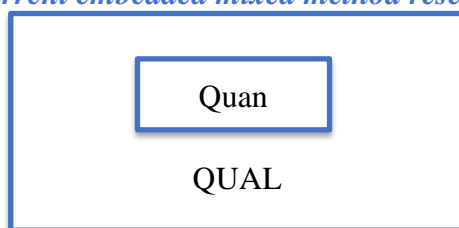
Thus, the Quan results implanted in the QUAL strand elaborated/confirmed the QUAL results, since the QUAL aspect is the driving part (weightier part) of the study with the QUAN only supporting it. However, the weight differences of both the QUAL and Quan strands helped strengthen the research results in general using their respective strengths to neutralize their inherent weaknesses. Finally, the mixing helped in enhancing the interpretability, significance, and legitimacy of constructs and research results (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

Research Design/Strategy: Concurrent Embedded

Mixed research method combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single research study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2009). With mixing, the weakness of each method is compensated by the strength of the other (Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird, & McCormick, 1992). In terms of research design, the concurrent embedded strategy of mixed methods was adopted since it helps collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously using one data collection phase. This mixed method strategy has a primary method that steers the research project whiles a secondary dataset only offers a supporting role—complementarity—in the approach

(Creswell, 2009). With this strategy, the secondary method (Quan) is embedded within the principal method (QUAL) since the secondary method examines the research hypotheses (and complements) the primary method (Ibid). For this thesis, the QUAL will be the main driving strand. The Quan aspect will seek to embolden claims made in the QUAL aspect—complementarity—whiles purposely answering the research hypotheses. A visual presentation of the concurrent embedded mixed method research design is shown in figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Concurrent embedded mixed method research design



Source: Adopted from (Creswell 2009, cited from Creswell 2003)

Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data means firsthand data obtained personally by the researcher. Secondary data refers to data gathered by someone else rather than the researcher (Bryman, 2016). Secondary data were obtained from scientific data sources such as ProQuest, SAGE, Science Direct contained in the Aalborg University's online library database. Again, Google scholar, textbooks and other (un)published articles as well as websites, official YouTube videos were the other secondary data sources employed in this thesis.

In terms of primary data, and its accompanying collection tools, in-depth interviews and survey were used concurrently in the study. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research data collection technique that encompasses doing detailed individual interviews with a small number of research participants to delve into their viewpoints on a particular situation (Creswell, 2007). Discovering in details the study participants' opinions, lived experiences, feelings, emotions, and perspectives are reasons for using in-depth interviews (Bryman, 2012).

Survey on the other hand, was the data collection tool used to gather quantitative data from a population for this thesis (Creswell, 2009). Primarily, Likert scale of agree, strongly agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree was used in the thesis to quantify the data. 122 surveys were conducted. Surveys are flexible, can

be constructed and modified to answer a wide variety of research questions, used to explore individual' views and experiences in a representative manner (Ibid).

Population and access to the study participants

Population comprises all the possible units from which samples are drawn to determine patterns and features of the whole (Creswell, 2009). Target population is the exact units from which a sample is selected for the study (Bryman, 2016). In this specific study, Accra and Tamale are the study population while the youth are the target population. Further, access to the study participants is the first step towards securing firsthand data. To gaining this access, I obtained an introductory letter from my supervisor (Professor Martin Bak Jorgensen), detailing the purpose and importance of the study.

I made 122+ copies of the cover letter and hand it over to each study participant before administering survey questionnaire and/or doing in-depth interviews. Thus, all the one hundred and twenty-two (122) study participants granted consent before survey and interviews were granted. Both the in-depth interviews and surveys were largely conducted in English with few exceptions—during interactions with some head porters, street hawkers and other stuck illiterates. In those exceptional cases, Twi (commonly spoken language in Ghana) and Dagbani (commonly spoken language in northern Ghana) were used.

Specifically, for the head porters and other street hawkers, twenty (20) surveys were done in Twi. Another fifteen (15) were conducted Dagbani while two (2) interviews with the (2) covid-19-stimulated returnee migrants in the north (head porters) were done in Dagbani as well. With regards to inclusion and exclusion criteria, only participants—out of the 122 study participants—willing and ready to give germane information on the subject matter were interviewed. The data collection spanned between 12th March and 8th April 2022. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the survey results were transferred to a centralized software reservoir called Kobo toolbox. It (Kobo toolbox) produced a pictorial summary report of the survey responses in the form of pie charts, bar charts, histograms, and tables.

Sampling Technique: Concurrent Mixed Method Sampling

It is quite impossible to collect and analyze all available data (youth in Accra and Tamale) for study due to time restrictions, financial constraints, and access to study participants (cases/elements). Therefore, sampling techniques are employed to provide a wide range of methods that enables researcher(s) reduce the amount of data to be

collected by focusing on only data from subgroup rather than the entire population (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

Often than not, mixed method researchers make concessions in the form of representativeness or saturation trade-off due to time and money constraints. This trade-off supposes that the more weight placed on the saturation of the QUAL sample, the less importance given the representativeness of the QUAN sample, and vice versa (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

To this end, the concurrent mixed method sampling which involves using a probability sampling technique to produce data for the Quan component, and purposive sampling technique to generate data for the QUAL strand were used simultaneously in this thesis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Fusing two sampling techniques enables mixed method researcher(s) to produce complementary datasets for a subject matter under investigation with information that has both depth (QUAL) and breadth (QUAN) (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The concurrent mixed sampling enables researchers to triangulate the outcomes from the different QUAL and QUAN elements of their research, to *“confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study”* (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

For instance, Lasserre-Cortez cited by Teddlie, and Yu employed a probability sample (involving a multiple cluster sample of schools) to respond to QUAN research hypotheses and a purposive sample to answer the QUAL research questions. Interestingly, the purposively selected sample was a subcategory of the probability sample obtained while data were gathered concurrently and triangulated in the final phases of the data analysis (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Specifically, this thesis used the cluster sampling technique to select **122 respondents** (72 in Accra and 50 in Tamale) for the survey part of the study. Also, **10 study participants** (7 in Accra, 3 in Tamale) were purposively sampled for an in-depth interview aspect of the study.

Cluster sampling involves dividing the population into separate groups (called clusters) based on any natural occurring groupings (such as geographical area) before the sampling proper due to inadequate time or financial resources (Henry, 1990). The study area (Accra and Tamale) was divided into geographical clusters (Accra: Accra North, Accra South, Accra East, Accra West and Accra Central. Tamale: Tamale metro, Sagnerigu Municipal). This is because, it is impossible to compile a full list of cases/elements making up the population of youth in Accra and Tamale. Afterwards, a convenience sample was used to elect study participants (youth) based on their

convenience and availability (Babbie, 1990). And upon availability of study participants by convenience, simple random sampling was used so that each sampling unit has an equal chance of being included for survey by making “Yes” and “No” balloting for them to choose (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). In essence, I deployed some sort of probability cluster-convenience-random sampling continuum.

Purposive sampling is employed in a study when the researcher(s) elect(s) the participants based on his/her own judgment. With this sampling technique, only respondents willing and able to give relevant information are favored purposively for in-depth interviews (Bryman, 2012). I purposively interview 10 participants (7 in Accra and 3 in Tamale), comprising 8 youth and 2 institutional representatives for detail account of the subject matter. I chose those I believe would contribute significantly to the study. The interview questions were focused on how the covid-19 pandemic (economically) impacted on migration and mobility among the Ghanaian youth. Some specific questions asked included: As youth, how has the pandemic impacted your labor market mobilities in Ghana? How has the covid-19 pandemic deepened labor market discriminations in Ghana? How has the pandemic disrupted your job search and/or general empowerment as youth? To what extent has the covid-19 crisis affected your income generation activity? Is there hope for the Ghanaian youth amidst the covid-19 pandemic?

Data Validity/Quality: Inside-Outside Legitimization

To ensure legitimization/validity of data, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson’s inside-outside legitimization strategy was used in this thesis (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Credence was given to both etic and emic viewpoints using inside-outside legitimization approach. Whereas the emic viewpoint denotes the perspectives of the the insider, group member, the etic viewpoint places premium on the “objective” outsider observing and experimenting the group (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Furthermore, peer review is required for etic viewpoint to be materialized. This involves the researcher soliciting the services of another/outsider—neutral and expert in social researcher—to scrutinize the explanations or social constructs created by the study participants, the conceptualizations, and the connection between the data and the conclusions drawn from data. With this, my supervisor was served the transcribed interviews as well as the analysis to see the patterns in the dataset. Nonetheless, for an acceptable insider perspective, member checking which involves making the study participants review the researcher’s analyses to check whether it conforms to the stories

they shared will be done (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Here, the educated study participants who had agreed to be contacted again were given the transcribed interviews to verify.

In summary, the researcher should seek insider-outsider legitimation for both the qualitative and quantitative aspect of a study. This can be done by keeping a well-balanced point of view when gathering, exploring, and interpreting the (whole set of qualitative and quantitative) data used in the study. With this, it is possible to claim that “quantitative research often seeks the objective outsider view, that qualitative research often seeks the insider’s view, and that mixed research seeks to balance fully these two viewpoints” (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006: 58).

Justification for the Choice of Literature Theory

The thesis was viewed through the theoretical lenses of the segmented labor market theory, concept of precarity and social exclusion. In discovering the extend of the economic impacts of the covid-19 crisis on migration and mobility among the Ghanaian youth, their association with the labor market—primary or secondary—should be given credence. Often than not, the youth in secondary market doing precarious jobs—part time, insecure, temp jobs, low-pay jobs, jobs without social benefits—get exposed to social exclusion and its concomitant repercussions: hunger, apprehension, anger, deprivation, poverty, and the resultant mental health and national security threats it might breed. Therefore, deploying these theory/concepts in this thesis is rational, applicable, and justified.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics are utilized (for the quantitative dataset) to explain and summarize the fundamental characteristics of the data in a study by showing the relationship between variables in a sample. It includes types of variables such as nominal, interval, and ratio as well as measures of frequency, central tendency, variation, and position (Yellapu, 2018). Frequencies and percentages were widely used in this thesis. In terms of quantitative data analytic tools, the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and kobo toolbox were used to produce descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages.

The results were presented using tables and graph thereafter. The descriptive statistics was deployed to describe the datasets, and to give a pictorial understanding of the features of the sampled population. The quantitative data obtained from the field survey and the descriptive statistics realized were used to test the three (3) research hypotheses.

Thus, the 3 hypotheses were tested using the data obtained from questionnaire—as well as complementing the answering of the research questions—professed in the introductory chapter.

Thematic analysis is a QUAL data analysis method that involves categorizing, analysing, and presenting patterns within datasets (Bryman, 2016). The voyant data analytic tools developed by Professor Geoffrey Rockwell was used for the qualitative data coding, data chunking and pattern identification. With this qualitative data analytic tool, recurrent/commonly used words from the transcribed interviews were extracted, common phrases and key topics from the study participants were identified (Rockwell, 2020).

From here on, I manually merged the phrases and key topics together to arrive at broad themes to guide the QUAL data analysis. Using the hermeneutic approach, data are interpreted for the purposes of gaining understanding, through the systematic analysis of actions and texts (Bryman, 2012). In terms of answering the research questions, the qualitative interviews were used for all the three (3) research questions. Intermittently, the quantitative data from the survey were used to complement the qualitative research findings, since the thesis deploys the concurrent embedded research design, where both QUAL and Quan analytic mode could co-exist, at the same time, in a single study.

Major themes for analysis

In arriving at the major themes—for both the QUAL and Quan analysis—in this thesis, the recurrent words, frequently used phrases by the study participants were extracted using the voyant data analytic tools. Thereafter, I then merged the recurrent words, common phrases (preliminary categories) plus the constructed categories together to create these four broad themes (major categories)—altered movements and labor market mobilities in Ghana amidst the pandemic, covid-19 crisis and the economic wellbeing among youth/women in Ghana, inequalities among the youth/women labor market space amidst the covid-19 crisis, and finally, mental health concerns among the Ghanaian youth amidst Corona Crisis—to guide my analysis.

It is worth noting that these four major themes, however different are very much intertwined, interconnected, and interrelated. For instance, the changing migratory and mobility patterns occasioned by the corona crisis could bring inequalities in labor market and educational space. This could impact on people's labor market engagement, knowledge acquisition and intellectual competences, economic wellbeing as well as income generation capacity of the youth, ultimately.

The abovementioned repercussions could, as well, lead to stress and depression syndrome and subsequently mental health problems and its wider implications such as gender-based and child abuse, continuous deprivation, and loss of life—in extreme cases—due to the lockdown. Overall, these could affect the economic life of the youth and their general livelihoods which could spark the discourses of national security concerns. The processes of the theme generation are explained below.

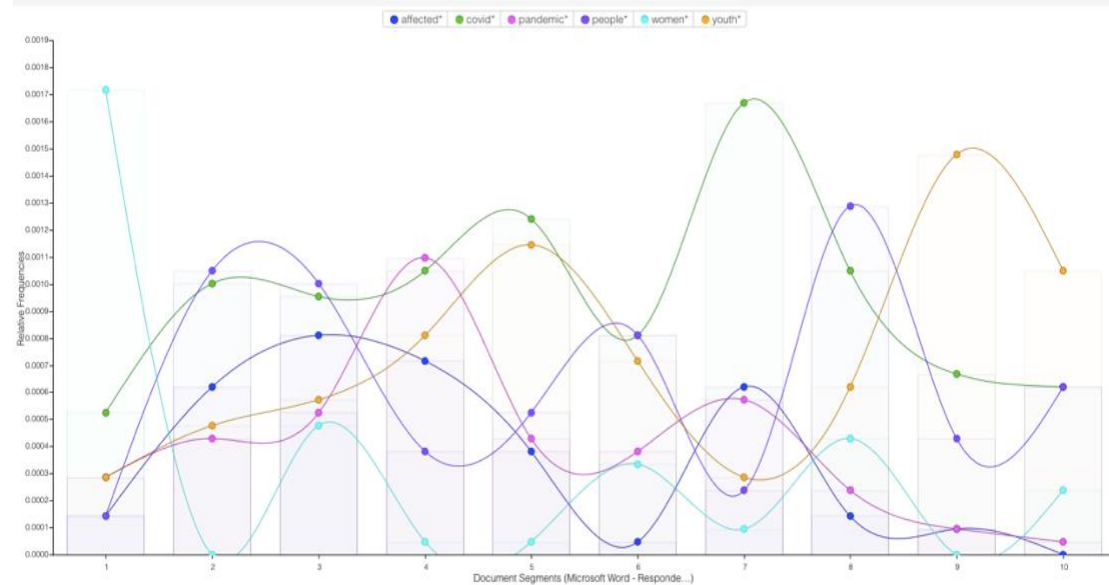
Figure 2.3: Twenty-five (25) Recurrent words from the dataset using the voyant tools



Source: Voyant data analytic tools

The above figure display words that have had several mentioning by the study participants. Words mentioned many times are visible and bigger as seen in figure 2.3 above. Clearly, words like youth, pandemic, covid, job, inequality, work, women, affected, economic, among others were mentioned severally, and given earmarked prominently by the voyant tools.

Figure 2.4: Trends – Graph of recurrent words using the voyant data analytic tools



Source: extracted from voyant tools

The above extracted bar and/or line graph from the voyant tools show the trends of some commonly cited words—affected, covid, pandemic, people, women, and youth—in the interview dataset, repeatedly uttered by the interview participants. It presents the relative frequencies of the recurrent words of the study participants. For example, youth was mentioned several times by participant 9 but recording less attention by participant 1. Equally, women have had more mentioning in by study participant 1 while lowest by study participant 2. Covid was cited more by participant 7. The trends of the other words are shown in the figure above.

Some phrases extracted from interview's data using the voyant analytic tools

Using the voyant analytic tools, some commonly used phrases and the number of times mentioned by the study participants are shown in the table below.

Table 2.2: Some phrases highlighted by the research respondents

Phrases	Number of occurrences
Inequalities that do not favor women	2
Money to purchase nose masks	2
Not being able to move from one point to another	2
Inequalities in terms of access to	4
Deepened inequalities in our educational	2
Faced in Ghana's labor market	2
Market mobility as a youth	2

Discrimination that the female	2
Empowerment for the youth	2
Majority of the youth	2
Of the unemployment in the	2
Everybody was affected	2
Frustration sets in	2
Income generation activities	2
Labor market mobilities	2
On the streets	2
Source of livelihood	4
Working from home	2
Economic livelihood	2
Online platforms	2
Limited opportunities	2

Source: extracted from voyant tools (Note: table drawn by the researcher, but all phrases gotten from the voyant tools)

Constructed themes

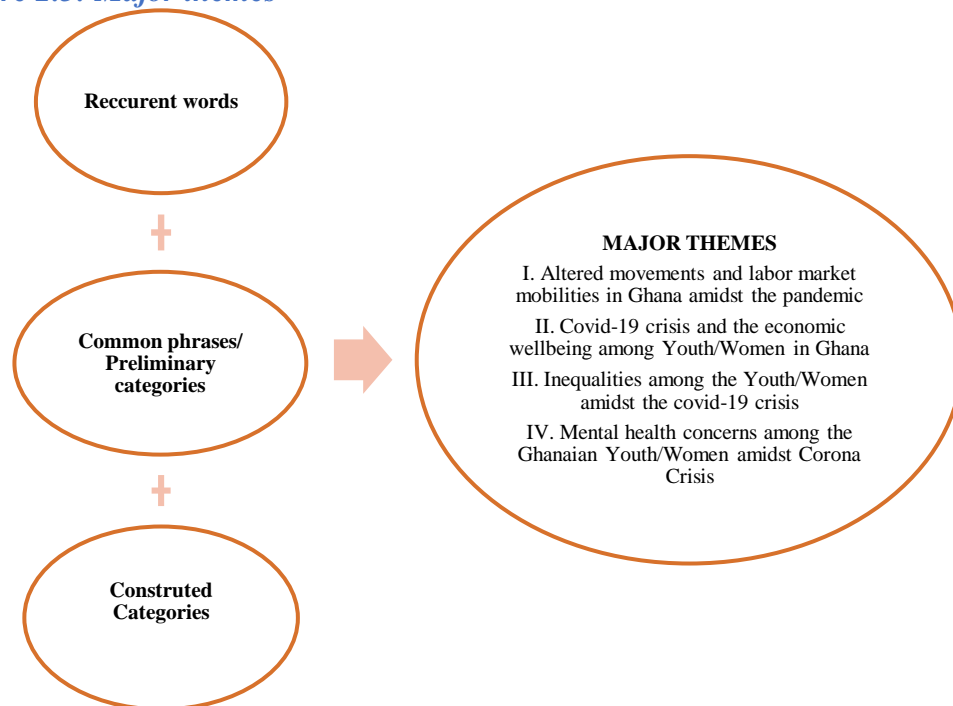
After carefully going through the recurrent words and commonly used phrases extracted from the dataset using the voyant analytic tools, I constructed the following categories myself presented in the table below.

Table 2.3: Constructed categories

1	Changing patterns of migration and mobility in Ghana amidst the covid-19 pandemic
2	Covid-19 and the labor market mobilities/securities and income generation ability among the Ghanaian youth
3	Unemployment, underemployment, and labor market mobilities/securities among youth in Ghana
4	Deepened Inequalities and security threats among the youth due to the covid-19 pandemic
5	Online entrepreneurship necessitated by the covid-19 pandemic and the controversies therein
6	Hopelessness and hopefulness of the Ghanaian youth amidst the covid-19 pandemic
7	Gender implications of the covid-19 pandemic among the Ghanaian youth
8	Gendered precarity in Ghana's labor market amidst the covid-19 Pandemic

Source: Researcher's own deductions

Figure 2.5: Major themes



Source: Researcher's own handiwork precipitated

The above diagram displays how I arrived at the four major themes for the analysis. I carefully read the dataset, then added the recurrent words to the common phrases (obtained from the voyant tools) plus the constructed categories (I did myself) to get the 4 major themes.

Position of Researcher

As an upcoming social science researcher, I subscribe to the opinion that social research could be done through the lenses of subjective or objective standpoint or combination of both in a single study. Whiles qualitative research is assumed to be subjectively driven, quantitative research is presumed to be objectively focused. Therefore, I have chosen to situate this thesis within the pragmatism philosophical leaning, using survey (questionnaire) and in-depth interview guide as data collection tools. Combining the two methods would enable me to optimize the strength and minimize the respective weaknesses of both the qualitative and quantitative study. Again, to minimize or eliminate biases, I went to the field of study (Accra and Tamale) without many prejudices. Even though I use interview guide and questionnaire, I utilized my analytic sensitivity to the data and research findings to cure possible biases I might have had.

Ethical Considerations

To adhere to the issues of ethics in social science research, I ensured that the consent of the study participants was granted before administering questionnaires (surveys) and doing in-depth and interactive interviews. To seeking their consent, I gave each respondent copy of introductory letter I got from my supervisor. The letter detailed the purpose of my study. I promised to keep their identity anonymous—which I did by assigning AR and TR as their identity—and the information they would share confidential. Again, participation in giving information was without threat, blackmail, or undue influence. This allows the participants to share their views willingly and objectively. Finally, raw data (transcribed interviews) were handled meticulously to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the study participants.

Research Audience

The thesis would aim to contribute both theoretical/methodological (through applying mixed research methods) and practicable knowledge (in terms of policies to remedy inequality, improve livelihoods of the youth, women, and other powerless and destitute groups) within the global south—Africa, Ghana. Therefore, the audience would be the academic world, policy makers, politicians, non-governmental organizations, social media influencers, researchers as well as students.

CHAPTER THREE

Contextual Overview

Preamble

The all-inclusive aim of the thesis is to critically assess the economic impacts of the covid-19 crisis on migration and mobility among the youth in Ghana. This section, therefore, seeks to make readers understand certain historical and contemporary matters aligned to the research questions and objectives. Emphasis is placed on these broad themes: migration and mobility in Ghana amidst the covid-19 crisis; precarious livelihood conditions in Ghana occasioned by the covid-19 crisis; policy regimes of youth employment and intervention and its relevance in Ghana; regimes of economic/social exclusion and inequality in Ghana/Africa and finally; the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on gender inequality.

Migration & Mobility in Ghana Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic

According to Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, IOM Ghana Chief of Mission: *“The pandemic is going to exacerbate existing migration dynamics. Some people are going to lose their jobs and many may decide to move from rural areas to urban centers like Accra or from Ghana to the subregion or beyond, looking for greener pastures. So even in the midst of the immediate COVID-19 response, we need more than ever to actively continue our safe migration campaigns and to advocate for the response to leave no one behind, including migrants”* (International Organization for Migration, 2020).

The partial or total lockdown affects almost **2.7 billion** workers (approximately **81%** of the global labor-force). With the impacted migratory and mobility patterns, loss of jobs and livelihood opportunities for the youth, small and medium-sized enterprises, some of the United Nation sustainable development goals—such as no poverty, zero hunger, reduced inequalities, quality education and gender equality—could be threatened (International Labor Organization, 2020). This covid-19 instigated job losses could lead to anger, isolation, apprehension, alienation, and other traces of precarity among the youth and women especially (Standing, 2011). These job losses and its fallouts are a major national security threats (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020).

To localize the context of the study to Ghana, the impacts of the covid-19 crisis on migration and mobility were immediately felt when the President of the Republic, H.E Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo Addo instituted public health actions and measures which included temporary lockdowns in the two major cities of Ghana—Greater Kumasi and

Accra metropolitan areas. For the covid-19 protocols to be devotedly followed, government's security agencies enforced them strictly. For instance, public gatherings of more than 25 people were disallowed and schools were shutdown resulting in changing the patterns of migration and mobility in Ghana (Mwainyekule & Frimpong, 2020).

The lockdown meant that people were excluded and disconnected from social and institutions relations, and not permitted to participate fully in activities of the society due to the covid-19 induced social exclusion they encounter (Silver, 2007). The lack of social relations—as consequences of the pandemic—could make people's life precarious due to the uncertainties and vulnerabilities it might have caused them (Kasmir, 2018). Unfortunately, there were instances violence and extrajudicial sanctions were meted out to 'undisciplined' violators—mostly the youth: the head porters, street hawkers and market women—of the restrictions by the military or police (Boatenga, Kusib, & Ametepey, 2021).

Moreover, apart from the labor crisis the lockdown of the Greater Accra and the Greater Kumasi regions precipitated, monumental labor migrant issue particularly for migrant workers from the Northern part of the country was suddenly created. An approximately **200 migrants**—including head porters—returned to the northern part of Ghana following the imposition of the lockdown in the country. Indeed, this would be the first returned migration in the country in this huge amount since the independence of Ghana in 1956 (Citi newsroom report, 2020).

Before the advent of covid-19, Ghana is a major destination for many international migrants within the West Africa sub-region. For example, an estimated **466,780** international migrants lived in Ghana due to the free cross border agreement within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region. Following the covid-19 stimulated measures—to limit the spread of the covid-19 virus to an unimageable level—a projected **20,000** international migrants were reportedly trapped at the border towns of the continent in Western and Central African countries. Additionally, about **1,800** Ghanaian migrants in Niger waiting to be transported home through Ghana's borders of Aflao, Elubo and Sampa were also left stranded due to the border closures (United Nations Framework Report, 2020).

The border closures resulted in the floodgates of illegal routes through the borders of Ghana for migrants either coming or leaving the country due to the inaccessibility of the regular border routes into the country. Thus, illegal migratory routes were either

created or heightened with their associating risk factors. The precarious situations of these labor migrants created a sense of fear, anxiety, hopelessness and rendered them vulnerable to the traffickers/smugglers who were using unapproved routes to make monies from them (Ibid).

The outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic on a global scale, and its connecting impact on migration and mobility exposed a potential impact of the pandemic on the socio-economic life of people and extraordinary breakdown in the Ghanaian economy. The introduction of the executive instrument by the President of Ghana to enact policies like social distancing, stopping social gathering, lockdown and travel ban on the Ghanaian economy affected migration, resulted in stress, fear, social stigma, increased level of depression, confusion and anxiety in human behaviors. Besides, the global economic recession triggered by the covid-19 pandemic alters the movements of the global population. Therefore, countries like Ghana with high levels of migration and high remittance flows contributing to the country's GDP will be greatly affected (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

To emphasize the changing migration and mobility patterns amidst the pandemic, it is worth reiterating that all land and sea borders to Ghana's neighbouring countries were closed as well as the airports. Besides, the impact of the pandemic is quite pronounced for many Ghanaian cross-border traders doing their trade in the sub-region. For transnational businesspersons who import merchandise basically from China have had their international travels obstructed by the restrictions and border closures (Owusu, Kutor, & Ablo, 2022).

With these, one could contend that the lockdowns and the restrictions on public gathering have modified the shape, format and pattern of migration and mobility within and outside Ghana. This impacted greatly the livelihoods of the citizenry (including the youth) due to the large informal nature of the Ghanaian economy and poor welfare policies with or without pandemics of such magnitude. For example, just 21 days after the lockdown, government began to relax the stringent restrictions in a bid to balance health with economy as well as public outcry (World Health Organization, 2020).

By October 2020, seven months after covid-19 struck, Ghana had the third highest number of corona infected cases in West Africa. However, the government continued to relax restrictions, ban on social gatherings and other protocols to balance health with economy (Owusu, Kutor, & Ablo, 2022). The motive of relaxing the covid-19

restriction is to restore normalcy in Ghana's migration and mobility patterns amidst the pandemic (KPMG, 2020).

Precarious Livelihood Conditions in Ghana Necessitated by the Covid-19

The United Nations Framework Report recognized the covid-19 as one of the world's major pandemics plunging the world's economy into a recession with unprecedented levels of unemployment, restrictions on the free movement of people and increased levels of deprivation and livelihoods (United Nations Framework Report, 2020). The devastating consequences of the covid-19 crisis globally, and by extension Ghana cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, the near collapse of economies with the resultant job losses, affected people's livelihoods and has created social inequalities and brought forth the need for fruitful social policies that can help citizens in dire need of assistance in some underdeveloped countries like Ghana (Perry, Aronson, & Pescosolido, 2021).

With people's livelihoods affected, hardship, deprivation, poverty, and marginalisation—which is in keeping with the concept of social exclusion—become pronounced in developmental or policy discourses (Sen, 2000). Suffice to add, Ghana's economy has been hardly hit by the virus. In this respect, economic growth outlook of the country has been revised downward from **5.8% to 1.5%**. Again, the loss of lives, livelihoods and the shutdown of many economic ventures are some of the major shocks covid-19 has brought on the global economy and in Ghana specifically (Bamfo, Ansah, Sarfo, & Amoah, 2020; Nicolaa, et al., 2020).

Additionally, about **770,000** workers (**25.7%** of the total workforce), had to face wages and salary reduction and about **42,000** employees were expectedly fired during the country's covid-19 partial lockdown. Therefore, the pandemic had caused underemployment through reduction in working hours for close to **700,000** workers in Ghana (The World Bank, 2020).

Imperatively, some market women engaged in the carting of fresh foods from the rural to urban communities for livelihood stopped due to fear of contracting the virus, fear of police brutality enforcing the covid-19 protocols, fear of spoilage from the slower pace in the purchasing of fresh foods because of the lockdown measure and other restrictions. To buttress the above point and the precarious livelihoods of Ghanaians during the pandemic instigated lockdowns, the Ghana Statistical Service documents that the restrictions in the movement of people from one place to the central business districts of the affected areas of the country had led to about **10–20%** price hikes of agricultural produce (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

A report by UNICEF on data gathered in 35 countries including Ghana reveals that about **22 million** Ghanaians—constituting almost two-thirds of the population—have experienced a decline in household income due to the pandemic. Adults in almost half of households with children allegedly skipped a meal since they have no money. In Ghana, **73.4%** confirmed that the prices of major food items consumed have skyrocketed. This resulted to about **52.1%** of families rationing food consumption as a coping mechanism amidst the pandemic. Further, **15.9%** of households could not buy at least one staple food due to lack of financial resources (UNICEF, 2022).

As a result of the combine effects of the pandemic on employment and social inequality, access to necessities of life such as water, food, medicine, shelter, clothing which encapsulates the livelihoods of people—citizens, youth, migrants, and returnees alike (Gayathri & Arjunan, 2018) have been threatened. For many people, including local and international migrants living in slum settlements, access to clean running water or the possibility to maintain social distance, was a challenge during the pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020).

Some Ghanaian head porters' access to necessities of life and place of abode have been affected by the pandemic leading to various forms of social exclusion (Ammah, 2020). As Joint-Lambert posited, people being removed from spaces they hitherto occupied or are denied the rights of access to that space echoes the concept of social exclusion and its broad effects (Joint-Lambert, 1995). The pandemic is expected to negatively impact livelihoods and wellbeing of migrants and returnees in particular [for example the **200** returnee migrants from Accra to the northern part of Ghana (Citi newsroom report, 2020); and the roughly **1,800** Ghanaian migrants stranded at Ghana's border towns of Aflao, Elubo and Sampa due to the border closures (United Nations Framework Report, 2020)].

Also, people in vulnerable and precarious employment in the informal sector—such as the street hawkers, head porters—as well as of households relying on remittances from abroad have been impacted. In these circumstances, many, especially young people, may turn to migration as means of livelihood reconstruction. This may not only fuel irregular migration but also migrants' exploitation and abuse, including smuggling and human trafficking witnessed in Ghana due to border closures (United Nations Framework Report, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020). The lockdown measures by Ghana government resulted to a reduction in the level of labour migrants

remittances flow which in 2019 constituted **5.2%** of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

To explain further how the covid-19 affected people's livelihood, bringing the issue of food stuff, necessity of life is therefore germane. With the lockdown in Ghana, low-income earning youth stayed at home adhering to covid-19 measures. Hence, their personal and family income generation, as well as their purchasing power were greatly affected since they were not working. With the poorly managed food supply chains, prices of foodstuffs rise steeply. Therefore, many people were not able to buy fresh and healthy food (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020).

For instance, some people resorted to purchasing canned tomato or tomato paste (which has relatively not experienced increased in price) rather than buying expensive fresh tomato. Also, livestock farmers have had to settle with low sales during the Easter celebrations due to the covid-19 social distancing protocols which earned the hashtag 'Stay Home' in Ghana. Some poultry farmers were negatively affected too because of low sales coupled with increased pressure from the financial institutions to pay back loans (Ibid).

Relative to solidarity and support for the covid-19 protocols, some section of the Ghanaian populace supported the policy. However, there were concerns about how some section of the population could not survive since most people have attachment towards the secondary labor market without social benefit, insecure employments, temp or part-time employment, lack of job-related social benefits/securities, and poor emolument packages (Millar, 2017). Again, the informal nature of the Ghanaian economy meant that, most people work "hand to mouth" on the streets and in the markets. Several people especially, the head porters are homeless and without access to necessities of life such as water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities even before covid-19. With covid-19, their situation might rather get worse (Foli & Ohemeng, 2022).

The female head porters, for example, depended on a functioning market to make ends meet. Before covid-19 struck, these porters sleep in crowded places in slums, on wooden slaps on the streets or even open market square due to housing unavailability and the lack of financial wherewithal to rent rooms from private individuals. In connection with the issue of livelihoods for these people, the lockdown stole their place of work, income, food, and a home rendering them socially excluded (Joint-Lambert, 1995). Owing to these livelihoods' problems

exacerbated by the covid-19 restrictions, some head porters dangerously hid in a cargo truck—trucks meant for transporting goods—to travel back to their hometowns, primarily the northern part of Ghana (Ammah, 2020).

To appreciate the extent to which the livelihoods of youth have been impacted and the difficulties at hand, individuals, religious groups, non-governmental organizations, and political parties had to step-in to provide some necessities for those seriously affected by the lockdown (Foli & Ohemeng, 2022). Besides, to conclude this sub section relative to government's policy responses, the note of Professor Samuel Kobina Annim, Government Statistician is worth seeing: *“Government has already put in place diverse supports for businesses including the establishment of a Coronavirus Alleviation Programme to protect jobs, livelihoods, and support small businesses. And, also is the Government's GH¢600 Million Stimulus Package to small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). The findings of the Business Tracker provide specificity on the pathways of effects, variation in the effects for different categories of businesses, their geographical areas, and the extent of effects.”* (The World Bank, 2020).

Policy Regimes of Youth Employment and Intervention in Ghana

The World Economic Forum reveals African countries—including Ghana—now have some of the youthful and fastest growing populations in the world. With a median age of 14-17 years ten youthful populations in the world, African countries hoist the flag (Myers, 2016). With the above premise in mind, the scale, magnitude, and nature of the youth employment challenges in Africa and its associating repercussions such as insecurity and mental health menace cannot be overstretched (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020).

Besides, the evolving precarity occasioned by uncertain, erratic, and risky employments (Kalleberg, 2009) could usher the youth into a “life without the promise of stability” (Tsing, 2015: 2). In Ghana, strenuous efforts have been put in place towards remedying the increasing unemployment numbers among the youth especially young graduates. As detailed in Ghana's National Youth Policy (NYP) document, the vision of the state concerning youth is to empower them to contribute effectively to nation building (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020).

The government of Ghana has implemented some youth employment programs with different nomenclature such as the National Youth Employment Authority, Youth in Agric, Youth in afforestation project, National Entrepreneurship, and Innovation

Programme (NEIP), Nation Builders Corp (NABCO) among others in the last two decades (Ibid). The raison d'être of this NEIP policy was to establish healthy work prospects to reduce unemployment with credence given to the youth and other helpless people like women and persons living with disabilities (Emmanuel Tetteh Jumpah, 2020).

The policy document identified some important issues that needed to be addressed by the State and other stakeholders in order to create sustainable employment opportunities. Key among them—which focus on youth—were the need to address rising youth unemployment despite years of economic growth, and reducing the prevalence of seasonal youth unemployment in rural communities. The government acknowledged that the challenges of the youth were multifaceted, therefore, to address them required a multi-sectoral approach making these parttime jobs temporary cure (Ibid).

The National Youth Employment Authority was created in 2006 to provide job opportunities for the youth in Ghana through job placement in the public sector and/or training. The aim of the programme is to absorb the youth in job opportunities that enables them to get the needed employable skills. It is therefore focused on skills development and entrepreneurial training, apprenticeship, and direct and indirect employment services. Since its inception several initiatives and programmes have been rolled out by the agency to create employment for the youth. (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020).

Similarly, NABCO was also developed. NABCO aimed to provide temporary employment—with the intention of permanent absorption—for university graduates in the public service, improve skills and employability. It is projected that **100,000** (paid GH¢ 700 equivalents of \$93.93 as of 17th April 2022 at 16.13 GMT) graduate were employed under the programme in the fields of agriculture, education, ICT, health, and community development (Ibrahim, 2018). Clearly, the above employment avenues created for the youth are not permanent, but temporal in nature. They are short-lived. With covid-19, the attendant lockdowns, firms shutting down and others not operating to full capacity, some full-time workers laid off, the precarious conditions of these young graduate—doing temp jobs—will only aggravate.

Admittedly, the successful implementation of development policies mentioned above is indispensable towards the fight against poverty and underdevelopment (Opoku, 2010). Development policy makers must therefore be mindful of those who implement the policies formulated if such policies are to achieve their set objectives. In this respect,

must not disregard the role of the youth in policy implementation because the youth constitute the age cohort endowed with the energy, enthusiasm, and zeal required to ensure the translation of development policies into practical action to effect changes in society (Gavin, 2007).

Notwithstanding the gains from these youth employment programmes and policies, the challenges of youth unemployment and underemployment remains a key developmental issue bedeviling Ghana. In fact, some economic and social analysts have positioned rising unemployment figures within the realm national security threat (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020). Allegedly, the youth are predominantly involved in social unrest and other violent activities. Thus, getting caught up in behaviors such as sport betting, gambling, fraud, prostitution—deemed social vices in the Ghanaian parlance—are mainly due to inadequate social and economic opportunities available for the youth (Dwumah, Akuoko, & Yeboah, 2018). In summary, these makeshift employment avenues mentioned above are often part-time, without job-related social securities, poor pay, and are therefore quite precarious in nature (Millar, 2017).

Why Youth Employment Policies and Programmes in Ghana?

The mismatch between educational curriculum (skills learned in school by the youth) and job market requirements are the main causes youth of unemployment in Ghana (Baah-Boateng, 2014). Together with the above assertion, the poor growth of the private sector and increasing youth population growth (Myers, 2016) have necessitated the need for makeshift youth employment openings to accommodate the army of young unemployed graduates in the country (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020).

Further, it is projected that approximately **300,000** graduates are churned out annually from tertiary institutions into Ghana's labour market space. Yet still, the public sector could only employ a handful—**about 80,000**—leaving roughly **220,000** at the mercies of the private sector and the street (Ibid). Unfortunately, the private sector touted as the engine of growth is incapacitated to absorb these numbers of young graduates because it is poorly structured and threatened by many problems. Besides, the private sector purportedly lacks serene business environment and policy support to grow well to provide decent jobs for the Ghanaian youth (Hoedoafia & Akosua, 2019).

In addition to these worrying trends, entrepreneurial zeal is not encouraging among the Ghanaian youth. For instance, Ghanaian youth feel more comfortable employed by the

State or employed by another for paid salary than venturing into entrepreneurship. This could be as a result of the teething challenges people who intend to have their own businesses face in the country. This contributes to explain the desire of the youth to seek “work for pay” rather than creating their own businesses (Jumpah, Tetteh, & Adams, 2018). The mismatch between skills acquired in school and the demand of the labour market has resulted to lack of entrepreneurial skills among the youth to create self-employment. With these, the youth are not able to take advantage of the opportunities—such as the covid-19 pandemic—within the society to be self employed (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020).

Despite the desire for the youth to seek “work for pay” rather than creating their own businesses, the public sector is allegedly full, impossible to employ the youth and government may even lay off more workers to free the huge wage bill (Bokpe, 2017) while the private sector is also challenged to providing employment to the youth (Hoedoafia & Akosua, 2019). This breeds exclusion as the youth are passively prevented from partaking in labor market activities (Sen, 2000).

A study revealed that university graduates in Ghana have the mindset that being self-employed is preserved for illiterates and those with little education, and therefore many do not bother venturing into entrepreneurship. Again, entrepreneurship has capital requirements. Nevertheless, access to capital notably by the unbanked youth and women is a major challenge (Jumpah, Tetteh, & Adams, 2018).

Regimes of Economic/Social Exclusion and Inequality in Africa/Ghana

Labor market have education and gendered dimension. In fact, the role of education and gender of jobseeker are indispensable towards their employability prospects and otherwise of same. It was argued that, even educated females have a lower chance of securing job in Egypt’s labor market as the economy transition to market-oriented economy as existing policies supposedly favoured males than their female counterparts (Assaad, El-Hamidi, & Ahmed, 2000). Studies show that income, gender, racial, and spatial, among other form of multiple inequalities dominant within and between countries, interact with the pandemic in different ways (Zarrilli & Luomaranta, 2021). In the Limpopo Province of South Africa, gender was found as a key determinant of unemployment (Kyei & Gyekye, 2011).

Coming down to my actual study context, Ghana, it is anticipated that about **45.5%** of the female youth is more likely to be underemployed unlike **38.4%** for their male colleagues (Ghana Statistical Service, 2016). Besides, the growing amount of

unemployment among the active youth—persons aged between 15 and 24 years—remained much higher than among other players of the laborforce in most economies including Ghana (Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research, 2018). A justification for the previously mentioned makeshift youth employment policies. For instance, statistics show that about **48%** (higher than the national average) of the Ghanaian youth are unemployed (Honorati & Silva, 2016).

UNESCO reveals that over **1.5 billion** students and youth across the globe have had their schooling or university education greatly impeded due to the shutdown. This translates into **72%** of the global student population (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020). Accordingly, the World Economic Forum documents that education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning. Nowadays, teaching is done remotely through digital platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams (Li & Lalani, 2020).

Regrettably, however in Ghana the structure of e-learning is less developed because only few private and government schools and a higher level of technical institutions could adopt online teaching methods. On a good note, Ghana's education sector is taking a drift from the brick-and-mortar system of teaching and learning to online system. This implies that, Ghana is progressively experiencing an e-learning education method by conducting the classes on Zoom, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

In consideration of the inequality situation in Ghana, and to what extent will the covid-19 crisis exposed it further, initial debates were rife on whether Ghana should adopt a total or partial lockdown at the onset of the pandemic only sort to emphasize the inequality between Ghana (as a global South) and other developed countries (in the global North), as well as internal spatial differences across the country (Klutse, 2020). Across different media platforms, section of the Ghanaian populace expressed anxiety and worry over the uncertainties lockdowns could bring and how they would survive. As a confirmation of the apprehension of the citizens, as well as the inadequacy of social programs to support the poor during this period, the government, through the livelihood empowerment against poverty (LEAP) and the labor intensive public works (LIPW) program, provided work opportunities and an additional one-time cash transfer to LEAP recipients, most of whom were in northern Ghana (Dadzie & Raju, 2020).

The Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Poverty and Gender Inequality

To start with, “prior to COVID-19, one in six children worldwide – 356 million – experienced extreme poverty, where household members struggled to survive on less than \$1.90 a day. More than 40 percent of children lived in moderate poverty. And nearly 1 billion children lived in multidimensional poverty in developing countries, a figure that has since increased by 10 percent because of the pandemic. In Ghana, almost one child out of every three lived in monetary poverty, while 73 percent of children experienced multidimensional poverty suffering from multiple and overlapping deprivations. This situation highlights the importance of strengthening and expanding the nation’s social protection systems to build resilience of the poor and vulnerable so they can cope in the event of shock” (UNICEF, 2022).

The covid-19 pandemic has brought differential socio-economic impacts on women and men. Available evidence suggests that the already existing inequalities between women and men—and between the different socio-economic groups—have been intensified by the pandemic. Notably, poverty levels were already very high in many countries in Sub-Saharan before the advent covid-19 pandemic. But women—and children—were more likely than men to live in extreme poverty. It is estimated that there is an increase in the percentage of extreme poverty amongst women and men fifteen years and older because of the pandemic (UN WOMEN, 2021).

It is a long-established fact that there are complex social, political, and legal foundations for “the exploitation, denigration and exclusion of women” (Cohen, 1983: 6) in our communities. With the covid-19 crisis, the lockdown meant that women stay at home and work remotely whiles doing house chores due to the culturally constructed roles. Hence, this increased unpaid care work and/or house chores burden women during the pandemic, affects their labor market participation prospects, diminished their income generation ability human capital development, and improved mental wellbeing. Again, there are fears mongering that the groundbreaking achievements made towards gender equality might be derailed due to the covid-19 pandemic. The economic implications emphasized on the act of informal work, as well as inferior savings and salaries of women are likely to be severely impacted (UNWOMEN, 2020).

Ultimately, the combined effects of these inequalities, could have unreported impacts towards achieving SDG 1 (end poverty in all forms everywhere), and SDG 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries) as proposed by the United Nations (United Nations, 2015).

On the mental health issues, there have been reported cases of an increased domestic violence against women and girls caused by the covid-19 crisis. For instance, the increasing demand for emergency violence against women and girls (VAWG) hotline and shelter services supports the assertion above (UN Women, 2020). Globally, **243 million** women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 years have endured either physical or sexual violence from their intimate partner a year before covid-19 struck. The covid-19 will most likely exacerbate other forms of violence, including trafficking, early child marriage, state sanctioned violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse (Ibid). Arguably though, the covid-19 pandemic is having an unequal economic impact on women and girls compared to their male counterparts. Since child marriage—which reportedly increased during the covid-19 pandemic with 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19—disproportionally affects girls, it is a large-scale demonstration of gender-based violence which shows the continued existence of patriarchy and gender inequality in our societies (UNICEF, 2021).

Therefore, there exist risks of enhancing their longer-term vulnerability to various but avoidable forms of violence in their communities (Haneef & Kalyanpur, 2020). Indeed, when women and girls find themselves without an income and are unable to meet their livelihoods—such as food, toiletries, clothing, and accommodation—they become more helpless and vulnerable to sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse by those in positions of power like social workers, aid workers. With these occurrences, it becomes much difficult for them to leave abusive relationships (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2020).

Moreover, disproportionate access to productive resources and services, unequal decision-making power, lower educational status, constrained mobility, poor access to technologies, markets, financial assets, and local institutions, makes women more vulnerable (than men) to the socio-economic effects of the covid-19 pandemic and the measures to contain it (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2020). To argue further, other epidemics such as the HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) impacted greatly on marginalized and vulnerable women, children, the elderly and the destitute than on men (Fan, 2020). To conclude, the above argument drum home the perspective that the exclusion of women's interest resonates their relegation from employment opportunities, basic education, and land and other property ownership in many parts of the world especially, the global South (Bardhan, 1984).

CHAPTER FOUR

Theoretical Underpinnings

Preamble

The theoretical chapter underscores the relevance of the concept of precarity, segmented labor market theory and the concept of exclusion within the context of the covid-19 pandemic, and its broad economic impacts on migration and mobility among the youth in Ghana.

Integration of Theory/Concepts – further theory building

The theory of dual/segmented labor market, concept of social exclusion and precarity have been interconnected and integrated, to sieve both primary and secondary data used in this thesis to tell a story of how the covid-19 crisis economically affects the Ghanaian youth through their altered migratory and mobility patterns. Indeed, these concepts/theories are very much interrelated, interconnected and fit for use in a single study—of this sort—to facilitate in-depth analysis, enhance further theory building as a contribution to study/literature. The justification for the use of these concepts/theory in this thesis is explain at the later part of this chapter under the theme “justification and application of theory/concepts in the thesis.”

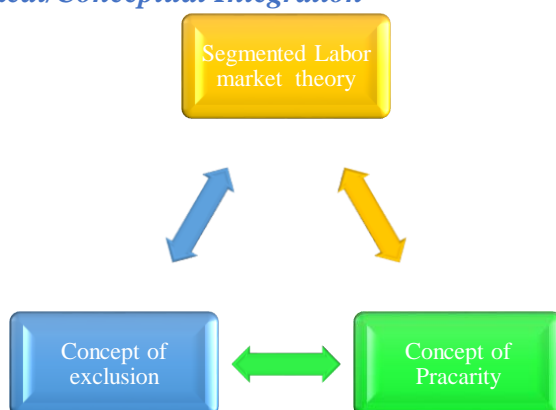
To start with, the association of the Ghanaian youth to the labor market determines whether they will suffer social exclusion, do precarious jobs, or live precarious lives, subsequently. Stated differently, the extend of exclusion or precarity the Ghanaian youth are exposed to—amidst the covid-19 crisis—is dependent on which labor market segment they ply their trade. For instance, employees—Ghanaian youth for precision purposes—who are into the primary/core market hardly face precarity due to the job security, high emoluments, and other insurance benefits they are entitled to, backed by State or corporate laws. There is therefore some sort of inclusion for those youth jobbing in the primary market.

However, their colleagues doing unskilled/odd jobs in the secondary/periphery market are easily exposed to precarity due to their exclusion from social benefits, retirement packages and other fringe benefits. With this, it could be argued that attachment to the secondary market could catapult the youth to various forms of exclusion—lack of social benefit, deprivation, hunger—and its attendant precarity effects such as vulnerabilities, apprehension, anger, and uncertainties.

Again, with the covid-19 crisis still hovering around us, it is expected to heighten the youth’s precariousness leading to social exclusion and its associating spillover effects:

poverty, deprivation, and hardships which could result to precarity too—vulnerability, hopelessness, isolation, apprehension, and alienation among the Ghanaian youth. In other words, precarity (part time, insecure, temporal jobs) could lead to social exclusion (and vice versa) as the two could co-predict the other. Exclusion and precarity interconnectedness, in turn, could also determine the labor market segment the youth will be attached to. The possible iterative/integrative nature of these concepts/theories and their interconnectedness is presented in figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 Theoretical/Conceptual Integration



The above figure showcased the iterative nature and interconnectedness of the theory/concepts deployed in this thesis. The figure begins with the premise that there exists some level of immobility in the labor market space. Thus, some youth willing to migrate from the secondary to primary market are sometimes hindered, actively or passively thereby causing either exclusion or precarity or even both, at the same time. Argued differently, when the rejection to participate in the labor market segment of choice happens, the youth must embrace the problems of exclusion—denying the opportunity to participate in their favorite labor market segment—and its broad implications on lives, communities, and the nation.

As a spillover effect, the social exclusion occasioned by lack of mobility in the labor market births precarity and its concomitant repercussions too (as mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter). Thus, uncertainty, vulnerability and insecurity will begin to swell around the youth and will keep them in the secondary market for life or a while, instead their labor market of choice: primary market. Stated otherwise, the interconnectedness of precarity and social exclusion concept could also determine the labor market segment the youth operate.

Concept of Precarity

What precarity?

The concept of precarity had gained traction in migration studies, labor market and citizenship (Jørgensen, 2015). From the labor market angle, the term precarity generally highlights precarious jobs. Thus, precarity epitomizes insecure employments, temp or part-time employment, lack of job-related social benefits/securities, and poor emolument packages (Millar, 2017).

OED online dictionary defined precarity as “Precariousness or instability; *esp.* a state of persistent uncertainty or insecurity with regard to employment, income, and living standards” (OED Online Dictionary, 2018). Besides, precarious work denotes “employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker” (Kalleberg, 2009). Anna Tsing also defines precarity as “life without the promise of stability” (Tsing, 2015: 2).

Overview of precarity concept

The scholarly contributions of Bourdieu (1998), Standing (2011) and Butler (2004) are given credence towards understanding the concept of precarity and its multifaceted implications in this thesis. The respective contributions of the abovementioned scholars to the concept of precarity literature would be discussed briefly under the historical overview of this section.

To begin with, it is worth mentioning that differences do exist between Bourdieu (1998) and Standing (2011) conceptualization of the precarity concept. Nevertheless, despite the differences in their conceptual framing, labor is at the center of their theorization of precarity. Therefore, Bourdieu (1998) and Standing (2011) approach to the conceptualization of precarity profoundly differed from Butler’s (2004) perspectives of precarity as a generalized condition of human life (Millar, 2017). These issues are explained briefly below. First and foremost, Bourdieu (1998) spoke about *précarité* as a critique to the rise of temp, part-time, and casualized employment in France in the late 1990s. He basically rebirthed the concept from one of his earliest sociological studies, which scrutinized the situation of underemployed and unemployed employees in Algeria in the 1960s (Bourdieu, 1998).

Second, Guy Standing (2011) drifted away from precarity as a labor condition to precarious workers as a socio-economic category or class-based issue. For him, *precariat* encompasses heterogeneous group of people including migrants, customer service representative as well as youth doing part-time jobs, but lacked work-based

identity and the loss of labor security: “*state commitment to full employment, protections against job loss, opportunities for upward mobility, representation through trade unions, and a stable income.*” Despite its internal fragmentation and definition by what it “lacks,” Guy Standing insists on christening the precariat a “class-in the-making” even if it is not yet a “class-for-itself,” in the Marxist sense (Millar, 2017: 3). He further posits that, this group of precariat is a “dangerous” class heightened by deep anger, isolation, apprehension, and alienation (Standing, 2011).

Finally, in the publication “Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence” (Butler, 2004), it was argued that the social nature of human presence implies that we are dependent on and made vulnerable to others. Our vulnerability is occasioned by two reasons: 1) We could miss the very people with whom we have developed formidable associations with 2) We are exposed to others and situations and that exposure always breeds some risk of violence (Millar, 2017). In the viewpoint of Butler, precariousness symbolizes “a common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself” (Butler, 2004: 31). She further pontificates that vulnerability is experienced disproportionately throughout our world notwithstanding class, ability, sexuality, race, gender, nationality, and age, among other important social distinctions (Millar, 2017). For instance, when covid-19 struck, race, gender and nationality from the global North even though affected (differently) compared to the the global South due to strong, effective and efficient social welfare systems the former has developed.

Main issues and strength of the concept of precarity to the study

Precarity constitutes both socio-economic condition as well as ontological occurrence (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008). It exemplifies how joblessness wear down a consciousness of social belonging which also lead to social exclusion (Muehlebach, 2011). Precarity also portrays how youth underemployment and unemployment unsettles daily temporalities and life plans (Allison, 2012) and this can influence the participation of youth in socio-economic, political, and other belongings. Since precarity had gained popularity in migration studies, labor market and citizenship (Jørgensen, 2015), the migratory decisions, social and labor market participation—as well as mobility (mainly upwards or line mobility) in the labor market—of the youth would be given credence due to the possible mind-sets of vulnerability, displacement, and hopelessness it could establish among the youth because of insecurity in their labor market engagement (Kasmir, 2018).

Additionally, loss of labor securities which creates psychic and disturbing states of apprehension and uneasiness could be situated within the sphere of precarity (Molé, 2010). And the consequential effects of these states of apprehension and uneasiness to national security threats cannot be farfetched (Sosu, 2021). More so, it highlights how precarious forms of labor setup an instrument of governance and subjectification (Lorey, 2015). It also reveals how contingent employment hinders normative, middle-class hopes and aspiration for good and better life (Berlant, 2011). These challenges are expected to be amplified by the covid-19 pandemic. And this could as well lead to social exclusion and affect the pattern of mobility (from secondary to primary) in the labor market space.

Ronaldo Munck argues that precarity is not novel. In fact, there is a well established, and contested, lineage of similar terms, mostly deployed to labor issues in the global South. For example, the discussions of “marginality” in the context of Latin America in the 1960s, and “informality” in the setting Africa from the 1970s exemplifies precarity (Munck, 2013). Besides Joseph Choonara added that “the type of work described by the term ‘precarity’ has always been the norm in the global South. In fact, it is Fordism and the welfare state which is the exception to the rule from a global perspective” (Choonara, 2020: 428). In a nutshell, as precarity emphasised on unemployment and social exclusion (Bourdieu, 1998), social exclusion would be the next concept—after the critique of the precarity concept—to be discussed since excluded labors (in this instance the youth) could be insecure and helpless, in defenceless position and mostly gullible (Bauder, 2006).

Critique of precarity concept

Guy Standing’s (2011) class-based approach to precarity was criticized on the grounds that, vulnerability and hopelessness is experienced remarkably different by workers across dissimilar historical ages, geographic spaces, and social situation among others (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008). Another critique is seeing precariat by labor insecurity puts together both low-paid workers doing unskilled service jobs and higher-paid professionals in creative industries in the same fray (Waite, 2009). Again, precariat cannot be contemplated as a new “class-in-the-making,” because it did not change the dealings of production in present-day capitalism (Munck, 2013).

What is the concept of social exclusion?

Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon defined differently by different scholars and policy makers based on time and necessity (Peace, 2001). Social exclusion

could be seen as a course of actions that, fully or partially, leave out individuals or groups of people from participating in social, economic and cultural webs and has been connected to the idea of citizenship (Lee & Murie, 1999). The European Union also expresses social exclusion as a process where individuals or groups of people are pushed to the edge of society and deterred—actively or passively—from fully taking part in socio-economic, political, and economic activities because of their poverty, or lack of basic aptitudes/proficiencies and lifetime learning opportunities, or due discrimination (European Union, 2004).

Historical overview of the concept of social exclusion

René Lenior is the credited first proponent of the concept social exclusion in 1974. Thereafter, the deployment of the concept soon spread, used far and wide in Europe (Berghman, 1995). Its utilization in theoretical and practical perspectives speedily spread to other contexts, beyond the borders of Europe. Besides, it has made important inroads into the discussions and writings on poverty and deprivation (Sen, 2000).

Second, as a policy term, the concept of social exclusion first appeared in English Language in the European Union Poverty Programmes in the 1980s. Notably in the 1980s, French and English were the compulsory official languages for all European Union broad policy initiatives. During that period, a recognisably related terminology—“*exclusion sociale*”—existed in the French language. Indeed, the European policy makers were troubled finding a friendly and/or an innovative term for social policy that shunned the stigma of concepts such as “poverty” and “deprivation”. Fast-forward, the term “*exclusion sociale*” or “social exclusion” was deemed appropriate for adaptation and use (Peace, 2001).

Social exclusion was referred to as the process by which certain individuals and entire communities of people, are systematically prevented from access to some rights, opportunities, and resources (paramount for socioeconomic integration usually available to members of society). It is a multifaceted and dynamic process (Silver, 2007). The excluded people are disconnected from social relations and institutions, and not permitted to participate fully in activities of the society (Ibid), and systematically underprivileged (Duffy, 1995) which could make people’s life precarious through uncertainties, apprehension, vulnerabilities, insecurities it breeds (Kasmir, 2018).

Additionally, taking inspiration from Amartya Sen’s introductory conceptualization of social exclusion, “.... the idea of social exclusion has conceptual connections with well-established notions in the literature on poverty and deprivation and has antecedents that

are far older than the specific history of the terminology might suggest” (Sen, 2000: 3). Often than not, the concept—social exclusion—somehow exemplifies the accepted wisdom of hardship, deprivation, poverty, and marginalisation. Aside the quantum of debate surrounding the concept’s conceptualization and usage, the concept is extremely used and appears to be overwhelmingly appealing and useful to social policy discourse makers (Ibid).

Relevance and application of the concept of social/economic exclusion to this study

The overarching aim of this thesis is to critically assess and evaluate the economic impacts of the covid-19 crisis on migration and mobility among the youth in Ghana. Towards unearthing the associating effects of the crisis on the livelihoods (poverty and deprivation) among the youth in Ghana, the concept of social exclusion is a good fit as explained in later in the section “justification and application of theory/concepts in the thesis”.

In fact, social exclusion could be occasioned by the global readjustments of production, and the associating outcome that workers previously safeguarded by trade barriers at a national level, and social security and formal employment conditions at an individual level, are discounted from such benefits (Murray, 1990). A case in point is the global realignment caused by the covid-19 pandemic in our health, education, economic and other sectors. Again, social exclusion could be segregated from poverty even though the two terminologies are inseparably connected. As such, social exclusion is indirectly a causative factor of poverty and inequality although not essentially a consequence of them (Atkinson, 1998).

Hunger, which signifies deprivation, necessitated by joblessness raises a more difficult issue for excluded people in our societies and policy makers. In some circumstances, a person’s hopelessness—precariousness—towards securing employment may be favorably analyzed within the ambit of exclusion. This is especially so, when the available employment opportunities are skewed towards people of some groupings while leaving out others. This could typify unemployment of minority groups, women, (in some cases the youth) in societies where jobs and/or better jobs are preserved for the majority groups or to men (Sen, 2000).

Interestingly, it is essential to amplify the notion that most socially excluded people do not necessarily lacked material possessions. That notwithstanding, there exist certain recognizable material conditions in any society that must be realized to escape exclusion (a place of abode and an address is of utmost relevance). From a

transformational perspective, Joint-Lambert likened social exclusion to processes by which people are either removed from spaces they hitherto occupied or are denied the rights of access to that space from the get-go (Joint-Lambert, 1995). Again, the perspective of social exclusion presupposes that poverty is not static. Thus, it is a situation which people might fall or from which they can equally escape from. Imperatively, in many countries of the global South where most people are low-income earners, labeled poor by global standards, material deprivation does not necessarily go together with exclusion from full social participation (Beall, 2002). The above viewpoint resonates with the use of the social exclusion framework to examine worldwide developments and institutional relationships connected with rapid social and economic global change and local impacts as well as responses (Beall, 2002).

Further, social exclusion could be active or passive. Active exclusion involves using deliberate policies to prevent some people—immigrants, refugees, or other group of people—from exercising certain rights, privileges, and access to economic activities. This is in keeping with some forms of deprivations minority communities suffer in Europe and Asia or elsewhere (Ogata, 1998). Contrarily, passive social exclusion involves no deliberate attempt to exclude people from socio-economic and political participation. Yet, they still face exclusion. For instance, if poverty and isolation are caused by a bad economy—or even a health crisis like the covid-19 pandemic—and subsequent increment of poverty, a passive exclusion is realized. More so, when particular groups of people—such as the young and those without skills or less skilled in our communities—suffer due to being left out of the job sector, it could be argued that the economic circumstances leading to this situation—as well as the economic policies heightening those conditions—may not have been, in most cases, targeted at excluding these vulnerable groups from economic participation (Sen, 2000).

Notably, being excluded from social relations can also result to series of deprivations, unfortunately. And this could further diminish the living opportunities of people and/or communities in a significant manner. This includes the omission of people from the opportunity of being employed, access to credit facilities could result to economic impoverishment. The ensuing consequences could include other forms of deprivations in the form of undernourishment or homelessness (Sen, 2000). A typical example is the covid-19 protocols to nip the further spread of the virus in the bud, prevented some of the youth from going to work as well as engaging in other forms of social relations such as funerals, marriage ceremonies.

Oddly though, by taking an extreme cognizance of poverty, in terms of the kind of the deprivation of the jobless could include the loss of freedom induced by the joblessness. Thus, a person caught in the torturous web of unemployment—with material support such as social insurance—freedom of decisions disrupted. In fact, attitudinal studies have shown that loss of freedom is perceived by many unemployed people as a critical issue of deprivation (Schokkaert & Ootegem, 1990).

Relatedly, joblessness can could expose people to social exclusion in multifold. Apparently, the exclusion does not relate to only economic opportunities—like job-induced insurance, pension, and medical entitlements—but exclusion from social activities, such as participation in the life of the community, which may be quite challenging for jobless people (Sen, 2000) and the covid-19 protocols have further derail the migration and mobility patterns of the youth leading to both employment related, freedom and social activities exclusion.

To continue with the argument, the impact of youth unemployment cannot be farfetched (in terms of the long-run loss of self-esteem of actual and/or potential young workers). Evidence abound that this damaging effect is tellingly obvious for young women. The increasing severity of youth unemployment in Europe and globally is obvious, and the present pattern of global joblessness is heavily skewed against the young folks thereby leading to social exclusion (Ibid).

Suffice to add, the lack of freedom to take part in the labour market keeps people in bondage, repression, oppression and captivity, and the war against the unfreedom of tied labor is essential in many underdeveloped countries today for some of the reasons for which the American civil war was momentous. For instance, the free will or choice to enter markets signifies important contribution to development. Besides, the praise of capitalism by Karl Marx and his characterization (in *The Capital*) of the American civil war as the one great issue in recent history (Marx, 1887) is in keeping with the relevance of the freedom of labour contract as contrary to slavery and other enforced exclusion people encounter in the labour market. Thus, the self-determination to partake in labour markets has a basic function in social living and can have both fundamental relevance and helpful importance (Sen, 1992a). Relative to the issue of gendered exclusion and inequality, it has been empirically noted that the exclusion of women's interest resonates their being relegated from employment opportunities, basic education, and land and other property ownership (Bardhan, 1984).

Critique of the concept of social/economic exclusion

The concept of social exclusion could be critiqued by dint of selectively itemizing certain societal problems under the broad umbrella of “social exclusion.” There is also a lack of discipline in the selection process of what constitutes social exclusion. Again, the vim and excitement with which the concept has been propagated for adoption by its adherents has had the trickling down effects of putting off some of the experts on poverty and deprivation (Sen, 2000).

As another critique by Amartya Sen, the milieus within which the concept come into view are often confusing and contradictory. Despite the concept’s over 20 years of deployment in the European Union—particularly France—in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, debates are rife about what the concept precisely stands for, its best usage in rhetorical and policy perspectives (Ibid).

What is segmented labor market theory?

Per the dual labor market theory, the labor market consists of two sectors: “a high-wage (primary) sector with good working conditions, stable employment, and substantial returns to human capital variables such as education and experience, and a low-wage (secondary) sector with the opposite characteristics” (Dickens & Lang, 1988: 128).

Brief historical of the segmented labor market theory

The dual labor market theory gained prominence in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. It was taken seriously by prominent conventional labor economists (Dickens & Lang, 1988). In terms of credit, relative to the first emergence of the segmented labor market theory development in the late 1960s, tribute goes to (Doeringer & Piore, 1971) work on firms’ internal labor markets and manpower analysis. The scholarly work garnered backing from critics of human capital and marginal productivity theory who posited that the war waged on poverty manpower programs did not yield significant reduction in poverty and underemployment, particularly for the minority groups in societies. The critics maintained and argued that, these programs was unsuccessful in fixing structural shortcomings and deficiencies in the creation and allocation of jobs (Harrison, 1972; Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973).

Relevance of the segmented labor market theory to this study

First and foremost, Doeringer and Piore argue that “the labor market is divided into a primary and a secondary market. Jobs in the primary market possess several of the following characteristics: high wages, good working conditions, employment stability, chances of advancement, equity, and due process in work rules. Jobs in the secondary

market, in contrast, tend to have low wages and fringe benefits, poor working conditions, high labor turnover, little chance of advancement, and often arbitrary and capricious supervision” (Doeringer & Piore, 1971: 165). Further, the secondary market stratified, taking cognizance of important differences between people employed in low-wage industries and workers employed in informal work and unlawful work activities (Bluestone, 1970).

It is worth mentioning that the primary market could be sub-divided into upper and lower tiers (Piore, 1973; Osterman, 1975). Stated differently, Reich, Gordon and Edward posit that the primary sector jobs are further divided into “subordinate” and “independent” primary jobs. The former is tedious, repetitive and recommends behavioral characteristics of loyalty, self-control and strictness, sensitivity towards rules and authority, and readiness to accept firm’s goals. For example, factory and office jobs are in this sector. On the other hand, independent primary sector jobs are characterized by creativity, based on problem-solving, self-initiating, and often have professional standards for work. In the latter segment, self-induced labor turnover is high. Also, the individual’s enthusiasm and accomplishment are vastly compensated (Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973).

To explain further, the terminology of dual labor market theory—the primary and secondary market segments—is usually segregated based on the job stability features. In essence, in primary sector jobs—a well developed and stable working habits; on the job training and acquisition of skills; a relatively high wages and salaries; and job ladders for promotion/advancement—do exist. In secondary labor market on the other hand, jobs are often characterized by less stable working habits, low wages and salaries, high labor turnover, and limited job ladders or few/nonexistence labor mobility. Indeed, jobs in the secondary labor market are predominantly (though not exclusively) occupied by minority workers, women, and youth (Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973).

Imperatively, the youth are the focal point of this thesis. Besides, some categories of jobs have gendered orientation. For instance, some jobs are restricted to men while some are reserved for women. Relative to the issue of emoluments, wages and salaries in the labor market occupied by the females are quite lower than their male counterparts, unfortunately. In fact, female jobs are often premised on “serving mentality,” an orientation towards subordinating the men thereby limiting the labor mobility of the female worker (Waddoups & Assane, 1993). This apparently constrains their desired labor market mobilities.

Interestingly, there exist restricted mobility between labor market segments in the dual labor market. The bone of contention is not the existence of secondary jobs basically, however the difficulties of the secondary workers to gain employment in the primary labor market over the life course (Doeringer & Piore, 1971). In fact, the term “secondary” resonates with the assumption that blue collar workers in the secondary labor market live in families with a primary labor market breadwinner. With this point of departure, families depending on secondary labor market take-home pay as their main source of sustenance will most likely endure poverty, economic hardship, precarious life, and general exclusion and its associating consequences. As a reminder, previous scholarly works on labor market segmentation argued that labor-force who start their careers in the secondary labor market are likely to continue working there for the rest of their lives. Thus, the opportunity for mobility is limited (Gordon, 1973a).

Conflicting with the above position is that some research revealed substantial numbers of employees did migrate from the secondary to the primary labor market (Griffin, Kalleberg, & Alexander, 1981). That notwithstanding, not all groups of workers transition from the secondary to primary market at the same speed. For example, black employees have lesser propensity to move to the primary from secondary sector jobs compared to their white colleagues (Rosenberg, 1980). A study by Charles Tolbert unearthed that, as workers get older, movements between core and periphery industry sectors tends to be reduced (Tolbert, 1982). These differences in the rate of mobility have been attributed to variances in education and other forms of human capital (Leigh, 1976).

Also, there exist substantial differences relative to the effects of human capital on earnings within a particular segment. This depends on the approaches deployed to recognize the sectors of the market and the individual variables used in the model (Zucker & Rosenstein, 1981). Again, the difference in returns to education across labor market sectors is not always as expected. For instance, it was unearthed that workers in secondary industries had higher benefits to education than workers in core industries. Nonetheless, women, racial and ethnic minorities tend to get less gains from investments in education than their white male colleagues irrespective of industry sector or occupation they are engaged in (Hodson, 1984).

Critique of the segmented labor market theory

As a first critique, while employee and job attributes—race, sex, immigration status, and type of work arrangement—intensify the likelihood of being employed in a “bad”

or nonstandard job, it is not fitting to use these features to determine/distinguish labor market sectors. The misjudgments of this approach is seen by the existence of counterfactual scenarios such as white male noncitizen labor-force doing “bad” jobs in the secondary market (Hodson & Kaufman, 1982). Second, advocates of the theory did not build a recognized theory in conformity with standards as mainstream economists will usually do. Thus, their work was largely atheoretical. Further, the practical methods deployed mostly occurred outside the usual norm like interviews, observational studies, and historical and institutional analysis. Thus, campaigners of the segmented labor market theory—primarily radical political economists—decided to develop and deploy their own research program outside the popularize mainstream approach (See Dickens & Lang, 1988).

Justification and application of theory/concepts in the thesis

Since the study aims to uncover the economic impacts of the covid-19 crisis on migration and mobility among the youth in Ghana; the type of labor market participation of the youth, the ease with which the youth can participate in their desired labor market without facing rejections (social exclusion), as well as the associating benefits, vulnerabilities, risks, apprehensions, (un)certainity (precarity) therein in the labor market is of utmost importance. Putting these in mind, the theory of segmented labor market theory, concepts of precarity and exclusion are justified and fit for purpose in this thesis as explained below.

In terms of theory/concepts application, available data and literature show increasing unemployment among the youth in Ghana because of the covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the theory of segmented labor will be used to showcase how differently youth in the primary and secondary market have been impacted differently by the covid-19 pandemic. Due to the issues of covid-19 to facilitate mobility to and from work, is the situation the same for all primary sector workers? Or those in the “independent” primary sector have mobility pass compared to those in the “subordinate” primary sector? And post pandemic, which labor market would be eased to admit participants back into its folds without many troubles. It could be recalled that mobility in the dual labor market (from secondary to primary) is quite limited. And for the few exceptional cases, mobility wanes with age and gender of the worker. Whiles education facilitates mobility, it is not always the same for women. Therefore, I will deploy this theory to showcase how the pandemic has further exacerbated these complexities for the youth in Ghana’s labor market space.

Second, the concept of precarity will be applied to highlight how perilous the labor conditions of the youth and women have become due to the pandemic. With the covid-19 crisis, restrictions placed limited people's movement and resulted to job losses as well. Besides, not all the youth who lost their jobs due to the covid-19 crisis were compensated. It will show whether the youth have become economically more unsafe, uncertain, and vulnerable because of the havoc of the pandemic. And how precarious have the life of the women have become by staying at home working, and doing house chores?

Third, the concept of exclusion will be used to examine how the youth and women have been further exempted from participating in the labor market of their choice due to the pandemic. For instance, some labor market opportunities revert to virtual platforms when covid-19 struck. Unfortunately, most females were—passively—excluded from this sector because they lack the IT skills needed for participation. Some of the youth, especially the head porters lost their places of abode—the market squares—which double as their place of work. And the youth who are in the lower tier primary market, how has the pandemic-imposed exclusion on them compared to their bosses who belong to the upper tier of the primary market? Thus, the concept of social exclusion would be applied to showcase how this exclusion could lead to poverty, deprivation, and general hardship for the youth. In essence, it would enable us to appreciate how the disadvantaged conditions of the youth and women would be aggravated by the covid-19 crisis and its broad implications including national security threats.

CHAPTER FIVE

Data Analysis: Findings and Discussions

Introduction of chapter

The data analysis chapter presents and discusses the findings of the thesis. It begins with the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Next, themes extracted from the primary data are analyzed, discussed, and presented to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses posed in the introductory chapter.

Demographic characteristics of the study participants

The study participants' demographic information such as age, gender, education, marital status, income level is presented here using tables and graph. The purpose is to help the reader have a fair-minded idea and understanding of the study participants.

Age distribution of the study participants

The table below shows the age distribution of the respondents. Of the 122 study participants, majority are between the ages of 21-25 (representing **36.1%**). Next is 15-20 years which approximates 25.4%. Followed by 26-30 years age group with 18%. The age groups with least representation are 31-35 and 36+ years old amounting to 8.2% and 12.3% respectively. The data means that majority of the youth contacted (15-20, 21-25) are in the school going age. The ideal economically active youth (26-30) constitute the median of the age distribution. Information on the participants' occupational status—shown later in figure 5.1—corroborates that 39.34% are students. For the lack of decent jobs unfortunately, some of the youths—with few exceptions—are either jobless, on job a search, in the streets hustling and doing other temp jobs for survival. The age data is shown in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Age distribution of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-25	44	36.1	36.1	36.1
	15-20	31	25.4	25.4	61.5
	26-30	22	18.0	18.0	79.5
	31-35	10	8.2	8.2	87.7
	36 years +	15	12.3	12.3	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Educational background of the study participants

From the data obtained, majority of the participants have certain level of educational qualifications. As shown in the table below, out of the 122 study participants who responded to the question of their educational qualifications, majority (**52.5%**) have acquired either diploma/degree certificates, 4.9% are master's degree holders. 14.8% and 12.3% of the youth respectively have had senior and junior high school education (Danish equivalent: undervisningsplig). 11.5% have no formal education at all (complete illiterates). A handful have other some forms of certificate courses, technical/vocational training, and non-formal education (called night and/or Arabic schools in the Ghanaian parlance).

Overall, the data reveals that, the youth is a positive human capital the country could leverage on to be competitive at the national, regional, or global level. With this educated army of human resources, growth, development, and general advancement of the country could be guaranteed. With the formal and other technical/vocational training the youth have attained, their contribution to the country's human capital reservoir could be impressive.

On the other hand, with large numbers of youth acquiring formal and technical/vocational education, the pressure on government and the private sector to provide decent jobs will be high. As argued under the contextual overview chapter, only 80,000 out of a possible 300,000 graduates produced annually secure jobs due to less job openings in the formal sector. The inability of these qualified youths to get jobs could pose national security threats. The analysis of the respondents' educational background is shown in table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Educational background of the study participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Degree/Diploma	64	52.5	52.5	52.5
	JHS	15	12.3	12.3	64.8
	Master's degree	6	4.9	4.9	69.7
	No education at all	14	11.5	11.5	81.1
	Non-formal education	1	.8	.8	82.0
	Others	4	3.3	3.3	85.2
	SHS	18	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Sex distribution respondents

The sex distribution the of respondents displayed in the table below means the sampled study population is male dominant. Indeed, 78 of them (**representing 63.9%**) interreacted and data solicited from were males. The remaining 44 (representing 36.1%) were females. This is shown in the table below.

Table 5.3: Sex of study participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	44	36.1	36.1	36.1
	Male	78	63.9	63.9	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Marital status of the respondents

The participants were asked whether they were single, married or cohabitating during the questionnaire administration. The aim of this question is to deduce the relationship between households and the economic livelihood of the youth. The data shows that **91** of the study participants were single; 29 were married whereas only 2 participants were in cohabitation partnership as of the time of the field survey. For the married couple, livelihood issues become complex. It transcends from being an individual phenomenon to household issue.

Household puts pressure on people to acquire spacious accommodation, cater for the family needs, perform house chores, and take care of children's needs—school fees, clothing, groceries, medical expenses. In Ghana, these roles are socially/culturally determined for both male and female gender. With the married unemployed youth, and those doing temp work without job security, their precarious situation could put extra burden on their social life which could bring about mental health problems and other forms of national security concerns. This is presented in table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Marital status of the study participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cohabitation	2	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Married	29	23.8	23.8	25.4
	Single	91	74.6	74.6	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

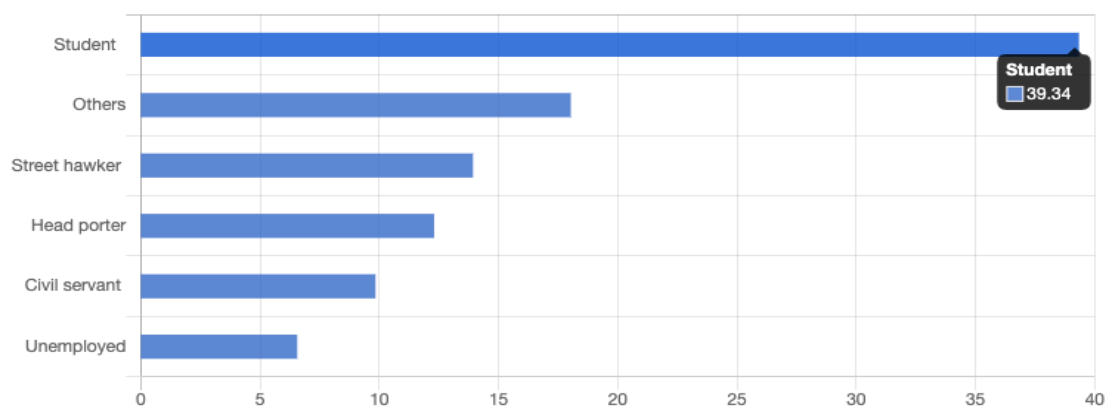
Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Occupational status of respondents

The graph below shows the labor market participation of the study participants. Indeed, **39.34%** of them are still attending school—even though some do temporary jobs after lectures or during vacation as a source of livelihood—whiles 9.84% are civil servants. Some of them are engaged in odd jobs such as street hawking, head porting. Others are unemployed. Nonetheless, some are into other forms of uncategorized jobs. This implies that those doing head porting and street hawking are in the secondary labor market doing unskilled jobs, with less pay, no social security/pension, and the covid-19 crisis could further their lives into precarity likewise those unemployed.

However, the few respondents working as civil servants are into the primary market with stable jobs. Even though the pandemic has impacted some of their mobilities quite similarly to the former group, but economically different due to the security of their job tenure. Therefore, the economic impact of the corona crisis on the former is more pronounced than the latter due to their respective association with the secondary and primary markets. The labor market inclination of the study participants is presented in horizontal graph below.

Figure 5.1: Occupational status of respondents



Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Employment type of the respondents

101 of the study participants are engaged in one sort of occupation or the other. 55 of them representing **45.1%** deemed their employment type permanent. However, 46 of them (approximating 46%) say they are into temp jobs, therefore underemployed labors. However, the remaining 21 (17.2%) participants were unemployed. Those doing temporary jobs are sometimes excluded from participating in the primary labor market. It is either they lack the educational/technical competences, their gender or due to structural problems. For the unemployed youth, they are completely excluded from the

labor market. Thus, their labor market mobilities are affected due to either active or passive exclusion. Unfortunately, the covid-19 crisis is projected to deepen these problems.

Table 5.5: Respondents' employment type

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21	17.2	17.2	17.2
Permanent employment	55	45.1	45.1	62.3
Temporary employment	46	37.7	37.7	100.0
Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Residence status of the study respondents

Since the study falls within the field of migration studies, knowing the residence status of the youth surveyed is relevant. The data gathered shows most of them (**64**) are migrants. Contrarily, 58 of them are natives of the study area: Accra and/or Tamale. In terms of migration motives, 23.77%, 21.31%, 3.28% and 3.28% are migrants by study, work, family reunification and other reasons respectively. Their residence status is shown in table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6: Residence status of the study participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	64	52.5	52.5	52.5
Migrants	58	47.5	47.5	100.0
Natives	122	100.0	100.0	
Total				

Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Annual income levels of the study participants

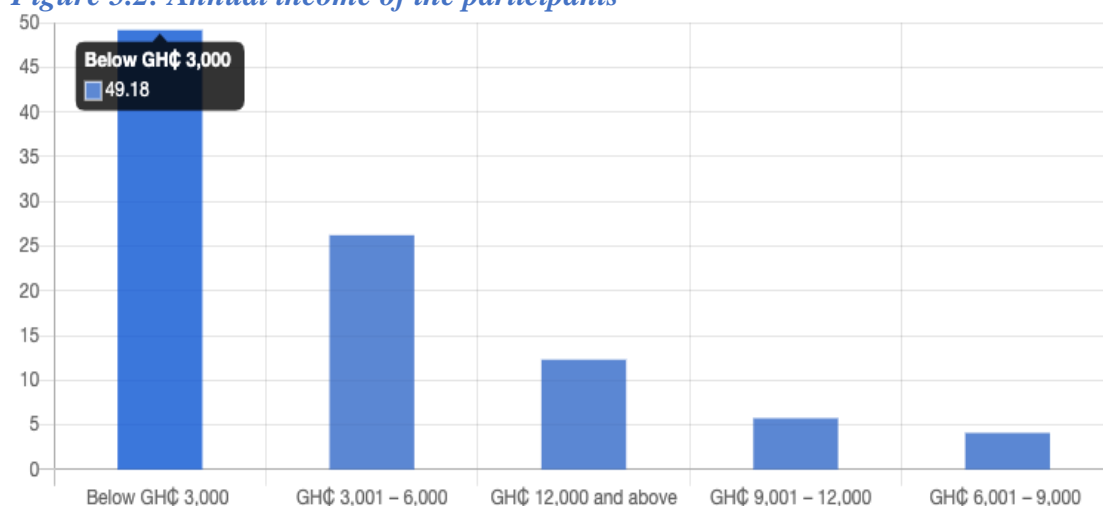
Since the study seeks to uncover how the covid-19 crisis economically impacted on migration and mobility among the youth, knowing their income level before covid-19 is worthwhile. The graph shows that **49.18%** of the respondents earned below 401 US Dollars annually pre-covid. With covid-19, **64.75%** earned below \$401 annually. This means that the pandemic has pushed more people to live below the poverty line of \$1.25/day. It therefore hastens precarity among the youth.

This is big drawback to the UN SDG 1—advocating for no poverty—since over **800 million** people (globally) survived below \$1.25 daily, making it difficult to procure drinkable water, enough food and proper sanitation ([UNDP Seoul Policy Centre for](#)

Knowledge Exchange through SDG Partnerships, n.d.). The study participants are not precluded from this global agenda of ‘no poverty’. The other income groups got at least \$794.53457 US Dollars or more annually. Therefore, they live slightly above the \$1.25 poverty line.

Therefore, could be describe not poor per the \$1.25/day poverty line. However, recounting their daily survival issues, they barely meet their daily livelihoods due to the recent high cost of living caused by the covid-19 pandemic and aggravated further by the Russia-Ukraine war (Kwakye, 2022). Besides, some experts have argued that the rising cost of living—such as 15.7% inflation in Ghana, cost of average food basket increase by 700% in Sudan, cost of fuel shot up 190% in Nigerian—could spark protest and national security concerns in Africa (Gbadamosi, 2022). With the job losses occasioned by the covid-19 pandemic, less job openings in Ghana, the claim on joblessness leading to national security threats is quite legitimate.

Figure 5.2: Annual income of the participants



Source: Field survey 2022, Ghana.

Note: 1US Dollar = 7.4868036 Ghanaian Cedis as of Thursday 5th May 2022 (Xe Currency Converter, 2022).

Summary of Major Findings

This thesis critically investigates the economic impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on migration and mobility among the youth in Ghana. First, it examines how the youth/women’s pattern of migration/mobility have been affected by the corona crisis plus their labor market mobilities. Second, their present economic wellbeing shaped by the covid-19 crisis. Third, the existing inequalities and those created and deepened by the pandemic. Finally, mental health issues brought about and/or heightened by the pandemic situation and its broader repercussions on national security concerns. The first issue, through the third theme are captured and extracted from both the QUAL and

Quan data. The final issue, however, was extracted only from the Qual side of the research. The summary of major findings is presented in table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7 Summary major findings

Themes	Occurrences particular to the interviewed study participants			
	General experiences	AR	TR	Seen Among;
Altered movements and labor market mobilities in Ghana amidst the pandemic	*Public buses could not operate to full capacity due to social distancing protocols making mobility to and from work difficult and sometimes impossible	+	-	One
	*Labor input(s) level has not really change but output reduced	+	-	One
	*Shift system and working from home	+	+	Some
		+	+	Most
	*Inability to move freely to seek job and other livelihood opportunities	+	+	Most
	*Mobility (social/economic) patterns impacted by the covid-19 crisis	+	+	Most
	*Lack of nose masks and vaccines impeded general movements	+	+	Some
	*People harassed and beaten for lack of nose masks	+	+	Two
Covid-19 Crisis and the economic wellbeing among Youth/Women in Ghana	*Less mobility for fear of infection	-	+	Two
	*Head porters' pans seized for breaching covid-19 protocols	-	+	Two
	*Loss of jobs	+	+	All
	*Income levels depleted by the covid	+	+	Most
		+	+	Three
	*Low sales or patronage due to covid	+	+	Some
	*Most of the Ghanaian youth have no formal work	+	+	Two
	*"Kayakaya" [head porting] business disrupted due to the covid restrictions	-	+	Three

Inequalities among the Youth/Women labor market space amidst the covid-19 crisis	*Women at mining firms laid off because the job is supposedly labor intensive	+	-	One
	*Women face social exclusion because they lack certain qualifications (IT skills) to do online commerce	+	-	Three
	*Some of the criteria used in recruitment are discriminatory towards women	+	-	One
	*Ghana's labor market generally does not favor women	+	-	Some
	*Young women are not technologically inclined	+	+	Most
	*Women performing unpaid services at home affects their labor market participation	+	-	Three
	*Online teaching and learning disadvantage those from rural areas and/or poor homes due to lack of access to laptops, internet	+	+	One
	*The pandemic is not gender bias	+	-	Some
	*Passcodes given to senior officers to aid their mobility to work	+	-	One
	*Covid-19 affected women due to the gender	+	-	Two
Mental Health concerns among the Youth/Women amidst corona crises	*Lockdown frustrates women working from home whiles house chores plus catering for the children	+	+	Most
	*Hopelessness caused by the covid-19 crisis	+	-	One
	*Increase harassment at home with some women allegedly beaten or killed by their partners	+	-	One
	*Market women beaten by military men for allegedly breaking covid rules	+	+	Some
	*Frustration and aggression setting into people's life	+	-	One

NOTE:

AR = Accra Respondents, TR = Tamale respondents, + = experienced from the data set, - = not experienced from the dataset

Altered Movements and Labor Market Mobilities in Ghana Amidst the Pandemic

Migration and mobility are age-long phenomena. In Ghana, freedom of movements is assured. It is a fundamental human right for all citizens guaranteed by the constitution. Indeed, Ghanaians are not required to show proof of citizenship during internal migration or mobility to any part of the country. More so, Ghanaians holding the ECOWAS travelling passport—ECOWAS Card—move easily within the West African sub-region without herculean barriers due to the free movement guaranteed under the ECOWAS charter (McAuliffe, Kitimbo, Abe, Sawyer, & Klatt, 2020). Again, no health passport is required before citizens could move or have access to institutions such as banks, hospitals, theaters, stadiums in Ghana and within the sub-region. With these limitless freedoms, labor mobilities is assured.

Unfortunately, with the arrival of the covid-19, all these freedoms were stolen from the people. And the Ghanaian youth were spectacularly affected because of their enormous mobility tendencies for work, educational, recreational, and other adventure purposes. In the peak of the corona crisis, people were asked to show proof of non-infection (in the form of negative PCR or quick test, vaccine certificate) before their constitutionally guaranteed free movement could be enjoyed. The denial of freedom is perceived by many unemployed people as a critical issue of deprivation (Schokkaert & Ootegem, 1990) which could spark disorder as seen in the Arab uprising.

For the free movement of citizens enshrined in the ECOWAS charter curtailed by the pandemic, a street hawker—coded AR 5—from Niger searching for livelihood in Ghana claimed that *“Now in Africa, there is no free movement because of the covid 19. Movement has become difficult from Niger to Ghana, Accra to Madina [popular market square in the Great Accra Region]. It has become difficult because of the covid.”* This is how bad the pandemic has impeded free movements in Ghana, in the sub-region and globally. Therefore, the above prologue infers that the migratory and mobility patterns of the youth in Ghana have been greatly changed by the covid-19 pandemic. Below are certain accounts from interviewees AR3 and AR6 with respect to the above theme.

.... when the Covid hits, we had to cut down the number of people per bus which really affected us. At some time, you come out and the buses will not be available because they have picked the number of people, they are supposed to pick due to the covid-19 restrictions.... Some days, you will you will not be able to get bus to your workplace (Extract 1, AR3)

The covid 19 pandemic brought with it several restrictions which included lockdowns... You needed to get nose masks or vaccinated before you move out to access certain places... If you are a youth and you did not have a secured job or

a source of income, you could not afford nose masks or get vaccinated, how do you move to even search for jobs... procuring nose mask was a challenge for a lot of Ghanaian youth. So, I think those restrictions really hampered the opportunity for people to go out and look for jobs (Extract 2, AR6)

The above renditions by study participants AR3 and AR6 markedly shows how the covid-19 pandemic influenced their routine social mobilities, labor market participation and securities. With the lockdowns for example, the public transport services could not take onboard the number of passengers hitherto taken due to the social distancing protocols enacted by the President through the executive instrument. In fact, the public transport minibuses allowed boarding for only 22 people. A big disadvantage to transport operators in terms of daily sales and overall profit margins.

At the apex of the covid-19 crisis and the accompanying restrictions, the bus operators were instructed to work in shifts. These restrictions limited the supply of buses on the streets. For some transport service owners, it was economically unwise to ply the roads only to cart few passengers amidst rising cost of fuel, diesel, impoverishing living conditions and the continuous pressure to cater for household needs—school fees, rent and general housekeeping expenses. Therefore, the covid-19-stimulated shift system generated a mismatch between the supply and demand of public buses on the streets.

Obviously, the variance between the supply and demand for buses—together with global fuel price hikes—led to increasing cost of lorry fares which further depleted the living standards of the already impoverished Ghanaian people. With few buses on the roads, workers (without personal cars) either go to work late or not at all on certain days. This resulted to underemployment, reduced productivity, contributing—partly occasioned by covid-19 pandemic related surge in government debt—to the recent downgrade of the Ghanaian economy from B to B- economy (FitchRatings, 2022).

In relation to the issues of daily livelihoods of people and their households, the passengers on board were disallowed from taking even snack in the bus whiles at the lorry station or on road going to their various destinations. The priority was survival—keeping everybody health and safe—according to the General secretary of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (Jones, 2020). With snacks proscribed at the lorry stations and in the busses, the implication is that the youth whose source of livelihood involves selling ice creams, candies, doughnuts, and other fries through street hawking are kicked out of business. And the head porters who walk around the lorry stations to carry loads are without loads to carry—out of work as well, loss of livelihoods leading

to precarious existence and social exclusion due to their attachment to the secondary market.

Move over, per the regular adjustments to the covid-19 protocols, the days street hawkers and head porters were allowed to work at the various lorry stations, they are required to wear nose mask for their mobilities to be guaranteed. In some cases, they are asked to produce proof of negative test or covid vaccination. It was difficult meeting these requirements. These restrictions also hampered the prospects of the youth seeking for—white and blue color—jobs in the affected lockdown areas. And for the youth gainfully employed in the formal sector, their mobility to work was disrupted leading to reduced labor hours or work output or even both.

In terms of underemployment and/or labor work hours loss statistics, the International Labor Organization projected global hours worked in 2021 to have been reduced by 4.3% (approximately 125 million full-time jobs) compared to pre covid-19 era. In the third quarter of 2021, some developed countries witness a total work hour of 3.6% lower than the fourth quarter of 2019. Low and lower-middle income countries were also affected. They former recorded 5.7% while the latter income countries experienced 7.3% reductions ([International Labour Organization, 2021](#)).

Apparently, the corona situation has brought some sort of social exclusion leading to precarious lives for some youths. This is especially so for those in the secondary labor market doing unskilled and temp jobs—graduates doing temp jobs, head porting, street hawking—without any social security, whatsoever. For example, the freedom of boarding buses, eating in the busses or at the lorry station, loitering around the station to sell goods is the right of citizens. With the covid, they have been—passively—excluded from access to certain rights, opportunities, and resources. Relatedly, participant AR 10 argues from the social and economic aspect of covid impacts as such: *“covid-19 really restricted my mobility especially getting to work and also having access to some recreational facilities... the impact of the covid-19 is in terms of restricting my mobility, social aspect seeing family seeing ...”* It could be argued that these excluded youths were being disconnected from the social relations of seeing friends, family members, some associates, and willfully frequenting institutions (like they use to do pre covid-19 crisis). Also, they are not permitted to participate fully in activities of the society such as free movement to work or search for means of livelihood ([Silver, 2007](#)). This could make their lives precarious through uncertainties, apprehension, vulnerabilities, insecurities ([Kasmir, 2018](#)).

In essence, these impacted migration and mobility, coupled with the social exclusion it brought onto the youth could usher them into a condition of “life without the promise of stability” (Tsing, 2015: 2). With these impacts, it becomes difficult for them to plan their personal, educational, social, and economic life with certainty. Other study participants, two head porters shared how their daily movements and labor market mobilities during the peak of the corona crisis in Ghana occurred. TR 7 and TR8 reveal the following in terms of migration and mobility.

When covid-19 came, they banned all travelling, and banned funerals. Here, if not the market we do not even go out. When they say we should not go to the market, then we will be indoors. But when they say we should go then we can go to the market. Also, we could not come back home because the government banned all travelling, even if you want a car to come to back to North you will not get (Extract 3, TR 7)

When the covid came it was very powerful... So, when they lifted the lockdown, we all had to ran home [to the northern region of Ghana] for our lives. We ran home because of the covid (Extract 4, AR 8).

.... If you are not wearing the nose mask, and they [Police/military] got you, they will collect your head pan, and you will have to pay 10 cedis [\$1.4] before you get it back or you are released. Sometimes they will even lash you. All these things affected me because I was female (Extract 5, TR 7)

The viewpoints of the above participants are in keeping with Osei-Assibey et al contention that the covid-19 pandemic had changed the global population patterns of movements including Ghana (Osei-Assibey, 2021). Since the participants’ daily movements and labor market mobilities as head porters is largely on mobility to and from market, the introduction of the executive instrument by the President of Ghana to ban travelling, lockdown the cities of Accra and Kumasi, ensure social distancing (Osei-Assibey, 2021). This affected their daily mobilities in different ways with its diverse socio-economic effects and unsettlements of their daily temporalities and life plan (Allison, 2012).

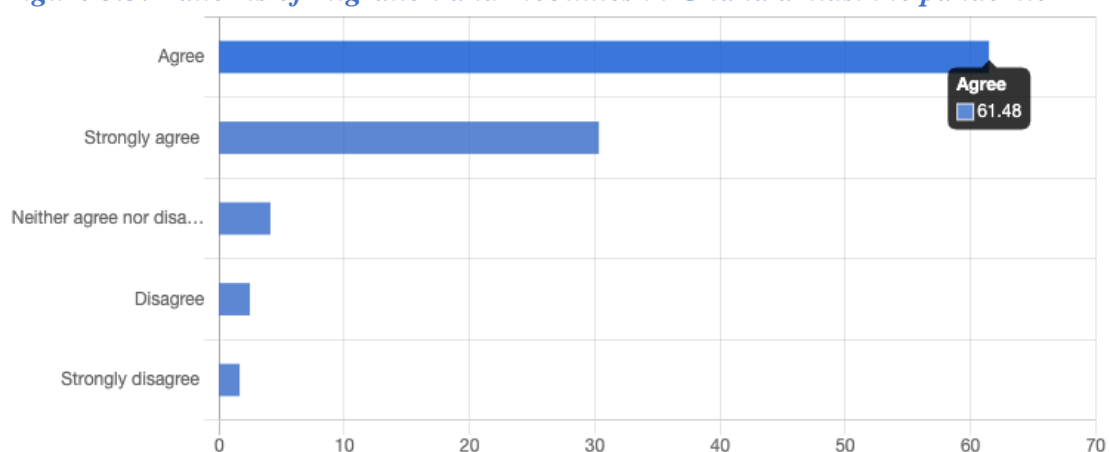
Therefore, these head porters could no longer commute to the market unrestrained like they did pre-covid. This consequently not only caused underemployment but reduced productivity and income levels too. With the high cost of living in Accra and coupled with reduced labor hours and income, the desire of participant TR 7 to return home (northern Ghana) was impractical due to the lockdown/travel ban. Instances where they are allowed to visit the market, they are required to strictly abide by the covid-19 face mask wearing protocols. Failure to do so had resulted to various form of harassments and punishments—losing their head pan, physical abuse, monetary fines—by the

Police. This assertion of physical abuse from the Police resonates with Boatenga et al claim that there were instances violence and illegal sanctions were meted out to ‘undisciplined’ violators—mostly the youth, street hawkers, head porters—by the police (Boatenga, Kusib, & Ametepey, 2021).

To contextualize how the corona situation has changed the migration patterns in Ghana internationally and internally, it triggered the first returned internal migration in Ghana in a large scale since the independence in 1956. For example, an approximately **200 migrants**—largely head porters—returned to the northern part of Ghana when the lockdown was mooted, prior to its actual date of imposition in the country (Citi newsroom report, 2020). Internationally, Ghanaians numbering about **1,800** living in the sub-region were also left stranded at Ghana’s borders of Aflao, Elubo and Sampa due to the border closures (United Nations Framework Report, 2020).

As alluded by head porter AR8, the pandemic forced her to return to the northern region from Accra to realize her freedom of movement guaranteed despite limited economic opportunities in northern Ghana. This returned migration hindered her source of livelihood due to the lack of industries in the north. AR8 and most of her returnees are basically home, idle without any paid work. To bring quantitative data from the field survey to buttress how the covid-19 crisis changed the patterns of mobility among the youth, this graph is worthwhile.

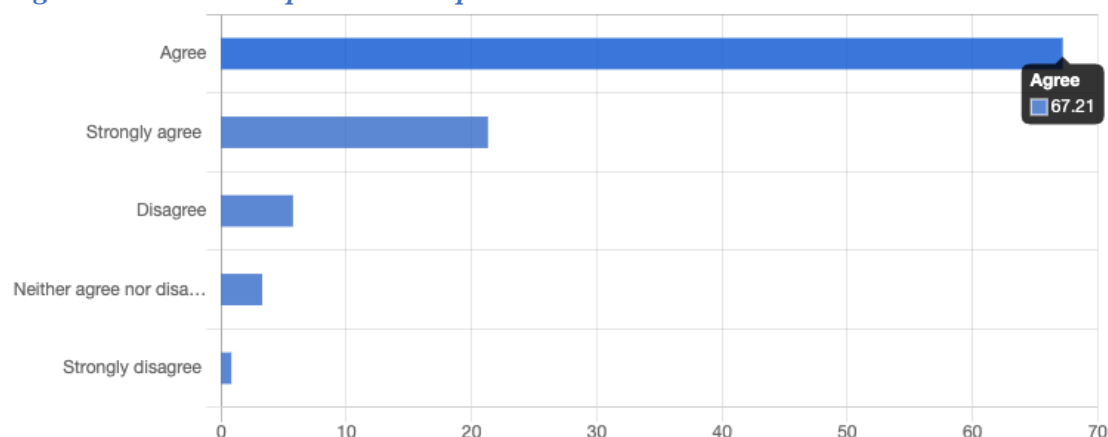
Figure 5.3: Patterns of migration and mobilities in Ghana amidst the pandemic



The horizontal graph above posits that, out of the 122 respondents, overwhelming majority (**91.81%**) of them either agree or strongly agree that their patterns of migration and mobility have been impeded by the pandemic. On the other hand, 4.1% disagree or strongly disagree. Another 4.1% remained indifferent in that respect. Furthermore, in terms of the pandemic affecting the labor market mobilities of the study participants

occasioned by the changing mobility patterns, results from the field survey using a Likert scale of agree, strongly agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree are presented in the figure below.

Figure 5.4: Covid-19 pandemic impacted labor market mobilities



As seen from the graph above using the Likert scale, 67.21% agree that the pandemic affected their labor market engagements while 21.31% strongly agree. Therefore, **88.52%** contended that their labor market activities were disrupted by the pandemic. However, 6.54% either disagree, strongly disagree while only 4.94% neither agree nor disagree to the question.

Covid-19 Crisis and the Economic Wellbeing Among Youth/Women in Ghana

The economic wellbeing and general livelihoods of the youth have been impeded by the corona crisis in Ghana. Before the covid-19, Ghana government created NABCO (Nation Builders Corps), a two-year temporary job opening for university graduates that pays paltry GH¢700—about US\$93.77 monthly wages ([EducationWeb, 2021](#)). This is too little for university graduates to survive on, notwithstanding the increasing cost of living precipitated by the pandemic and now the Russia-Ukraine war. The glimmer of hope these youth have—to be migrated onto permanent employment scale by governmental or private companies after the expiration of the two years working contract—are to some extent quashed by the advent of the corona crisis.

To this end, precarity concept is in keeping with this line of analysis. Because these university graduates are ushered into casualized and precarious jobs that is unreliable, capricious, and perilous from the viewpoint of having a good life ([Kalleberg, 2009](#)). This could lead these university graduates—who ought to have been decently employed—to live a “life without the promise of stability” ([Tsing, 2015: 2](#)). These uncertainties could also undermine Ghana’s national security architecture. Due to the pandemic, some youths were laid off, others such as the head porters and street hawkers

were barred from hustling on the streets. These impacted their economic life and general livelihoods. Extracts of engagements with participants AR2 and AR3 revealed the following narratives.

I have friends who lost their jobs. I have friends whose salaries have been slashed due to covid-19. I mean I live in an economy where job search in the first place is a big issue before even covid.... and the little job avenues we have are folding up because business is running down (Extract 6, AR2)

...there has been a lot of laid offs.... because of the pandemic. For us in the public sector, we were lucky because we have job security. But with the private sector, they have those issues of laid offs. It was terrible most of them were laid off from the waitress to the bar attendance to shopkeepers and all that (Extract 7, AR3)

The above revelations confirm UNDP statistics that about **770,000** workers have had their salaries slashed and about **42,000** workers employees lost their jobs during the peak of the covid-19 partial lockdown in Ghana. Again, labor hours of about **700,000** workers in Ghana got reduced (The World Bank, 2020). The job losses and reduced labor hours are still on-going labor issues in the country. This makes the people's condition precarious. As Bourdieu claimed, underemployment could make people's life precarious (Bourdieu, 1998).

More so, the job losses triggered by the pandemic could wear down awareness of social belonging leading to social exclusion (Muehlebach, 2011). Interestingly, with about **700,000** workers in Ghana becoming underemployed in the form of having their labor hours reduced, their daily temporalities and life plans could be unsettled greatly thereby rendering them precarious (Allison, 2012). Moreover, loss of labor securities breeds precarity due to the psychic and disturbing states of apprehension and uneasiness it brings forth to the youth (Molé, 2010). And the consequential effects of these states of apprehension and uneasiness to national security threats cannot be farfetched (Sosu, 2021).

To make deductions from the two interview extracts, study participant AR2 reveals that youth unemployment is a major problem in Ghana before the advent of the covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, the mismatch between skills and job market requirements had caused most youth unemployment in Ghana (Baah-Boateng, 2014). Of the **300,000** projected graduates yearly, only about **80,000** get employed and the remaining left on their own. This exclusion could pose a major national security threat if the youth fail to secure employment at legit avenues (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020). Thus, unemployment could create a dangerous army of youth in the form of cybercrimes. As Guy Standing put it in terms of precariat as a “dangerous”

class intensified by deep anger, isolation, apprehension, and alienation (Standing, 2011). Clearly, unemployment and underemployment could cause isolation, anger, and alienation among the youth—a catalyst for national security concerns.

Since the private sector is also challenged to recruiting the army of youth into productive ventures (Hoedoafia & Akosua, 2019), makeshift youth employment avenues such as NABCO were created to accommodate the army of young unemployed graduates in the country (Ampadu-Ameyaw, Jumpah, Owusu-Arthur, Boadu, & Fatunbi, 2020). Regrettably, these NABCO recruits went six months without their meagre monthly allowances being paid. This prompted them to stage street protest/demonstration in the country (Citi News Room, 2022). Back to the primary data, participant AR2 maintains that with the covid-19, some of his acquaintances lost their jobs. Those who were fortunate to be maintained have had their salaries slashed amidst rising cost of living globally and in Ghana caused by the pandemic.

Evidently, the lockdown prompted increment in the cost of goods, services, and exacerbated an impoverished living standard of the people. Data from the Ghana Statistical Service shows that the covid-19 restrictions had led to about **10–20%** price hikes of agricultural produce (Osei-Assibey, 2021). Moreover, job losses and salary reduction meant that livelihoods of youth will be precarious. This could exclude them from future labor market participation since employers prefer to hire employees in employment to those out of job. The cutting down salary syndrome was a strategy deployed by companies as a buffer, to stay afloat in order not to fold up due to the pandemic.

For respondent AR3, he created distinction on the dissimilar ways the covid affected the youth in the public and private sector. Thus, the labor market the youth belong determines the length, breadth, and extent of impact they might have felt. Accordingly, youths attached to the public sector—primary labor market—have had their jobs protected compared to those in the secondary market. This is because, there is job security in Ghana’s public sector compared to most private companies and the informal sector.

Refreshingly, the job security explains why the youth constantly want to be employed by state owned institutions and formal private entities, to seek “work for pay” rather than other ventures like entrepreneurship with the risk factors therein (Jumpah, Tetteh, & Adams, 2018). However, those working in the informal sector such as the restaurants, bars were either sacked or vacated post themselves as some of those businesses

collapsed during lockdown due to low patronage. These type of employment avenues are often part-time, without job-related social securities, poor pay and are therefore quite precarious in nature (Millar, 2017).

Additionally, it could be argued that, for the youths such as AR3 working with the public sector, they enjoy relatively high wages and employment stability (Doeringer & Piore, 1971) compared to those working with the informal sector jobs—such as bars, restaurants—often characterized by low wages and salaries, high labor turnover with limited labor mobility (Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973). With the poor pay and high labor turnover in the informal sector, uncertainties and insecurities could swell around the youth (Kasmir, 2018). This could result to social exclusion leading to various forms of hardships, deprivation, poverty, and marginalisation among the youth (Sen, 2000). Within the same contextual probe, participant AR 4 explains how his wellbeing has been impacted by the crisis.

If I do not go out, I cannot work. Even sometimes, my income depends on donation from people, from friends. Maybe the person earns some certain amount because he works 24hrs. Now, due to the pandemic or maybe the restrictions, or they run shift [at workplace], he will be limited. So, it will also affect the amount of money that he earns and give me. So, if he is affected in a way me too whatever he gives me will be affected (Extract 8, AR 4)

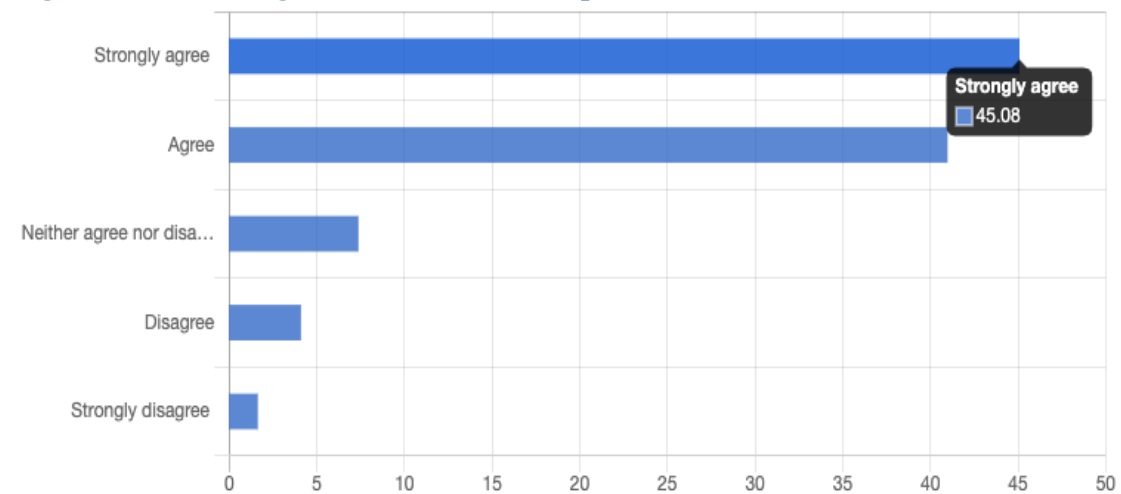
His supposition echoes the issue of precarity as a generalized condition of human life (Millar, 2017). Accordingly, precarious conditions epitomize “a common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself” (Butler, 2004: 31) where the social nature of human presence means that we are dependent on and made vulnerable to others (Millar, 2017). For participant AR 4, he survived through handouts from friends, family members and other acquaintances. Since the income earning of his benefactors have been depleted by the covid-19, participant AR4 expected remittances would not be forthcoming.

Instances the remittances do come, they will be little for his sustenance. Obviously, this could make his general wellbeing uncertain and expose him to social and economic vulnerabilities. Therefore, it is argued that the social nature of human presence implies that we are dependent on and made vulnerable to others. For example, we are exposed to others and situations and that exposure always breeds some risk of violence (Millar, 2017) and dissatisfaction as experienced by participant AR 4.

It is imperative noting that the economic wellbeing of the study participants could be accessed based on their job types, income earnings capacity, and the ability to meeting

their basic needs. At this juncture, I will bring the field survey quantitative data on how the pandemic affected their earnings and basic needs (general livelihoods).

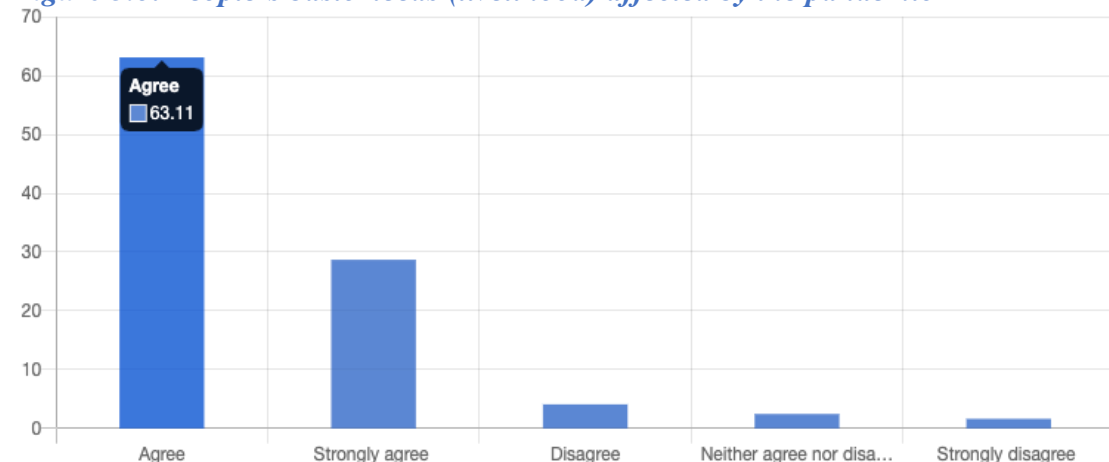
Figure 5.5: Income generation activities impacted



The figure above posits that, out of the 122 respondents, overwhelming majority (**86.06%**) of them either agree or strongly agree that their income generation prospects were reduced with the onset of the pandemic. On the contrary, just a few 5.74% disagree or strongly disagree that the covid affected their income levels, with 7.38% remaining indifferent in that respect.

With the youth and the general public's income levels impacted; the question arises whether their ability to meet their basic needs was impacted as well. This question is relevant because the aim of this thesis is to access the economic impacts of the covid-19 on migration and mobility among African youth. Also, the politics of covid-19 in Ghana is about survival mindset. The effects of covid on people's ability to meet their basic needs is shown in the graph below.

Figure 5.6: People's basic needs (livelihood) affected by the pandemic



As seen from figure 5.6 above, 77 (**63.11%**) and 35 (28.69%) participants agree and strongly agree respectively relative to the pandemic depleting people's livelihoods. In total **91.8%** of the respondents affirmed the view that people's livelihoods have been affected by the corona crisis. However, 4.1% and 1.64% respectively disagree and strongly disagree that livelihoods of people have been affected by the pandemic. But 2.46% neither agree nor disagree to the question.

Inequalities Among the Youth/Women Labor Market Space Amidst the Covid-19 Crisis

Advocating and giving equal rights and opportunities for women and girls to live a life without violence and discrimination is crucial for sustainable future devoid of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. By—economically, politically, and socially—empowering women, sustainable development could be achieved (Nordic Co-operation, 2019). In far global South in Ghana, nevertheless, there are reported cases of inequalities in the country's labor market participation and educational setting before covid-19 struck. Therefore, the overarching purpose of this theme is to ascertain how the youths' obstructed migratory and mobility patterns created other inequalities and/or deepened the existing discriminations in the labor market and educational milieu of Ghana. It is projected that about **45.5%** of the Ghanaian female youth is predisposed to underemployment compared to **38.4%** of their male counterparts (Ghana Statistical Service, 2016). In this respect, the study participants have had these to say about inequalities in Ghana. In terms of the gendered dimension of inequalities we have in the country, two respondents contended that,

.....We are looking at the mode of employment in our labor market. Some of the criteria used in recruitment affects women which people do not even recognize or notice.... Some of the questions asked during job interviews such as the woman's marital status, number of kids the woman has or intend to have, how many times she plans for maternity leave are discriminatory and affects the female gender (Extract 9, AR1)

.... Because of maternity issues in the informal sector, people will want to employ ladies but think in three months' time you are pregnant, you must go and stay home, and I will pay you three months salary for no work done. So, in the informal sector, yes you will find ladies by virtue of being a lady may not have found employment because their employers will find it difficult paying them when they are at home because of labour or maternity issue, but for the formal sector is a little better (Extract 10, AR6)

The above is in keeping with the position that roughly **45.5%** of the female youth in Ghana is more likely to be underemployed unlike **38.4%** of their male colleagues

(Ghana Statistical Service, 2016). With regards to the gendered dimension of exclusion and inequality, it has been empirically noted that the exclusion of women's interest reverberates their relegation from employment opportunities, basic education, land, and other property ownership (Bardhan, 1984).

To add value to the viewpoints of participant AR1 and AR6, the former argues that the mode of recruiting workers into Ghana's labor market is biased against the females. She reveals that questions such as the marital status of women, the number of children women intend to have, number of times women plan to go on maternity leave are discriminatory. Furthermore, the extracted answers determines whether the woman will be employed or not. And obviously, these discriminatory questions make the chances of women being absorbed into the labor market of their choice very blurry.

For instance, if the woman is married and probably has kids, or single but intends to marry and possibly bear children, she might most likely be denied the job due to the expected underemployment and reduced productivity. A male gender—who might not be as qualified as the woman discriminated against—might be considered instead. For the women gainfully employed, the resultant effects of the socially and culturally constructed house chores—washing, cooking, child keeping—puts extra burden on them, affects their labor market participation, their work performance and promotion at workplace.

Suffice to add, education, capacity building and training facilitates job promotion. It also builds the intellectual competences of human resources. Unfortunately, racing against time due to household chores, some Ghanaian women will not be able to upgrade themselves through education or learn new set of skills even on the internet. Apparently, the role of education and gender of prospective employees are determinants of their employability prospects and otherwise of same in most African countries. In Egypt for instance, even educated females have a lower chance of securing job as the economy transition to market-oriented economy as existing policies supposedly favoured males than their female counterparts (Assaad, El-Hamidi, & Ahmed, 2000).

Moreover, with the maternity issue posited by respondent AR6, prospective employers deem it disincentive to pay women—without any productivity—whiles on maternity leave. Consequently, the labor market participation of women could be lessened mainly due to their gender. Indeed, *“the pandemic has come to deepen the inequalities against women and our Ghanaian culture is backing this discrimination because they think that the kitchen is for the women and so if the women is trying to go higher, they try to pull*

the women down” (Extract 5, AR1). With the covid-19 crisis, the lockdown meant that women who are employed in the formal sector stay at home and work remotely whiles doing house chores. This increased unpaid works burden women during the pandemic, reduced their labor market participation prospects, makes them underemployed and less productive, affects their further studies, and rest for improved mental wellbeing.

Apart from diminishing the income generation ability of women, it could also impoverish their mental health. Obviously, the concept of social exclusion appears to give some legitimacy to this line of analysis. Thus, the women have been actively—through discriminatory job interview questions—or passively—culturally constructed gender role—excluded from labor market engagements. This social exclusion is indirectly a causative factor of poverty and inequality in our societies (Atkinson, 1998). Available data suggest that certain employment opportunities are skewed towards people of some groupings whiles leaving out others. This could typify unemployment of minority groups, women, in societies where jobs and/or better jobs are preserved for the majority groups or to men leading to social exclusion (Sen, 2000).

Moreover, the prevailing inequalities between women and men have been purportedly intensified by the pandemic. It is estimated that there is an increase in the proportion of extreme poverty amongst women because of the pandemic (UN WOMEN, 2021). Again, it is feared that successes chalked relative to SDGs on gender equality might be disrupted because of the pandemic. Therefore, the economic implications emphasized on the act of informal work, as well as inferior savings and salaries of women are likely to be severely impacted (UNWOMEN, 2020). Ultimately, the combined effects of these inequalities, could have unreported impacts towards achieving SDG 1 (end poverty in all forms everywhere), and SDG 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries) as proposed by the United Nations (United Nations, 2015).

Importantly, other epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola impacted on marginalized and vulnerable women, children, the elderly and the destitute than on men (Fan, 2020). To conclude, the above arguments drum home the perspective that the exclusion of women’s interest sustains their relegation from employment opportunities, basic education, and land and other property ownership (Bardhan, 1984). Using the Likert scale, the views of the 122 study participants with respect to the prevailing labor market inequalities in Ghana were extracted and tabulated below.

Table 5.8: Prevailing inequalities in Ghana's labor market space

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	79	64.8	64.8	64.8
	Disagree	3	2.5	2.5	67.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	4	3.3	3.3	70.5
	Strongly agree	36	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

The above descriptive statistics shows majority of the participants (**115 representing an overwhelming 94.26%**) believed there are prevalent discriminations in Ghana's labor market space. However, 2.5% disagree while 3.3% neither agree nor disagree. At the far end of the spectrum, none of the respondents had strong disagreement about the notion of inequalities in the labor market of Ghana. With the advent of the covid-19 pandemic, the existing labor market discrimination has rather amplified, according to the perspectives of the respondents. In this regard, the following unfolding account from the transcribed interviews by participant AR6 and AR5 is worth examining.

...Our work usually you must be in the office to partake in certain activities especially if it has to do with field work. You cannot stay at home and do field work. So, once some categories of people are excluded from coming to the office because they do not have a covid pass, then, certainly, their work will be curtailed while others who have the pass can come to work, go to the field of course, have field allowance which will be to the disadvantage of those who could not come (Extract 11, AR6)

So, the laid off was a key factor these days because of the covid. Most businesses had resorted to online transactions so youth who are not academically inclined or do not have access to online gadgets like laptops or smartphones and things that can help them work online, they just cannot find a job (Extract 12, AR5)

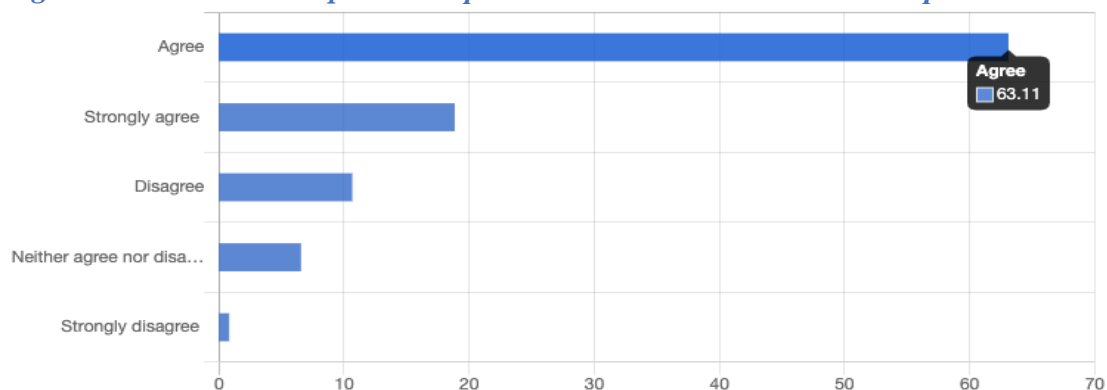
Obviously, the covid-19 crisis has deepened labor market inequalities as seen from the above two interview excerpts. The youth are usually junior staff members in most governmental and private companies in Ghana. Entry level for senior management position is very stringent. And the youth hardly meet the requirements. So, when companies or organization are giving covid-19 pass to facilitate mobility, senior officers were favored over junior staff members. For study participant AR6, a junior agriculture officer with Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture, his work schedule is basically field work. Going to field comes with two major benefits—financial incentive and intellectual competences.

Since he was not given free movement pass, unlike his superiors, he could not come to work and has had his extra income and technical expertise adversely affected. AR6, a primary market worker has difficulty commuting to work and/or field work because he

belongs to the lower tier. However, his superiors in the upper tier of the primary market had the leeway to move a bit freely (Osterman, 1975). This is a clear example of how the covid-19 has deepened inequalities in our labor market space against the youth. Again, since some economic activities have moved online, the youth without information technology skills are exempted from labor market participation. As contended by Lee and Murie, social exclusion involves either fully or partially, exempting people from engaging in social, economic, and cultural undertakings (Lee & Murie, 1999).

Moreso, when individuals or groups of people are pushed to the edge of society and deterred—actively or passively—from participating fully in socio-economic, political, and economic activities because of lack of basic skills and competences—such as information technology in this case—and lifetime learning opportunities, or due to discrimination, social exclusion is faced (European Union, 2004). The resultant implications—hardship, poverty and marginalization cannot be overemphasized. Notably, the study participant’s social association was not only affected, but his economic activities through exemption from physically coming to work and field work. Quantitative results from the field survey supports the covid-19 induced deepening labor market inequalities, as argued by the above study participants. This is shown in the graph below using a Likert scale of agree, strongly agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Figure 5.7: Covid-19 deepened inequalities in Ghana’s labor market space



Using the Likert scale, the figure above presents that, out of the 122 respondents, vast majority (**81.96%**) of them either agree or strongly agree that the covid crisis had triggered labor market insecurities in the form of deepened discrimination. Conversely, 11.48% disagree or strongly disagree that the covid-19 had deepened labor market inequalities. The remaining 6.56% neither agree nor disagree.

Furthermore, inequalities have been precipitated. A typical example is in our educational setting due to the covid crisis. Some revelations are as follows.

During the pandemic schools reverted to online teaching and learning. This made the rich or the elite people to be at advantage as they have the gadget and the resources to be able to afford internet services, computers to help their kids to stay educated. For those in deprived homes/communities, they were at home, they could not even afford a computer not to talk of having internet service at their disposal (Extract 13, AR 3)

.... We have students who are in the government schools called public schools. If you take the public schools, most of them did not have access to online platforms, laptops, smart phones, especially those in the rural areas.... So I think it created a lot of inequality as compared to children who attended some private schools (Extract 14, AR 10)

The views of the above respondents are in keeping with UNESCO's findings that over **1.5 billion** students and youth across the globe have had their schooling or university education affected by the covid-19 pandemic (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020). There is a rise in e-learning globally (Li & Lalani, 2020). Regrettably, however in Ghana, the structure of schooling and e-learning is less developed because only few private and government schools and higher-level technical institutions could afford/adopt online teaching/learning methods (Osei-Assibey, 2021). UNICEF report found that children in **40%** of households did not pursue any educational activities when schools were shutdown (UNICEF, 2022).

In Ghana, **35%** children in basic schools and **28%** senior high school students were not engaged in learning activities from March to December 2020. Access to basic information technology tools such as computers, smart phones and internet used in remote learning was a challenge (UNICEF, 2022). Nevertheless, some schools are progressively experiencing an e-learning education method by conducting classes on Zoom and other e-learning platforms (Osei-Assibey, 2021) during the peak of covid. Therefore, the remote learning in Ghana has broadened inequalities in education relative to access to and engagement due to school closures (Wolf, Aurino, Suntheimer, Avornyo, & Tsinigo, 2021).

Just like in the labor, the pandemic had triggered inequalities in our educational space. Surely, this will influence the knowledge and expertise the youth could acquire during their educational journey. This unequal access could cause grave mismatch between skills learned in school by the youth and job market requirements which could heighten youth unemployment in future (Baah-Boateng, 2014). Thus, the youth from rich/urban and poor/rural settings would be exposed to different skill sets, and different human

resource will be built. Ultimately, their future labor market participation will be affected. This will limit labor market mobility of those with few skills, competence, and intellectual set. The protracted impact of inequality in our education space is the discrimination it will create in future, in the labor market. Because different skills set will be bequeathed the youth due to the online classes. With this, the youth without the requisite skills or less skilled in our communities could be left out of the job sector in future (Sen, 2000).

Mental Health Concerns Among the Youth/Women Amidst Corona Crises

The last theme focuses on the broader implications of the first three themes. Thus, the changing patterns of migration and mobility in Ghana amidst the covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the economic wellbeing of the youth. These created inequalities in the labor market and education space. Therefore, the combine effects of these three factors could cause hopelessness, stress, exclusion, isolation, depression, and other forms of mental health problems for the youth and women. By and large, it could spark national security problems. Some noticeable renditions of the study akin to this theme are extracted below.

The Covid-19 has increased the discrimination both in the work and our homes and increase the harassment. Because you will not understand why men should put their problems on women and try to beat them, kill them and some will just set them ablaze which is too much. The pressure on women laid off from work and had to stay at home is also there due to house chores thereby increasing harassment at home (Extract 15, AR1)

I am in the house the children too are in the house and I need certain things to cater for them and I cannot go out due to the lockdown. So, it became boring and sometimes when small thing happens you became aggressive and peeved on them and you beat children where you are not supposed to beat them. And it is all because there is too much on us as women. We added up unpaid service to ourselves and all the time we are stress up (Extract 16, TR8)

In Ghana, 2016 national survey on domestic violence revealed that roughly **27.7%** of Ghanaian women have been exposed to either physical, sexual, economic, social, and psychological abuse. Sadly, **23.1%** of the women abused agreed that wife-beating is customary (Uzobo & Ayinmoro, 2021). With the lockdowns, spouses and their wards essentially spent time in their small spaces together. And domestic violence is expected to increase because of this. As argued by study participant AR1, harassment towards women by their partners, and some spouses being aggressive towards their own kids also increased. There were instances men beat their wives, bruise them and (in the worst-case scenario) set them ablaze. Since schools were shutdown, children were

primarily at home under the care of women, obviously. The pressure of working from home online and taking care of children sometimes get to the women's nerve leading to beatings and other forms of child abuse. For those who had lost their jobs, they became overly dependent on their spouses which furthered their vulnerabilities.

Indeed, there are reported cases of an increased domestic violence against women and girls because of covid-19. Globally, **243 million** women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 years have endured either physical or sexual violence from their intimate partners before covid-19 struck. The covid-19 lockdowns were expected to aggravate other forms of violence against women and girls (UN Women, 2020). When women and girls find themselves without an income and are unable to meet their livelihoods—such as food, toiletries, clothing, and accommodation—they become more helpless and vulnerable to sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse by those in positions of power including their spouses. Due to the vulnerable position heightened by the pandemic, it becomes much difficult for them to leave abusive relationships to improve their mental wellbeing (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2020).

In connection with livelihood vis-à-vis mental health issues, participant AR 1 argues in this manner.

During the nationwide lockdowns, it became difficult for most of these market women to go out to make sales due to fear of being beaten by the military men. So, for them it was very difficult to go out. For instance, in Ashaiman [a suburb of Accra] the soldiers were there and if you come out, they will beat you and that increase the rate of harassment on the streets and at homes -- (Extract 17, AR 1)

Using the concept of social exclusion as the point of departure for the above interview excerpt, these market women are denied access to space—market—they hitherto occupy (Joint-Lambert, 1995). Undoubtedly, the pandemic had caused harassment, fearfulness among some women and youth which could lead to mental health debasement. The imposition of an unprecedented lockdown brought about stress, fear, social stigma, aggravated depression, confusion and worry among some Ghanaians (Osei-Assibey, 2021). Imagine people harboring fear of been molested by the Police/Military in case they go out to buy or sell food stuffs for survival. That is a bitter pill to swallow during the peak of the lockdown in Ghana.

The physical abused meted out on certain people could have undermined the national security of Ghana like we witnessed in the Arab regions (Salih, 2013). Like the Arabians, this renders them vulnerable and prompted them to live a “life without the promise of stability” which could ostensibly impact their mental wellbeing (Tsing,

2015). Additionally, as argued by Osei-Assibey et al, the lockdown and a travel ban on the Ghanaian economy affected both inward and outward migration—due to the restrictions involved—which resulted to mental health issues such as stress, fear, social stigma, increased level of depression, confusion and anxiety in human behaviors (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

With people stranded due to the border closures, it opened floodgates of illegal routes for coming or leaving the country because of the unavailability of the routine border routes into the country. Therefore, illegal migratory patterns were either created or amplified with their associating risk factors. This created precarious situations for these people leading to a sense of fear, anxiety, hopelessness and rendered them vulnerable to the traffickers and smugglers who were using unapproved routes to extort monies from them (United Nations Framework Report, 2020).

It is worth adding that, people sometimes suffer from mental health problem when they think a situation (in this case the covid-19 pandemic) had targeted them, relegated them to the background—in their labor market, educational and other social engagements—and brought some untold hardship and uncertainties on them. To discover the gendered aspect of those impacts quantitatively, the 44 women who took part in the survey were asked whether the pandemic impacted on them because of their gender specifically. The responses are tabulated below.

Table 5.9: Gender biased nature of the covid-19 pandemic

Value (Scale)	Frequency	Percentage %
Agree	16	36.36
Disagree	8	18.18
Neither agree nor disagree	7	15.9
Strongly agree	7	15.9
Strongly disagree	6	13.63

Overall, **52.26%** of the females believed that the impacts covid-19 had on them was not gender biased. This is in keeping with argument put forward by participant AR 3 that “... *this pandemic affects everybody. It did not know any gender. It was not gender biased. Everybody was affected, from children to adults to women and men everybody was affected. So, I will not say the pandemic really affected women than men no, it did not know the rich, it did not know the poor. Everybody was equally affected*” (Extract 18, AR 3). Often than not, lack of hope in people could result in mental health issues.

Conversely, mental health problems could lead to hopelessness, social exclusion, and various forms of precarity among people.

Discussions – Transversal perspectives

The analyses proof that the covid-19 crisis has altered migration and mobility patterns among the Ghanaian youth/women, exacerbated inequalities in various forms, magnitude, affected general livelihood of the people—and could sometimes—lead to mental health problems and their concomitant national security threats. Therefore, cross-sectional issues would be examined here. Truly, the noticeable impacts of the pandemic as reported by the study participants included loss of jobs, salary reduction, decline in labor hours, restricted mobility, physical abuse, and access to necessities of life.

For instance, both participant AR2 and AR3 revealed job losses caused by the pandemic. Also, both participant AR3 and AR6 contended that the covid-19 restriction limited mobilities resulting in difficulties finding jobs or even commuting to work (for the employed). Again, participant AR7 and AR8 who are head porters reported how the pandemic occasioned returned migration to northern Ghana from Accra. Even though there exist limited economic livelihood openings in the north. Yet, the spreading nature of the virus in Accra pushed them away to save their lives. But their livelihoods were lost. Therefore, they lost their jobs and had their labor hours diminished.

There were also reported cases of physical violence meted on the youth when they allegedly breach the restrictions. They were instances head porters were fined 10 cedis (\$1.4) or even lashed by police/military before their head pans released to them. Accordingly, study participants AR1 and AR6 agreed that maternity leave had caused gendered labor market discrimination in Ghana. It makes prospective employers discriminate—passively—against hiring women thereby excluding them from various forms of labor market engagements. Employers considered it disincentive paying women for no work done during maternity leaves. Hence, men are preferred to women during recruitments. In our educational landscape, those in the public schools, poor homes or impoverished communities have been disadvantage compared to their colleagues in private schools, rich homes, and urban communities.

Furthermore, whiles **91.81%** of the participants agreed that the covid changed their migratory and mobility patterns, **88.52%** argued the altered mobility affected their

labor market dealings. Also, **86.06%** of the respondents had reasoned that income generation capacity had been affected by the pandemic. Besides, **91.8%** contended that people could not meet their basic needs because of the pandemic. Due to the pandemic, **81.96%** claimed that inequalities have been deepened.

For the ensuing national security concerns, some head porters beating, having their head pans seized and had to pay money to retrieve them sometimes, and market women allegedly maltreated by the Police for breaking the covid-19 protocols, this could have sparked nationwide agitations, hunger strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of protests. The physical abuses meted out on certain people could have undermined the national security of Ghana like we witnessed in the Arab regions when a street vendor—Tarek el-Tayeb Mohamed Bouazizi—in Tunisia set himself ablaze due to police corruption and ill-treatment, which became a catalyst for the Arab uprising and regime changes (Salih, 2013).

Like the Arabians, the power vacuum due to toppling of despotic regimes (Salih, 2013) could have rendered the Ghanaian youth vulnerable and make them live a “life without the promise of stability” which could have impacted their mental wellbeing as well (Tsing, 2015). Also, with some university graduates doing part time jobs under at NABCO with 7 months payment arrears, they threatened to stage demonstrations. Indeed, protests and demonstration to drum home demands are course to worry relative to country’s national security architecture as we witnessed with the Arab uprising. Often than not, these protests do take various forms of continuous campaigns using strikes, demonstrations, street marches, and political and/or non-political rallies (Salih, 2013).

Furthermore, in the heat of the pandemic, some military men in Ghana—whose mandate—is primarily to protect the country against external aggression were called upon to enforce the covid-19 protocols. These sort to make law breakers respect the imposed restrictions. Some Ghanaian youth, market women including media personnel—the third arm of government—were reportedly attack and/or molested by the men in uniform: police/military. For instance, a group of military men attacked and arrested Yussif Abdul Ganiyu, a reporter with the German government funded Deutsche Welle news agency and a local radio station called Zuria FM. He was reportedly phoned, harassed, and warned by the military to not publish critical covid-19 stories. He was later taken to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and questioned for three hours by the military men before been released without any

charge. He was forced to erase the phone call recording, and again threatened him with violence if he continued his covid-19 critical reporting ([Committee to Protect Journalist, 2022](#)).

In South Africa, soldiers reportedly killed some people for breaching covid-19 protocols ([Channels Television, 2020](#)). Enforcing the covid-19 protocols in Nigeria, one person was killed while many others were left injured after soldiers allegedly attacked members of covid-19 committee in Borno state ([TVC News Nigeria, 2020](#)). In far Asia, Indian citizens were physically beaten and asked to do pushups for violating covid-19 protocols ([Global News, 2020](#)). Stitching these cases of alarming security situations triggered by the pandemic together, a reprisal attack from the abused citizens and other social movement organizations could spark serious security issues like we witnessed in the Arab region. And the result could have been more loss of lives, destruction of government and private properties. In the worst-case scenario, government could be toppled, and power vacuum created like we have in Libya and other places.

To conclude this discussion section, I will bring to readers' attention, the warning Ghana's Ministry of National Security issued on national security matters dated 14th May 2022, *"In view of the growing threats of terrorism from the subregion and the expansionist drive of terrorist groups towards Coastal West African states, with a renewed modus operandi of targeting public gatherings including places of worship, it is imperative that precautional measures are taken by all stakeholders"* ([Dzakpata, 2022](#)). However, with the rising unemployment and some youth losing their jobs due to the corona pandemic, there is heightened tension in the country already. Like it happened in most parts of the world, the youth might be lured or even motivated to joining some terrorist or even cyber terror groups to earn a livelihood. Often than not, financial inducement is a major motivator for most youth joining terrorist group in Nigeria ([Salifu, 2017](#)). And the pandemic might hasten this in Ghana unless securitization and employment creation are taken seriously.

Conclusion

The thesis aimed to find answers to these research questions: How has the covid-19 pandemic affected the pattern of migration and mobility among the Ghanaian youth? In what ways have the covid-19 pandemic affected labor market mobilities for the youth in Ghana? What are some of the inequalities in Ghana's labor market space, and how the covid-19 pandemic deepened these labor market inequalities? In line with these

research questions, three hypotheses—the covid-19 pandemic has impacted migration and mobility in Ghana, the covid-19 pandemic has influenced labor market mobilities in Ghana and the covid-19 pandemic deepening labor market inequalities—were stated for testing using quantitative data answered by 122 respondents from the field.

The thesis concludes that the migratory pattern of people has been impacted by the pandemic due to executive instrument banning domestic and international travels, social distancing, restricting funerals, requiring people to constantly wear nose mask.

It confirmed Coz & Hooper (2021) findings that the pandemic has dramatically decreased migration globally especially in West Africa. In some cases, government moved to even make vaccination or valid negative covid-19 compulsory before people are allowed entry into Ghana. These restrictions, obviously affected labor market mobilities in terms of reduced labor hours which impoverished livelihoods of people. For example, Ghana Statistical Service documents that the restrictions in the movement of people to and from the central business districts led to about **10–20%** price hikes of agricultural produce leading to depleting living standards (Osei-Assibey, 2021).

For the economic wellbeing of the youth, some lost their jobs and others had their salaries slashed. For the unemployed youth, it was difficult finding jobs even before covid-19. With the advent of corona crisis, their unemployment situation became terrible since some companies' shutdown. It confirmed Svabova & Gabrikova (2021) claims that unemployed youth are vulnerable and disadvantaged group especially during pandemics or economic upheavals.

Relative to covid instigated inequalities, there were reported cases of some youth in the lower tier of the primary market were asked to work at home while their superiors—in the upper primary tier—were allowed to go to work and do field research too. This led to some youth missing out on field research experiences and the commensurate allowances. Yet, their superiors had passcodes that allowed them to go to work and do field work and earn extra income in the form of field work allowances. In our educational space, public schools and students from poor homes/communities were disadvantaged—compared to private schools and students from rich homes/communities—since the former lack the required internet infrastructure to pursue online teaching and learning. Instances the public schools revert to online schemes, students from deprived communities—who mostly patronize these public schools—did not have laptops, smartphones to follow online course. This widened the inequality gaps in our education space. The above discussed issues collectively

culminated into some mental health concerns for the affected people and their households too. For gender issues, there were instances women were harassed and beaten by their spouses. Even children suffered similar fate from their parents. The resultant effects of these mental health problems include endangering the national security architecture of the country and the sub-region as well.

The thesis also tested three hypotheses. For hypothesis 1, the research proved that the patterns of migration and mobilities have been impacted by the pandemic. As demonstrated in figure 5.3 page 60, majority (**91.81%**) of the study participants indicated that their migration and mobility patterns have been affected by the pandemic. Research hypothesis 2 was proven valid too by the 122 surveyed respondents who answered the probe. Of the total 122 participants, **88.52%** of them contended that their labor market mobilities have been influenced by the pandemic as seen in figure 5.4 page 61. Finally, hypothesis 3—covid-19 pandemic deepening labor market inequalities—was tested in the affirmative like the first two. Evidently, **81.96%** of the 122 respondents acknowledged that the covid crisis had not only triggered labor market insecurities but deepened discriminations in the labor market too as shown in figure 5.7 page 71.

Conclusively, I deployed the mixed research methods in this thesis mainly for complementarity purposes. As the analyzed data demonstrated, the QUAN aspect complemented the narrations extracted from the QUAL aspect of the study. Therefore, the purpose of mixing is realized in this thesis.

Policy Recommendations

In view of the various ways the pandemic had impoverished the livelihoods of the youth, this thesis had put forth the following policy recommendations.

- I. Government should begin exporting educated youth to foreign countries who might need extra labor. Government will earn foreign exchange with this. The youth will have better employment opportunities and the possibility of them imposing security threat would be tamed. To avoid brain-drain, research should inform such a move. The possibility of making the youth returned after a couple of years learning abroad should be inserted in the employment contract.
- II. Women should be encouraged to pursue further education. This motivation should include granting them study leave with pay. Also, a special fund should be established under the ministry of education to provide financial assistance to

women who want to build their technical competences through further education.

- III. For the unbanked women especially, the head porters and street hawkers, they should be brought together and given startup capitals (interest free loans at best) to start their businesses. So, I will recommend that there should be a national policy for this. The Ministry of Gender, Women and Children or Social Protection should strengthen their social welfare activities so that they will have data on all women and children. With this, whenever we are hit with this pandemic and other disasters, they will reach out to the exact people for them to benefit and should not be fraught with partisan politics. So, we could establish entrepreneurship recovery policy so that if we experience pandemic of this sort, we can hold the people so that once the person loses whatever he has, there should be something to support them.
- IV. The Ministry of Labor and Employment Relation and the various labor unions must make sure that employers follow the labor act so that they recruit personnel in the right field. Besides, they should pay employees the right minimum wage. There should be some protections for them so that they are not just laid off without any compensations. Therefore, the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations must enforce our labor laws on both local and expatriate companies to get the youth decent jobs so that the packages will cover everybody.
- V. Attention should be given to technical and vocational education since both the public and private sectors cannot absorb the teeming unemployed youth. With the technical and vocational skills imbibed, the youth could be given startup capital to begin their own business. They could as well have apprentice working under them. This will obviously open employment avenues for most unemployed youth.
- VI. We should develop programs or projects that will enhance women's resilience to the changed that covid 19 has brought. So, if we take IT for example, we should have program that is design to train women on how to do online business, how to be responsive to the changes in the technological space. If we do that the woman will be well positioned to contribute to the development of the society and improve to the livelihood just as the men are doing so with IT.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Introduction

Biographical Narrative: Interview Protocol:

I am a master's degree student pursuing MA Culture, Communication and Globalization with specialization in Global Politics, Migration and Movements, Aalborg University-Denmark. As part of the 10¹⁰^h academic work, I am writing my thesis on the topic “**Critical Reflections of the Economic Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Migration and Mobility Among the Youth in Africa**’

By this, I would like to have an open conversation with you, through which I hope to understand your own perspectives on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on migration & mobility, youth empowerment/employment, social inclusion/gender equality and their consequential impacts on the UNSDGs.

Aim: To make critical assessments of the economic impacts of the covid-19 Pandemic in Ghana with emphasis on migration/mobility, youth employment/empowerment, and social inclusion/gender equality and its broad effects on the UNSDGs

Emphasis questions:

- I. What are some of your mobility decisions?
- II. In what ways has the pandemic impacted on your mobility decisions?
- III. How has the pandemic disrupted your job search and/or general empowerment as youth?
- IV. How has the pandemic affected people's livelihoods?

Phase I: Migration & Mobility:

- I. What are some of the reasons people migrate in Ghana?
- II. Kindly tell us, in a typical day, how is your daily mobility/movements amidst the covid-19 pandemic
- III. In your view, what are some of the general ways the covid-19 pandemic is affecting migration and mobility of people in Ghana?
- IV. How does movements amidst the pandemic impacts your economic activities/income generation?

Phase II: Youth Employment & Empowerment:

- I. Explain to me, how the covid-19 pandemic affected your mobility as youth.
- II. As youth, how has the pandemic impacted your labor market mobilities in Ghana?
- III. How has the pandemic disrupted your job search and/or general empowerment as youth?
- IV. Has the covid-19 affected your income generation activity? If yes, explain how?
- V. Is there hope for the Ghanaian youth amidst the covid-19 pandemic? Please explain

Phase III: Social Inclusion & Gender Equality:

- I. What are some of the discriminations females/women faced in Ghana's labor market space?
- II. How has the covid-19 pandemic deepened these labor market discriminations?
- III. Explain to me, how the covid-19 pandemic affected you as a female/woman.
- IV. To what extent has it obstructed your labor market mobility as a female?
- V. How has the pandemic disrupted your job search and/or general empowerment as a female?
- VI. Has the covid-19 affected your income generation activity as a female? If yes, explain how?
- VII. Is there hope for the Ghanaian female/woman amidst the covid-19 pandemic?

Phase IV: NGOs & government Agencies in charge of women and youth

- I. How has the pandemic affected your programs targeting the youth and women?
- II. How has the pandemic impacted on youth or women empowerment?
- III. Has the pandemic widened the gap between females in males in terms of opportunities?

Appendix 2: Survey/Questionnaire

PREAMBLE:

My name is Abdul Latif Anas. I am a master's degree student with Aalborg University-Denmark. I am writing my dissertation on the topic "**Critical Reflections of the Economic Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Migration and Mobility Among the Youth in Africa.**" The aim of this questionnaire is to help critically assess the economic impacts of the covid-19 Pandemic in Ghana with emphasis on migration/mobility, youth employment/empowerment, and social inclusion/inequality and its broad effects on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

NOTE: All information provided herein is CONFIDENTIAL, would be treated with ultimate privacy and will be used **STRICTLY for ACADEMIC PURPOSES ONLY.**

PART 1: PROFILE OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Please provide general information about yourself. Please complete the questionnaire by ticking the appropriate box or filling the space provided.

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: 15-20years ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36 years + ☐
3. Marital Status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Cohabitation ☐
4. Educational Background: No education at all ☐ Non-formal education ☐ JHS ☐ SHS ☐ Degree/Diploma ☐ Master's degree ☐ Others (Please Specify)
5. What is your occupation: Unemployed ☐ Student ☐ Civil servant ☐ Head porter ☐ Street hawker ☐ Retired ☐ Others ☐
6. What is your employment status: Permanent employment ☐ Temporary employment ☐
7. Are you a native of Accra: Yes ☐ No ☐
8. If no, what brought you to Accra: Education ☐ Work ☐ Marriage unification ☐ Conflicts ☐ Environmental factors ☐ Others reasons ☐ state them.....
9. Do you have intention of going back to your hometown: Yes/temporary migrant ☐ No/permanent migrant ☐
10. Estimated annual income level **BEFORE** covid-19: below GHC 3,000 ☐ GHC 3,001 – 6,000 ☐ GHC 6,001 – 9,000 ☐ GHC 9,001 – 12,000 ☐
11. Estimated annual income level **BEFORE** covid-19: below GHC 3,000 ☐ GHC 3,001 – 6,000 ☐ GHC 6,001 – 9,000 ☐ GHC 9,001 – 12,000 ☐

PART2: OTHER QUERIES: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

12. The pandemic has disrupted job search and/or general empowerment for the youth/woman: Agree ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐
13. People could not meet their basic needs (livelihoods) due to the pandemic: Agree ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐
14. The pandemic impacted your labor market mobilities (**NOTE: Labor Market Mobility - the degree to which people are able and willing to move from one job to**

- another or from one area to another in order to work*): Agree [☐] Strongly agree [☐]
 Neither agree nor disagree [☐] Disagree [☐] Strongly disagree [☐]
15. The covid-19 has affected your income generation activities: Agree [☐] Strongly agree [☐]
 Neither agree nor disagree [☐] Disagree [☐] Strongly disagree [☐]
16. There are inequalities in Ghana's labor market space (**NOTE: Inequalities in the labour market take many forms: unequal employment opportunities, wages and hours worked as well as job security**): Agree [☐]
 Strongly agree [☐] Neither agree nor disagree [☐] Disagree [☐] Strongly disagree [☐]
17. The covid-19 pandemic deepened these labor market inequalities (**does whether it has made some people to have more jobs, but denied others, gives some people more pay and more hours of work than others**): Agree [☐]
 Strongly agree [☐] Neither agree nor disagree [☐] Disagree [☐] Strongly disagree [☐]
18. (**Note: ask if respondent is FEMALE**) The covid-19 pandemic affected you particularly because you are a female/woman: Agree [☐] Strongly agree [☐]
 Neither agree nor disagree [☐] Disagree [☐] Strongly disagree [☐]
19. The covid-19 pandemic affected you especially because you are a youth: Agree [☐] Strongly agree [☐]
 Neither agree nor disagree [☐] Disagree [☐] Strongly disagree [☐]
20. There is no hope for the youth/women due to the *pandemic* (**Note: HOPE in terms of finding jobs, earning more income, reducing inequality in education and labor market**): Agree [☐] Strongly agree [☐]
 Neither agree nor disagree [☐] Disagree [☐] Strongly disagree [☐]
21. Are you aware of any government agency or NGOs having projects or programs concerning youth or women empowerment: Yes [☐] No [☐]
22. If yes, mention them.....
23. Will you like to be contacted for further in-depth interview: Yes [☐] No [☐]
24. Please provide your telephone number.....

Appendix 3: Screenshot of the spreadsheet of Raw data in Kobo toolbox

KoBo toolbox Critical Reflections of the Economic Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Migration and Mobility Among the Youth ... 122 submissions

SUMMARY FORM **DATA** SETTINGS

Table

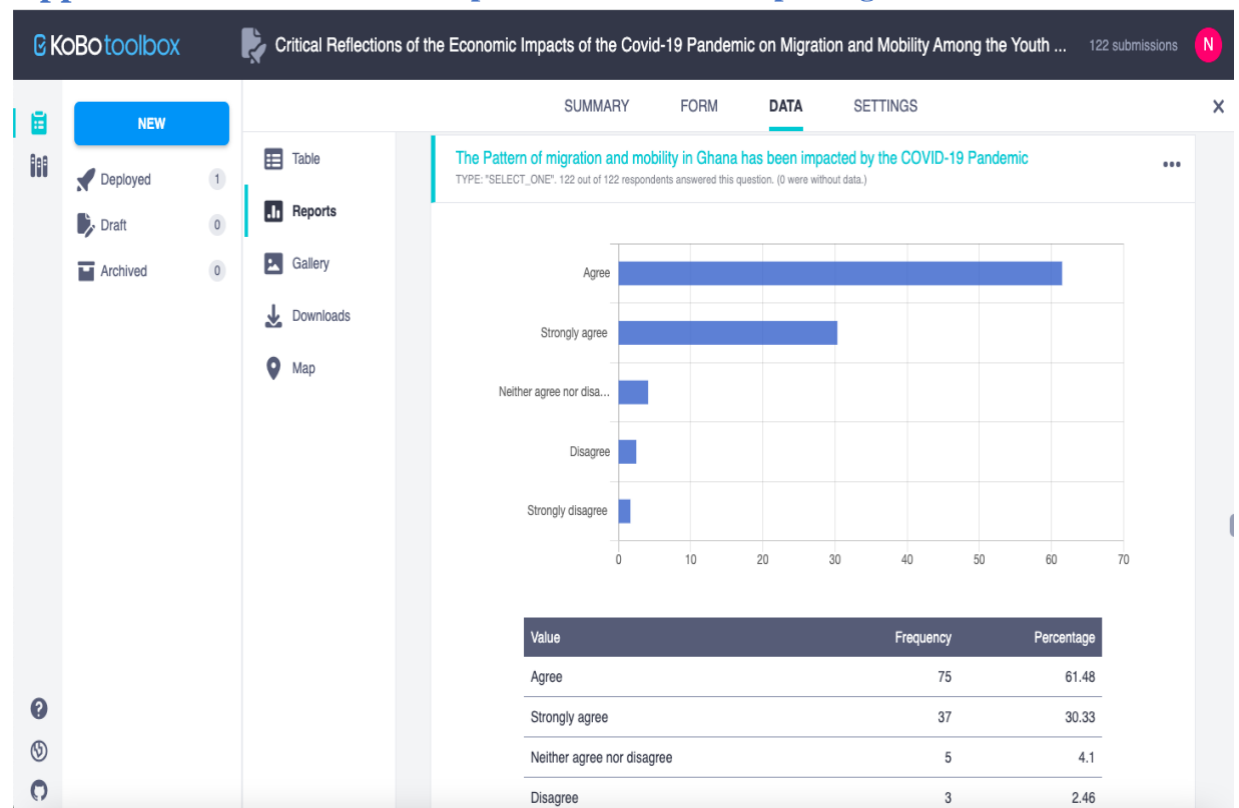
hide fields

1 - 30 122 results

	Validation	start	end	Sex	Age	Marriage	Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Show All	Search	Search	Show All	Show All	Show All	Show All
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	15-20	Single	No education
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	31-35	Married	Degree/Diplom
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	15-20	Single	SHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	15-20	Single	JHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Female	15-20	Single	JHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	26-30	Single	SHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Female	15-20	Single	JHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	36 years +	Married	No education
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diplom
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	21-25	Single	SHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Female	21-25	Single	Degree/Diplom
<input type="checkbox"/>	—	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Mar 20, 2022 ...	Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diplom

PREV Page 1 of 5 30 rows NEXT

Appendix 4: Screenshot of the spreadsheet of Data Reporting in Kobo toolbox



Appendix 5: Screenshot of Data spreadsheet on voyant tools



Appendix 6: Screenshot of Data spreadsheet on SPSS

The screenshot shows the IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor with a dataset containing 42 cases and 43 variables. The variables include demographic and socio-economic information such as gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, and employment status. The data is presented in a tabular format with columns for each variable and rows for each case.

	start	end	MynameisAbdulLatifAnas lama master	PARTICIPANT	Sex	Age	Marriage	EducationalBackground	Specifythreeducation	Whatistheyouroccupation	Specifythetheoccupation	Whatistheyouremploymentstatus	Ar	Work
1	44632 584621929	44632 5888838889			Male	25-30	Married	JHS	Primary	Street hawker		Permanent employment	No	Work
8	44632 5907395833	44632 5941229745			Male	21-25	Married	Others		Street hawker		Permanent employment	No	Work
9	44632 6414086343	44632 6438093750			Male	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	Yes	Work
10	44632 6468596412	44632 6485642940			Male	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	Yes	Work
11	44632 6506543056	44632 6539438889			Female	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	Yes	Work
12	44632 6548772454	44632 6579134028			Female	15-20	Single	SHS		Student		Permanent employment	Yes	Work
13	44632 6827424884	44632 6861277662			Female	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	No	Work
14	44632 6872783796	44632 6908253819			Male	25-30	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	No	Married
15	44632 6923909954	44632 6943338889			Male	25-30	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	Yes	Work
16	44632 6944291551	44632 6969948032			Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	No	Educational
17	44632 6973623958	44632 6999904745			Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
18	44632 7012593218	44632 7044590509			Female	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	Yes	Work
19	44632 7069162755	44632 7098793866			Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	No	Educational
20	44632 710716551	44632 7141665162			Male	25-30	Single	Master's degree		Others	Finance officer	Permanent employment	Yes	Work
21	44632 7145568676	44632 7175763889			Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	No	Educational
22	44632 3975068750	44632 4020513426			Male	36 years +	Married	Degree/Diploma		Civil servant		Permanent employment	No	Others
23	44632 4029286921	44632 4188679630			Male	36 years +	Married	Degree/Diploma		Civil servant		Permanent employment	No	Others
24	44632 4199984548	44632 4219045181			Male	31-35	Married	Degree/Diploma		Others	Business Man	Permanent employment	Yes	Work
25	44632 4220780440	44632 4254712269			Male	36 years +	Married	Degree/Diploma		Others	Entrepreneurship	Permanent employment	Yes	Work
26	44632 4257579935	44632 4320598032			Male	36 years +	Married	Degree/Diploma		Others	Business man	Permanent employment	Yes	Work
27	44632 4379869213	44632 4377018519			Male	21-25	Single	SHS		Student		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
28	44632 4397888773	44632 4534227778			Male	26-30	Married	JHS		Others	Taxi Driver	Permanent employment	No	Work
29	44632 4547834144	44632 4605698264			Male	21-25	Single	JHS		Others	"Okada" - commercial motorbike rider	Temporary employment	No	Educational
30	44632 4826525694	44632 4878957060			Female	26-30	Married	Degree/Diploma		Unemployed		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
31	44632 5147550116	44632 5834984491			Male	36 years +	Married	Non-formal education		Street hawker		Permanent employment	No	Work
32	44632 6416626273	44632 6444390509			Male	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Temporary employment	No	Others
33	44632 6486643866	44632 6556350926			Female	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
34	44632 6594542593	44632 6631027894			Female	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
35	44632 6636838542	44632 6659271875			Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
36	44632 6825865741	44632 6868308333			Male	21-25	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
37	44632 6876844213	44632 6895773495			Female	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Permanent employment	No	Educational
38	44632 6459915509	44632 6482057755			Female	15-20	Single	Degree/Diploma		Student		Temporary employment	Yes	Work
39	44632 3802410648	44632 3837362500			Female	21-25	Single	SHS		Unemployed		Permanent employment	No	Work
40	44632 3838032755	44632 3855000926			Female	26-30	Single	JHS		Unemployed		Permanent employment	No	Married
41	44632 3923807176	44632 3968291667			Male	26-30	Single	JHS		Others	Grinding Mill operator	Permanent employment	No	Work
42	44632 3997176042	44632 4029795602			Male	26-30	Single	JHS		Others	Professional boxer	Permanent employment	No	Work

