



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MIGRATION AND GLOBAL STUDIES
[IJMGS]**

PUBLISHED BY

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN MIGRATION AND GLOBAL STUDIES

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1, APRIL 2026

**ISSN: 2782-7534
eISSN: 2992-3786**

EDITORIAL BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MIGRATION AND GLOBAL STUDIES

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Uduma Oji Uduma

Managing Editor

Prof. Samuel Opeyemi Iroye

Assistant Managing Editor

Dr. Utah Nduka David

Editorial Advisory Board

Emeritus (Prof.) Godwin Sogolo - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Prof. Olufemi Peters - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Prof. Hakeem I. Tijani - Morgan State University, USA

Prof. Monioluwa O. Olaniyi - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Prof. Chike Fidelis Okolocha - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Prof. Philips Obololi-owei Okolo - Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Yenagoa

Prof. James Nda Jacob - University of Abuja, Abuja

Editorial Members

Prof. Mbare NGOM - Morgan State University, USA

Prof. John A. Bewaji - The University of the West Indies, Jamaica

Prof. Bridget Teboh - University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, USA

Prof. Rasheed Olaniyi - University of Ibadan, Oyo State

Prof. Iyabode Nwabueze - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Prof. Akeem Akinwale - University of Lagos, Lagos State

Dr. Joyce A.M. Ejukonemu - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Dr. Marek Hrubec - Centre of Global Studies - Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic

Dr. Hauwa Mahdi - University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Copy Editor

Prof. Bridget A. Yakubu – CMDU, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Mr. Chukwuemeka Nwosu – CMDU, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Electronic Production Editor

Dr. Nathaniel Omotoba - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Mr. Kenechukwu Emmanuel Ejiofor - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Mr. Abdulazeez A. Lawal – CMDU, National Open University of Nigeria

Executive Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Blessing O. Alabi - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Editorial Assistants

Mr. Daniel Victor Ashafa - National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

About Journal

Introduction:

International Journal of Migration and Global Studies (IJMGS) is developed and published by the Centre of Excellence in Migration and Global Studies (CEMGS) at the National Open University of Nigeria. The Journal publishes high-standard research articles that promote migration and global studies.

Peer Review:

Each article is reviewed by three independent experts, and the final decision is made by the Managing Editor.

Open Access Policy:

The Articles published in this Journal are published under license and are subject to copyright, reserved by the Centre of Excellence in Migration and Global Studies, National Open University of Nigeria. All works (including texts, images, graphs, tables, diagrams, photographs and statistical data) may be used for non-commercial purposes, citing the original work appropriately.

Publication Frequency:

The Journal is published twice each year in April and November.

Information for Authors

- Copies are given free only to lead Authors
- No payment for publication in this Journal
- Abstract, not more than **300** words with 3-5 keywords
- Empirical research should be limited to **5,500** words maximum
- Review research should be limited to **7,000** words maximum
- All papers must be typed in Times New Roman with font size 12 with double line spacing
- There should not be more than seven tables.
- Acceptance letter and Authorship Declaration form will be issued to authors whose papers have been accepted for publication after making the necessary corrections from the reviewers.
- Once an acceptance letter is issued, the order of authorship cannot be changed, and no new authors can be included.
- Galley proof will be sent to authors for verification before publication.
- All articles will go through blind peer review by three reviewers
- Plagiarism test scores of more than 25% will not be accepted

Submission of Manuscripts

All manuscripts for publication should be submitted through the official email of the journal/Centre ijmgs@noun.edu.ng

Conflict of Interest Declaration

Authors are to declare if there is a conflict of interest or not

Cover letter

The corresponding author should write a cover letter to the Managing Editor indicating the intent to publish with the journal.

Ethical Approval

Any empirical study must have ethical approval.

Focus & Scope

The Journal publishes articles concerned with research theory and practice or programme application in all disciplines provided it is related to Migration and Global issues.

IJMGS Article Format

All articles submitted to IJMGS for peer review must follow the following format in the write-up of articles:

1. First names of authors must be listed before their surname (last name), and all authors'
2. Institutional affiliation must also be listed.
3. The corresponding author must be indicated, including his/her email and phone number
4. Block abstracts in italics (300 words); keywords, 3-5 words
5. Introduction
6. Objective(s)
7. Materials and Methods
8. Results
9. Discussion
10. Conclusion
11. Recommendation
12. Acknowledgements
13. Conflict of Interest
14. Referencing: APA 7th Edition

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS/REFERENCING STYLE (JOURNAL ARTICLE, OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES & BOOK SERIES)

The proposal should be between 2,500 and 7,000 words. The draft of your proposal should be submitted via Centre's email address (ijmgs@noun.edu.ng) and the revised version (if required) should be received as specified on correspondence letter with the author(s).

Proposals are to be written in English. Authors are advised to avoid all forms of plagiarism including self-plagiarism. All ideas and works must be properly referenced. The author must properly reference his or her own work which has been used or published elsewhere. **Authors are to avoid the use of Wikipedia.** Manuscripts should be referenced using the APA 7th Edition Referencing Style.

Copyright Notice: The Articles published in this Journal are published under license and is subject to copyright, reserved by the Centre of Excellence in Migration and Global Studies, National Open University of Nigeria. All works (including texts, images, graphs, tables, diagrams, photographs and statistical data) may be used for non-commercial purpose, citing appropriately the original work.

Contact

Prof. Samuel Opeyemi Iroye
siroye@noun.edu.ng

Support Contact

Kenechukwu Emmanuel Ejiofor
kejiofor@noun.edu.ng

Table of Contents

Title/Introduction.....	i
Editorial Board.....	ii
About Journal.....	iii
Guidelines for Authors.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
Editorial Brief.....	vii
 Data Privacy and Ethical Challenges in the Management of Migrant Records in Nigeria -Ugonna Vivian Ailakhu & Smart Eromosele Ambrose.....	 1
 Preserving the Knowledge of Displaced Communities: The Responsibility of Academic Libraries in Archiving Migrant and Refugee Narratives -Ifema Abigail Ajie, Loveth O. Ekwueme & Patricia Ngozi Ofodu.....	 21
 Trans-Border Crime Along Nigeria-Benin Republic Borderlines -Godwin Onu, Aniefiok Emeka-Okereke & Arinze Ngwube.....	 53
 Internal Labour Migration and Social Integration in Nigeria's Industrial Zones: A Sociological Analysis -Hope Imuetinyan Iguodala-Cole.....	 77
 An Analysis of Stakeholders' Human Security Interventions in Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Guma and Makurdi Local Government Areas in Benue State, Nigeria -Samson Ojonugwa Adegbe & Simeon Onuche Isah.....	 95
 Effect of a Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model on Reintegration and Academic Achievement of Displaced Senior Secondary Students in Benue State, Nigeria -Jane Ngunan Adzape, & Paul Terkura Torkula.....	 121
 Administrative Support and Academic Performance of Internally Displaced Secondary School Students in Benue State, Nigeria -Ochepa-Murtala, I. T.....	 141
 Diaspora Tourism and Migrant Communities as Catalysts for Ecotourism Development in Homeland Destinations -Jacob Oluwafemi Orimaye, Nathaniel Ileri Omotoba, & Adedokun Olukemi Fagbolu.....	 159
 Dynamics of Forced Migration and The Politics of Language and Identity in Achebe's Things Fall Apart -Nduka David Utah, Catherine John Mamman, & Nwachinemere Okechukwu-Oji.....	 187
 Determinants of Youth Rural-Urban Migration and Employment Outcomes in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria -Uguru Wisdom Ibor & Eteng Mbang Usang.....	 207

Editorial Brief

This is Volume 6, Issue 1 (April edition) of the International Journal of Migration and Global Studies (IJMGS). The Journal is developed and published by the Centre of Excellence in Migration and Global Studies (CEMGS) at the National Open University of Nigeria. All the articles underwent blind peer review by scholars from various disciplines. The coverage is multidisciplinary in content and trans-global in analyses. In this era, it is vital that we continue to assemble interdisciplinary solutions to migration and global studies issues.

Hence, this volume features: Data Privacy and Ethical Challenges in the Management Of Migrant Records in Nigeria, Preserving the Knowledge of Displaced Communities: The Responsibility Of Academic Libraries in Archiving Migrant and Refugee Narratives, Trans-Border Crime Along Nigeria-Benin Republic Borderlines, Internal Labour Migration and Social Integration in Nigeria's Industrial Zones: A Sociological Analysis, An Analysis of Stakeholders' Human Security Interventions in Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Guma and Makurdi Local Government Areas in Benue State, Nigeria, Effect of a Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model on Reintegration and Academic Achievement of Displaced Senior Secondary Students in Benue State, Nigeria, Administrative Support and Academic Performance of Internally Displaced Secondary School Students in Benue State, Nigeria, Diaspora Tourism and Migrant Communities as Catalysts for Ecotourism Development In Homeland Destinations, Dynamics of Forced Migration and the Politics of Language and Identity In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Determinants of Youth Rural-Urban Migration and Employment Outcomes in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria

The articles in this volume are rich in content, informative in analyses, and refreshing in evidence. They are useful across all parameters and will add value in finding solutions to some of the issues raised across all topics. The efforts of various people smoothed the editorial transition and made this publication possible.

I really appreciate all the contributors, Reviewers, and members of the editorial team for making the publication of this volume possible, and we rely on your continuous cooperation towards the next edition.

Prof. Samuel Opeyemi Iroye
Managing Editor

Data Privacy and Ethical Challenges in the Management of Migrant Records in Nigeria¹

Ugonna Vivian Ailakhu¹ & Smart Eromosele Ambrose²

^{1&2} Department of Library and Information Science
Faculty of Education
National Open University of Nigeria
Abuja

Corresponding author's email: vailakhu@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

The management of migrant records in Nigeria has become a vital component of migration governance, national security, and human rights protection. This study investigates the ethical and privacy concerns surrounding the collection, processing, and storage of migrant data within Nigeria's migration management systems. It demonstrates how agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) handle sensitive information, including biometric data, travel histories, and refugee documents. Even though the Nigerian Data Protection Act has been signed into law, substantial ethical issues remain, particularly in terms of data protection, consent, secrecy, and responsibility. The study demonstrates that frequent breaches, unauthorised sharing, and misuse of migrant information are driven by inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure, a lack of institutional cohesion, and a lack of education about data ethics. It also discusses the conflict between national security needs and individual privacy rights, emphasising that ineffective enforcement and oversight lead to ethical issues. The paper emphasises the importance of a human rights-based and moral framework for the control of migrant data in Nigeria. According to the study, robust legislation alone is insufficient to ensure open, safe, and accountable migration management. It should also include ethical standards, professional training, and institutional improvements that prioritise privacy, dignity, and fairness when handling migrant data.

Keywords: Data Protection Act, migration governance, ethics, human rights, and migrant records

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/s33f-k758>

Protection des données et enjeux éthiques dans la gestion des dossiers des migrants au Nigéria

Résumé

La gestion des dossiers des migrants au Nigéria est devenue un élément essentiel de la gouvernance migratoire, de la sécurité nationale et de la protection des droits humains. Cette étude examine les enjeux éthiques et les questions de protection de la vie privée liés à la collecte, au traitement et au stockage des données des migrants au sein des systèmes de gestion migratoire du Nigéria. Elle analyse la manière dont des institutions telles que le Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), la National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) et la National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) traitent des informations sensibles, notamment les données biométriques, les historiques de voyage et les documents relatifs aux réfugiés. Bien que la loi nigériane sur la protection des données (Nigeria Data Protection Act) ait été adoptée, d'importants défis éthiques persistent, notamment en matière de protection des données, de consentement, de confidentialité et de responsabilité institutionnelle. L'étude met en évidence que les violations fréquentes, le partage non autorisé et l'utilisation abusive des données des migrants sont favorisés par l'insuffisance des infrastructures de cybersécurité, le manque de coordination institutionnelle et une faible sensibilisation aux principes d'éthique des données. Elle examine également les tensions entre les impératifs de sécurité nationale et le respect du droit à la vie privée, en soulignant que les lacunes dans l'application des lois et les mécanismes de contrôle contribuent à l'émergence de ces défis éthiques. L'article insiste sur la nécessité d'adopter un cadre normatif fondé sur les droits humains et l'éthique pour la gestion des données migratoires au Nigéria. Il soutient que l'existence de cadres juridiques robustes, à elle seule, ne suffit pas à garantir une gouvernance migratoire transparente, sécurisée et responsable. Elle doit être complétée par l'élaboration de normes éthiques, la formation professionnelle et le renforcement institutionnel, afin de garantir le respect de la vie privée, de la dignité et de l'équité dans le traitement des données des migrants.

Mots-clés : Protection des données, gouvernance migratoire, éthique, droits humains, dossiers des migrants.

INTRODUCTION

The management of personal information has become a critical component of contemporary information governance, particularly where sensitive human data is collected and maintained across institutions. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to data privacy and ethical responsibilities among policymakers and information professionals, who expect institutions that handle human records to ensure confidentiality, transparency, accountability, and the protection of individual rights, especially for vulnerable populations. Migration has significantly expanded the scope of personal data collection, as governments and international organisations maintain extensive records for identification, migration control, humanitarian support, and policy planning. In Nigeria, the growing movement of people across borders has made the management of migrant information an essential aspect of migration governance, with agencies increasingly relying on digital systems and biometric technologies to monitor migration flows, enhance national security, and provide humanitarian services. While these technological systems improve administrative efficiency, they also raise serious ethical and privacy concerns, as migrant records often contain highly sensitive information, such as biometric data, travel histories, and identity documentation. Globally, there is a growing emphasis on balancing national security interests with migrants' rights to privacy and dignity, yet challenges such as unauthorised data sharing, weak cybersecurity infrastructure, and inadequate oversight continue to raise ethical questions about consent, confidentiality, and institutional accountability. Within this context, the management of migrant records presents complex governance challenges that require stronger ethical frameworks and data protection mechanisms to ensure that migrant information is handled responsibly, securely, and with respect for human rights.

Data privacy and ethics are fundamental principles in the responsible collection, processing, storage, and use of personal information in both public and private sectors. Globally, modern data protection frameworks emphasise core principles such as lawfulness, fairness, transparency, purpose limitation, data minimisation, accountability, and security in the handling of personal data (Voigt & Von dem Bussche, 2017; Paul, 2024; Johnson, 2020). These principles require that organisations collect only the data necessary for a legitimate purpose, process it with the consent or knowledge of the data subject, and protect it from unauthorised access, misuse, or disclosure. The concept of data minimisation, for example, emphasises that only essential personal information should be collected to reduce risks such as identity theft or data misuse (Gonzalez & Staddon, 2021). Ethical data management also demands

transparency and fairness in decision-making processes, ensuring that personal data is not used to discriminate against individuals or groups and that individuals retain control over their personal information (Ndukwe, 2022).

Within the context of migration governance, the ethical management of migrants' records is particularly sensitive because such records often contain biometric, demographic, and legal information that can affect an individual's security, legal status, and access to services. In Nigeria, data protection has increasingly been guided by the Nigeria Data Protection Act (2023) and earlier regulatory frameworks, emphasising lawful processing, informed consent, and secure storage of personal information by both public and private institutions (Nigeria Data Protection Commission, 2023; Adeleke & Ojo, 2023). Similarly, in South Africa, the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA) establishes strict requirements for the lawful processing of personal data and the protection of individuals' privacy rights, including migrants and foreign residents (Government of South Africa, 2013). Globally, many countries align their data protection frameworks with standards like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), promoting strong safeguards for personal data and accountability in its management (Voigt & Von dem Bussche, 2017). These regulatory frameworks highlight the importance of ethical governance in migration data systems, ensuring that migrants' records are managed securely, used only for legitimate administrative or humanitarian purposes, and protected from exploitation, discrimination, or unauthorised surveillance (Gonzalez & Staddon, 2021).

Migration in West Africa, particularly Nigeria, is influenced by political, economic, and historical factors. Labour demand, commerce, environmental changes, and violence account for around 70% of migrant movements in the region (International Organisation for Migration, 2025). Colonial laws disrupted traditional migration patterns that previously facilitated commerce and urbanisation. Following independence, Nigeria emerged as a major migration destination and source country, facilitated by ECOWAS frameworks that allow free movement and residency rights (Chukwuma & Hassan, 2024). Annually, millions travel to and from Nigeria for economic, environmental, and security-related reasons. More than three million people have fled to different parts of Nigeria due to conflicts and natural disasters, underscoring the importance of reliable record-keeping for the security, integration, and management of migrants (Adewale & Ojo, 2023).

Effective migrant record management underpins government and social service operations. Systems such as the National Identity Number (NIN) and biometric registries provide reliable identification, enabling access to services, promoting security, and supporting governance functions (National Identity Management Commission, 2023). Such records improve healthcare delivery, social welfare distribution, and humanitarian assistance, and enhance state capacity to combat trafficking and irregular migration. However, these technologies depend on ethical data handling and strong institutional safeguards (Okafor & Ozioma, 2022).

While digital identity databases exist in Nigeria, they present ethical and privacy challenges. Individuals must have control over the acquisition, use, and dissemination of personally identifiable information (PII), including biometric identifiers, travel documents, and residence records. Poor governance, lack of ethical awareness, and weak enforcement of privacy regulations have made data breaches, unauthorised access, and misuse increasingly common (Adeleke & Ojo, 2023; Ndukwe, 2022).

Nigeria's information security framework, governed by the NDPA 2023, builds on the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR 2019) and the creation of the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC 2022). Nonetheless, many migration-related agencies, including the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), often lack the technical expertise, ethics training, and oversight mechanisms needed to comply with these regulations (Adeleke & Ojo, 2023).

Consequently, migrant data may be collected without proper authority, inadequately safeguarded, or shared without explicit consent, increasing the risk of discrimination, stereotyping, surveillance, and identity theft. A notable example occurred in Plateau State in 2022, where a data breach exposed the personal information of over 37,000 individuals, highlighting enforcement gaps (Olaigbe, 2022). Scholars have also raised concerns about biometric nationality, in which politicised identification systems can be manipulated during administrative or electoral processes, undermining migrants' rights (Iwoha & Doeverspeck, 2023).

These challenges illustrate persistent inadequacies in Nigeria's data governance framework. Weak ethical accountability, conflicting institutional priorities, and inconsistent regulations compromise the protection of migrant data. Moreover, the

tension between privacy safeguards and national security often results in state monitoring taking precedence over human rights.

Migrants, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, face heightened risks of marginalisation and abuse, which erodes public trust in government institutions. Without a transparent, human-rights-centred, and ethically sound system for recording migrant data, efforts to modernise migration policy risk exacerbating systemic vulnerabilities.

The prevalence of data breaches, limited compliance culture, and low ethical awareness among migration professionals highlight the urgent need for reform. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the privacy and ethical challenges of managing migrant records in Nigeria and to propose strategies to enhance data governance, institutional accountability, and the protection of migrants' rights in the digital era.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the nature of migrant record management in Nigeria.
2. To identify the ethical challenges encountered in the handling of migrant data.
3. To discuss the existing legal and institutional frameworks governing data privacy in migration management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a narrative review as its method. It was selected because it facilitates a general summary and synthesis of empirical evidence on a particular concept or theme, situating it within the context of current research. A narrative review combines previously published literature on a particular subject, with particular focus on a concept's major ideas, theoretical explanations, methodologies, and findings, as stated by Paré et al. (2015). The literature used in this work focused on a series of core issues: the nature of migrant record management in Nigeria; the ethical challenges encountered in handling migrant data; the application of innovative technologies; the existing legal and institutional frameworks governing data privacy in migration management; and proposed recommendations and future research.

The Nature of Migrant Record Management in Nigeria

Managing migrant records in Nigeria is crucial for effective migration governance and national security, involving the organised collection and use of migrant data for

service provision and policy development (IOM, 2023; Adeleke & Eze, 2022). Key agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) maintain separate databases, leading to inefficiencies and gaps in inter-agency coordination (Oloyede & Hassan, 2024; Ibrahim & Musa, 2023).

Despite initiatives like the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) aimed at improving data collection, challenges such as limited funding, technical expertise, and legal gaps persist (Eze, 2022). The data collected includes personal and biometric information, but incompatibilities between digital systems, reliance on paper records in rural areas, and a shortage of skilled personnel increase the risk of mismanagement (Okafor & Ozioma, 2021; Chukwuma & Abubakar, 2023; Adewale & Ojo, 2024). Recent improvements, such as biometric passports and the endorsement of data protection guidelines by the International Organisation for Migration, indicate progress, yet experts emphasise that technology alone cannot address underlying structural and ethical issues; sustainable change requires political will, continuous capacity building, and strong ethical frameworks (Adewale & Ojo, 2024).

Despite efforts to modernise migrant record management in Nigeria, challenges such as weak coordination, technical limitations, and insufficient ethical oversight persist. The findings section below explores these issues, focusing on privacy, unauthorised data use, threats to human rights, lack of ethical awareness, institutional data, and ongoing ethical and security/privacy concerns.

RESULTS

This section presents the key findings of the study on data privacy and ethical challenges in managing migrant records in Nigeria, highlighting systemic and operational issues that compromise privacy and human rights. The analysis revealed six interrelated themes that illustrate the complexities of managing sensitive migration data.

First, concerns about privacy and confidentiality underscore the vulnerability of personal information, including biometric identifiers, travel histories, and medical records, due to weak cybersecurity and limited regulatory enforcement.

Second, unauthorised use and sharing of data reflects coordination gaps among migration agencies, which can result in duplication, misuse, or politically motivated dissemination of migrant information.

Third, threats to human rights emerged as mismanaged data sometimes lead to discrimination, stigmatisation, or the repurposing of humanitarian data for law enforcement.

Fourth, a lack of ethical awareness and institutional accountability highlights deficiencies in training, oversight, and organisational culture that hinder responsible data handling.

Fifth, the findings demonstrate the challenge of balancing ethics, security, and governance, revealing tensions between border security objectives and the protection of migrants' rights.

Finally, ongoing ethical and privacy threats such as breaches, function creep, and political exploitation remain persistent concerns. These findings provide a structured foundation for examining the ethical challenges in migrant record management, which are further explored in the discussion.

DISCUSSION

Ethical Challenges in the Management of Migrant Records

Handling migrant data raises significant ethical concerns regarding privacy, human rights, and security. Such data often include sensitive information, including biometric identifiers, travel history, and medical or family records.

To uphold migrants' dignity, safety, and trust in migration organisations, it is essential that this data is managed ethically. Ethical dilemmas typically arise from the tension between state security objectives and the protection of individual privacy and data rights. While governments may justify extensive data collection for border security, national identity verification, or counter-terrorism purposes, weak ethical standards can lead to misuse or overreach.

1. Concerns about Privacy and Confidentiality

Maintaining privacy and confidentiality is one of the foremost ethical responsibilities in managing migrant data. The digitalisation of migration records, such as through

biometric databases, has made it easier for unauthorised individuals to access sensitive information. In Nigeria, cybersecurity safeguards and data encryption technologies are often inadequate, leaving personal information vulnerable to theft or leakage. Poor infrastructure and limited professional knowledge of data ethics further complicate efforts to protect privacy. Additionally, the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA, 2023) currently lacks robust enforcement mechanisms, thereby exacerbating risks associated with unauthorised access to and misuse of migrant data. Migrants often provide personal information under duress during asylum or deportation processes, limiting genuine consent and contravening ethical principles such as autonomy and informed permission, emphasised in international frameworks like the EU's GDPR (Abebe, 2022; IOM, 2023).

When compared regionally, Kenya and South Africa provide stronger legal safeguards for migrants' data. Kenya's Data Protection Act (2019) establishes a dedicated Data Protection Commissioner with the power to monitor compliance, enforce penalties, and oversee cross-border data transfers, giving individuals greater control over sensitive personal information, including biometric data (Abebe, 2022). Similarly, South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA, 2013) imposes strict processing requirements, purpose limitations, and accountability measures, with a strong emphasis on securing information against misuse and unauthorised disclosure (Abebe, 2022). In contrast, Nigeria's framework is still developing and faces challenges in enforcement, inter-agency coordination, and technical capacity (Eze & Musa, 2023).

2. Unauthorised Use and Sharing of Data

Unauthorised data sharing among government agencies is a persistent ethical challenge. In Nigeria, overlapping roles among the NIS, NIMC, and NPopC often result in duplication of records and inconsistent information-sharing protocols (Okon & Abubakar, 2023). Migrant data may sometimes be repurposed for political profiling or surveillance, raising issues of equity, discrimination, and stigmatisation. By contrast, Kenya and South Africa's regulatory frameworks provide clearer guidance and stronger enforcement mechanisms to prevent unauthorised sharing and ensure accountability (Abebe, 2022).

3. Threats to Human Rights

Mismanaged data can exacerbate discrimination and stigmatisation of migrant populations. In Nigeria, insufficient ethical awareness among officials has led to cases where irregular migrants are incorrectly labelled as security threats, violating

principles of justice, equity, and human dignity (Ojo & Ighodaro, 2023). The stronger institutional oversight in Kenya and South Africa mitigates some of these risks by enforcing legal accountability and providing avenues for redress, ensuring that data handling respects human rights (Abebe, 2022; UNHCR, 2022).

4. Lack of Ethical Awareness and Institutional Accountability

Nigeria continues to face challenges in embedding ethical awareness and institutional accountability across migration agencies. The NDPA (2023) has not been fully implemented, and gaps in training, monitoring, and organisational culture hinder responsible data handling (Oloyede & Nwosu, 2024). Regional examples illustrate the benefits of institutional capacity: Kenya's Data Protection Commission and South Africa's Information Regulator provide structured oversight, ethical guidance, and sanctions for non-compliance, highlighting the importance of strong institutions and training programs in promoting ethical stewardship.

5. Balancing Ethics, Security, and Governance

Ethical management of migrant data requires balancing national security needs with individual privacy rights. While Nigeria prioritises border security and intelligence gathering, inconsistent enforcement of privacy laws undermines ethical compliance (Eze & Musa, 2023). Lessons from Kenya and South Africa suggest that integrating robust legal frameworks, independent oversight, and technical safeguards can achieve a better equilibrium between security and rights protection. International cooperation, such as Nigeria's partnerships with the IOM and the European Union for MIDAS implementation, further strengthens alignment with GDPR standards, though budget and capacity limitations continue to restrict full compliance (UNHCR, 2022; IOM, 2023).

6. Ongoing Ethical and Privacy Threats in Migrant Data Management

Persistent challenges such as data breaches, "function creep" of biometric systems, and politicisation of identification processes remain critical. A 2022 breach in Plateau State exposed over 37,000 individuals' records, illustrating weaknesses in enforcement and infrastructure (Iwuoha & Doeverspeck, 2023). While Kenya and South Africa have robust regulatory authorities to respond to breaches and protect migrant privacy, Nigeria's enforcement remains uneven, underscoring the urgent need for technical capacity-building, inter-agency collaboration, and rights-based, ethical governance.

Existing Legal and Institutional Frameworks for Data Privacy in Migration Management

The safeguarding of personal data in migration management has become a significant issue in both international and national government. Migration systems manage vast quantities of sensitive information, including biometrics, demographic data, and personal identifiers, hence requiring well-defined legal and institutional frameworks to protect privacy and guarantee ethical adherence. The development of data protection laws in Nigeria has sped up in the last few years. For example, the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023 sets the legal framework for keeping an eye on data processing in several areas, such as migration. Oloyede and Nwosu (2024) note that execution is still not uniform, and that migration institutions do not work together very well.

1. The Legal Status in Different Parts of the World and in Different Areas

International human rights norms and regional legal instruments play a crucial role in regulating data privacy and protection in the context of global mobility. Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights affirm the right to privacy and protect against arbitrary intrusion. The UNHCR (2022) states that these principles serve as the moral foundation for the global management of migrant data.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union has set a global benchmark for data privacy, emphasising legality, fairness, transparency, purpose limitation, and data minimisation (European Data Protection Board, 2021). Many African nations have adopted similar principles, exemplified by the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention), which became effective in 2019 as the first continent-wide framework for personal data protection. Abebe (2023) notes that this convention encourages member states to develop their own legislation regarding data collection, handling, and sharing. These principles assist data controllers, including immigration authorities, humanitarian organisations, and border agencies.

2. The National Legal System: The Nigerian Data Protection Act (NDPA) of 2023

The Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA), enacted in 2023, serves as the primary legislation for privacy protection in Nigeria, establishing the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) as the enforcement body.

Oloyede and Hassan (2024) argue that the NDPA represents a significant advancement over the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) of 2019 by incorporating principles such as lawful processing, consent, purpose limitation, data minimisation, and data subject rights, aligning with global best practices.

The Act is particularly crucial for migration management, as it applies to organisations like the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI). Okonkwo and Ajayi (2023) emphasise that these agencies are now legally required to ensure the transparent, secure, and lawful handling of migrant data. However, challenges remain in enforcement, as Chukwuma and Hassan (2024) argue that many public entities lack internal data protection officers and compliance frameworks, which hinder effective implementation.

3. Institutional Structures for Data Privacy in Migration Management

In Nigeria, several important institutions oversee migration data, but their roles often overlap. The Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) ensures that the NDPA 2023 is followed, sets out rules for doing so, and punishes those who violate them (NDPC 2024).

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) works with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to manage biometric and travel data. One way they do this is through the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) (IOM 2023).

The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) oversees the National Identity Database (NIDB) and issues the National Identification Number (NIN), which is sometimes used to verify people's identities when they move (Eze & Musa 2023).

The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) gathers information about migration and humanitarian needs while protecting the rights of at-risk groups. Still, there are coordination problems. Ibrahim and Musa (2023) argue that poor data-sharing rules and overlapping institutions make it harder to comply with them. The NDPC's supervision is further hindered by limited resources and a complex bureaucracy.

4. Nigeria's Data Privacy Framework Has Legal and Policy Holes

The NDPA 2023 has some operational and policy issues, despite some good points. Oloyede and Nwosu (2024) contend that penalties for breaches of privacy are feeble

and enforced inconsistently. The NDPA does not require Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) for high-risk data operations, unlike the GDPR. This is an important difference in cases involving biometrics. Asogwa and Nwafor (2022) emphasise the lack of explicit inter-agency data exchange regulations, resulting in unregulated data transfers. The NDPA similarly lacks definitive guidelines for cross-border data flows, despite Nigeria's collaboration with organisations like the IOM and the EU on migration data initiatives. Ajayi and Okonkwo (2022) assert that Nigeria's data protection strategy emphasises technical compliance at the expense of moral accountability, advocating for the integration of ethical principles such as fairness, respect, and transparency into the culture of data governance.

5. Different Points of View and Working Together with Other Countries

When comparing Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa, clear differences emerge in the legal and institutional frameworks governing the protection of migrant data. Nigeria's Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA, 2023), building on the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR, 2019) and the establishment of the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC, 2022), provides a foundational framework for safeguarding personal information, including that of migrants. The Act addresses principles such as lawful processing, consent, purpose limitation, and data minimisation. However, enforcement remains inconsistent, partly due to limited technical capacity, budget constraints, and fragmented inter-agency coordination among the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), and National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) (Eze & Musa, 2023).

Kenya's Data Protection Act (2019), in contrast, offers a more robust and detailed legal framework. It establishes the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as a dedicated regulatory authority with strong powers to monitor compliance, enforce penalties, and oversee cross-border data transfers. The Act explicitly addresses sensitive personal data, including biometric identifiers, and emphasises individuals' rights to access, correct, and control their personal information. For migration data, this provides a clearer mechanism for protecting vulnerable populations and ensures accountability in data handling (Abebe, 2022).

South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA, 2013) similarly sets high standards for privacy protection, including strict requirements for processing personal data, obtaining consent, and securing information. POPIA applies to both public and private institutions, requiring organisations to implement comprehensive

information security measures and to report breaches to regulators. For migrant records, POPIA's emphasis on purpose limitation and accountability provides strong ethical and legal safeguards against misuse or unauthorised disclosure (Abebe, 2022).

In comparison, Nigeria has made progress by adopting principles similar to those in Kenya and South Africa and aligning its systems with international standards, such as the EU's GDPR through partnerships with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM, 2023) and the European Union's support for the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) (UNHCR, 2022). However, practical challenges such as weak enforcement, insufficient training, and inter-agency overlap mean that Nigeria still lags behind its regional peers in translating legal provisions into effective protection for migrants. These contrasts highlight the importance of continuous institutional strengthening, international cooperation, and a rights-based approach to data governance to ensure that ethical and privacy principles are consistently upheld across migration management systems.

6. Making Legal and Institutional Structures Stronger

For Nigeria to improve its current processes, it needs to focus on making the law more consistent, working together with other agencies, and enforcing the law. Chukwuma and Hassan (2024) say that migration agencies should set up special data protection teams and do frequent audits. Parliamentary and judicial supervision might help NDPC do its job of regulating. Oloyede and Hassan (2024) also support that migration databases should have DPIAs, that cross-border data exchange should be regulated, and that privacy-by-design should be built into digital platforms. Training and efforts to raise public awareness would also help create a stronger culture of data protection and hold institutions accountable.

CONCLUSION

The management of migrant records in Nigeria has seen significant transformation through the adoption of digital technologies, including biometric registration, national identity databases, and electronic migration systems. These innovations have enhanced the efficiency of data collection, verification, and service delivery. However, they have also introduced complex ethical and privacy challenges that require urgent attention. This study finds that migrant data is frequently collected without proper consent, stored in vulnerable systems, and shared across institutions without adequate authorisation. Such practices expose migrants to identity theft, misuse of personal information, and violations of fundamental rights. The tension between national

security objectives and the protection of individual privacy further complicates the governance of migration data. The ethical and privacy challenges stem largely from systemic deficiencies, including weak inter-agency collaboration, limited technical infrastructure, insufficient institutional capacity, and inadequate enforcement of data protection laws. While recent reforms, such as the Nigeria Data Protection Act (2023) and the establishment of the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) represent a positive step, much remains to be done to ensure compliance, accountability, and public confidence.

To achieve a sustainable and ethically sound framework, Nigeria must adopt a rights-based, transparent, and secure approach to migrant data management. Strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing inter-agency coordination, integrating ethical principles into operational culture, and investing in cybersecurity are essential. Furthermore, aligning practices with international and regional standards and collaborating with organisations such as IOM, UNHCR, and ECOWAS can provide technical expertise, policy harmonisation, and cross-border learning. Ultimately, a balanced approach that safeguards migrants' privacy and dignity while meeting legitimate national security objectives is crucial for effective and responsible migration governance.

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Harmonisation of Legal Frameworks:** The Nigerian government should consolidate existing data protection instruments by integrating the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR, 2019), the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC, 2022), and the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA, 2023) into a unified and enforceable regulatory framework for migration data management. This consolidated framework should clearly define standards for ethical data handling, informed consent, cross-border data sharing, and strict penalties for violations. Aligning Nigeria's legal framework with international standards, such as the EU's GDPR and the African Union Malabo Convention, can improve accountability, eliminate overlaps, and strengthen compliance across migration-related institutions.
2. **Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Infrastructure:** Migration-related institutions, including the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), should be adequately resourced and equipped with modern infrastructure to ensure secure and

efficient data management. A centralised, interoperable data-sharing platform with robust access controls should be established to reduce duplication and unauthorised access. Regular professional training on data ethics, privacy protection, and cybersecurity should be mandatory to cultivate a culture of responsibility and ethical compliance.

3. **Embedding Ethical Standards in Operational Culture:** Ethical principles should be fully integrated into the core operations of all institutions handling migrant data. Developing a comprehensive professional code of conduct, coupled with periodic audits and clearly defined disciplinary measures, can enhance transparency and accountability. Establishing ethical review boards or committees will ensure that data management practices consistently respect the rights and dignity of migrants. Comparative lessons from South Africa and EU member states show that independent ethics oversight can significantly improve adherence to privacy and human-rights standards.

4. **Investment in Cybersecurity and Data Risk Management:** Continuous investment in cybersecurity systems, encryption technologies, and data risk management tools is essential to safeguard sensitive migrant information. Regular independent security audits should identify and address system vulnerabilities, while robust data recovery and incident response mechanisms will mitigate breaches and unauthorised disclosures. Learning from global best practices, including the EU and UNHCR guidelines, Nigeria can develop proactive systems that balance efficiency with data protection.

5. **Rights-Based Data Governance:** Management of migrant data should prioritise human rights, privacy, and informed consent. A rights-based approach ensures that technological efficiency does not override ethical responsibility. Nigeria should align its migration data practices with international standards and conventions that emphasise fairness, transparency, and protection for vulnerable populations, thereby building public trust and upholding human dignity.

6. **International and Regional Collaboration:** Nigeria should deepen partnerships with international and regional organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These collaborations can strengthen technical expertise, support policy harmonisation, and enable cross-border capacity building. Engagement with civil

society organisations and research institutions will further facilitate oversight, advocacy, and shared learning, promoting globally informed ethical governance practices.

7. **Public Awareness and Accountability:** Public education is crucial for reinforcing data protection and accountability. Migrants and the public should be well informed about their privacy rights, the purpose of data collection, and available redress mechanisms in cases of misuse. Government agencies should publish regular reports on data management practices to promote transparency and trust. A participatory approach, informed by both local realities and international standards, will foster confidence in Nigeria's migration governance and encourage compliance with ethical data standards.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We, Ailakhu, Ugonna Vivian and Ambrose, Eromosele Smart (authors), clearly declare that there is no conflict of interest in the study/paper titled: Data Privacy and Ethical Challenges in the Management of Migrant Records in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Abebe, T. (2023). Data privacy and human rights in migration management. *Journal of Migration Studies*, 14(2), 45–61.
- Adeleke, O. & Ojo, A. (2023). Data protection and migration management in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of African Policy Studies*, 7(2), 112–130.
- Adeleke, O. (2022). Proportionality and ethical decision-making in data governance. *Information Ethics Review*, 6(3), 75–90.
- Adewale, T. & Ojo, A. (2023). Migrant record-keeping and governance challenges in Nigeria. *African Journal of Public Administration*, 12(1), 22–39.
- Adewale, T. & Ojo, A. (2024). Ethical issues in digital migration databases in West Africa. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, 102512.
- Adeyemi, K. & Olaniyan, S. (2021). Data ethics in public administration: Lessons from Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Administrative Studies*, 18(1), 11–28.
- Ajayi, L. & Okonkwo, M. (2022). Nigeria's data protection framework: Technical compliance versus ethical accountability. *African Journal of Cybersecurity and Policy*, 3(1), 34–50.
- Asogwa, F. & Nwafor, C. (2022). Inter-agency data sharing and privacy challenges in migration governance. *Journal of Information Policy*, 12, 55–72.
- Asogwa, F. & Ozioma, U. (2021). Unauthorised data sharing and migrants' right to informational self-determination. *Nigerian Journal of Human Rights*, 9(2), 44–59.
- Chukwuma, I. & Abubakar, H. (2023). Digital migration records and operational inefficiencies in Nigeria. *African Journal of Information Science*, 15(1), 88–102.
- Chukwuma, I. & Hassan, A. (2024). Migration governance and ethical data management in Nigeria. *International Journal of African Governance*, 11(1), 1–19.
- Dentons. (2022). *Global data protection laws: Nigeria overview*. Dentons Legal Insights. <https://www.dentons.com/en/insights>

- European Data Protection Board. (2021). Guidelines on the implementation of the GDPR. <https://edpb.europa.eu/>
- Eze, N. & Musa, T. (2023). Balancing security and ethics in migrant data management: Nigeria case study. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 8(2), 101–120.
- Eze, N. (2022). Migration information and data analysis system (MIDAS) in Nigeria: Opportunities and limitations. *African Journal of Technology and Governance*, 4(2), 33–47.
- Gonzalez, L. & Staddon, J. (2021). Data minimisation and ethical governance in information systems. *Information Systems Ethics Journal*, 7(1), 15–30.
- Government of Kenya. (2019). *Kenya Data Protection Act, No. 24 of 2019*. Nairobi, Kenya: National Council for Law Reporting. <https://www.dataprotection.go.ke>
- Government of South Africa. (2013). *Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013(POPIA)*. Pretoria, South Africa: Government Printer. <https://www.justice.gov.za>
- Ibrahim, S. & Musa, T. (2023). Institutional coordination and data sharing in Nigerian migration governance. *Nigerian Journal of Public Administration*, 17(3), 87–102.
- Ibrahim, S. (2023). Dual use of humanitarian data and ethical implications. *Migration Ethics Review*, 5(1), 50–68.
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2023). *Migration data and ethical standards: Do no harm guidance*. Geneva: IOM.
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2025). *Migration trends in West Africa: Labour, commerce, and displacement*. Geneva: IOM.
- Iwuoha, V. & Doevenspeck, M. (2023). Biometric nationality and political exploitation in Nigeria. *African Journal of Migration Studies*, 11(1), 44–63.
- Johnson, R. (2020). *Principles of data privacy and ethics in information management*. Oxford University Press.
- National Identity Management Commission (NIMC). (2023). *Annual report on National Identity Number (NIN) enrolment and biometric systems*. Abuja, Nigeria: NIMC.

- Ndukwe, C. (2022). Ethical handling of personal data in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Nigerian Journal of Information Ethics*, 5(2), 25–41.
- Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC). (2023). *Guidelines for implementing the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023*. Abuja, Nigeria: NDPC.
- Okafor, I. & Ozioma, U. (2022). Ethical management of digital identity databases: Nigeria experience. *African Journal of Digital Governance*, 5(1), 12–28.
- Okafor, I. & Ozioma, U. (2021). Challenges of managing biometric and digital migration records in Nigeria. *Journal of African Information Systems*, 13(2), 45–60.
- Okonkwo, M. & Ajayi, L. (2023). Legal compliance and gaps in Nigerian migration data management. *African Journal of Law and Technology*, 9(2), 60–78.
- Olaigbe, O. (2022). Data breaches and privacy violations in Plateau State health agency. *Nigerian Journal of Cybersecurity*, 6(1), 77–89.
- Oloyede, F. & Hassan, A. (2024). Institutional accountability in Nigerian migration data governance. *Journal of African Public Administration*, 16(1), 33–51.
- Oloyede, F. & Nwosu, P. (2024). Ethical gaps in data handling and sharing in migration institutions. *Nigerian Journal of Information Ethics*, 7(1), 15–30.
- Paré, G., Trudel, M.-C., Jaana, M., & Kitsiou, S. (2015). Synthesising information systems knowledge: A typology of literature reviews. *Information & Management*, 52(2), 183–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2014.08.008>
- Paul, M. (2024). *Global perspectives on data protection and ethical governance*. Cambridge University Press.
- UNHCR. (2022). *Guidelines for data protection in migration and humanitarian operations*. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- Voigt, P. & Von dem Bussche, A. (2017). *The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): A practical guide*. Springer.

Preserving the Knowledge of Displaced Communities: The Responsibility of Academic Libraries in Archiving Migrant and Refugee Narratives¹

Ifeoma Abigail Ajie¹, Loveth O. Ekwueme² & Patricia Ngozi Ofodu³
^{1,2&3} National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's Email: iajie@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

Academic libraries have long served as custodians of knowledge, safeguarding texts and cultural artifacts for scholarly and societal benefit. In the 21st century, however, the growing displacement of populations due to conflict, climate change, persecution, and economic instability has underscored the urgent need to preserve the narratives of migrants and refugees. These stories, often marginalised or at risk of erasure, embody cultural memory, identity, and resilience. This study examines the responsibility of academic libraries for archiving displaced communities' narratives, highlighting the approaches, implications, and challenges involved. Using a systematic literature review guided by PRISMA standards, 99 articles were initially retrieved, with 23 meeting inclusion criteria for full analysis. Findings reveal that libraries increasingly adopt participatory and culturally sensitive archival practices, including oral histories, community collaborations, and digital repositories. Such approaches enhance inclusivity, representation, and intercultural dialogue, positioning libraries as agents of social justice and integration. Yet, significant challenges persist: ethical concerns around consent, confidentiality, and ownership; resource limitations; risks of misrepresentation; and difficulties in sustaining archives across diverse contexts. The implications extend beyond preservation, requiring libraries to balance accessibility with protection, foster partnerships with displaced communities, and train librarians in trauma-informed practices. Ultimately, academic libraries must evolve from passive custodians to active collaborators, ensuring that migrant and refugee voices are preserved authentically for posterity. This research contributes to policy, governance, and professional training, reinforcing libraries' role as vital institutions in safeguarding cultural heritage and human experience.

Keywords: Archives, Displaced Communities, Academic Libraries, Migrant and Refugee Narratives

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/fgrv-4706>

Préserver le savoir des communautés déplacées : la responsabilité des bibliothèques universitaires dans l'archivage des récits de migrants et de réfugiés

Résumé

Les bibliothèques universitaires ont longtemps joué un rôle essentiel dans la préservation du savoir, en protégeant textes et artefacts culturels au bénéfice de la recherche et de la société. Au XXI^e siècle, cependant, l'augmentation des déplacements de populations due aux conflits, aux changements climatiques, aux persécutions et à l'instabilité économique met en évidence l'urgence de préserver les récits des migrants et des réfugiés. Ces récits, souvent marginalisés ou menacés d'effacement, incarnent la mémoire culturelle, l'identité et la résilience des communautés déplacées. Cette étude examine la responsabilité des bibliothèques universitaires dans l'archivage de ces récits, en mettant en lumière les approches adoptées, leurs implications et les défis associés. À partir d'une revue systématique de la littérature conduite selon les normes PRISMA, 99 articles ont été initialement recensés, dont 23 répondaient aux critères d'inclusion pour une analyse approfondie. Les résultats montrent que les bibliothèques adoptent de plus en plus des pratiques archivistiques participatives et culturellement adaptées, telles que la collecte de témoignages oraux, les collaborations avec les communautés et le développement d'archives numériques. Ces approches favorisent l'inclusion, la représentation et le dialogue interculturel, positionnant les bibliothèques comme des acteurs clés de la justice sociale et de l'intégration. Cependant, des défis importants persistent, notamment des enjeux éthiques liés au consentement, à la confidentialité et à la propriété des données, des ressources limitées, des risques de déformation ou de simplification des récits, ainsi que des difficultés de pérennisation des archives dans des contextes variés. Les implications de cette recherche dépassent la simple préservation : les bibliothèques doivent concilier accessibilité et protection des données, renforcer leurs partenariats avec les communautés déplacées et former les professionnels de l'information à des pratiques sensibles aux traumatismes. En définitive, les bibliothèques universitaires sont appelées à évoluer d'un rôle passif de conservation vers celui de partenaires actifs, afin de garantir une préservation authentique et éthique des récits des migrants et des réfugiés pour les générations futures. Cette étude contribue aux réflexions sur les politiques documentaires, la gouvernance des archives et la formation professionnelle, tout en réaffirmant le rôle essentiel des bibliothèques comme institutions clés dans la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel et de l'expérience humaine.

Mots-clés : Archives, communautés déplacées, bibliothèques universitaires, récits de migrants et de réfugiés

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries have historically functioned as custodians of knowledge, preserving texts, manuscripts, and cultural artifacts for the benefit of scholars and society. In recent years, however, there has been growing recognition of the significance of preserving the stories and cultural memory of displaced populations, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, whose narratives are often at risk of loss due to displacement, marginalisation, or war. Patil's (2023) findings indicate that libraries are vital custodians of cultural heritage, safeguarding materials such as manuscripts, rare books, photographs, maps, and audio recordings for future generations by preserving them and ensuring their integrity and accessibility. The value of such narratives lies not only in historical record but in fostering identity, belonging, and resilience among displaced communities.

Institutions responsible for knowledge preservation are increasingly called upon to extend their mission to include these vulnerable voices, transforming libraries into more inclusive, socially responsive entities. Libraries, if well-funded and managed, reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the communities they serve. It can serve as the mirror through which the community's reflection can be seen, making the cultural heritage of a Nation/Community not to be toyed with or played with. It needs to be preserved for posterity (Chibuzor & Osadebe, 2009).

The scale of global displacement has increased dramatically in the 21st century, due to conflicts, climate change, political persecution, and economic instability. There must be library support for people in need across various categories. Gerasimidou et al. (2024) stressed that international bodies and library associations, such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, have begun issuing guidelines and frameworks for supporting displaced people. This emphasised the role libraries can play as safe, welcoming sanctuaries; agents of integration; and repositories of culture and memory for displaced communities. These developments reflect an awareness that library work must extend beyond custodianship of texts to preserve human experience and stories.

Archiving refugee and migrant narratives presents a complex set of ethical, practical, and methodological challenges. Stewart and Shaffer (2021) discuss how narrative archiving of refugee research projects in the UK navigates confidentiality concerns, anonymisation, decisions about access levels, and the preservation of the integrity of the stories while protecting vulnerable individuals. Romme and Chaer (2024) inferred

that these are not trivial issues: balancing transparency and open access with the protection of narrative ownership and safety requires careful archival policy and sensitive procedural frameworks. Additionally, when institutions fail to properly document or preserve such narratives, there is a risk of erasure of voices, distorted memory, or loss of cultural heritage.

Academic libraries are also uniquely positioned to collaborate with community archives, oral storytellers, and culturally displaced persons to ensure that narrative preservation is participatory and respectful of the knowledge-holders' agency. In fostering collaboration between research libraries and community archives to preserve the network of mutuality, the importance of partnerships is emphasised to avoid the marginalisation of lesser-heard voices and to benefit from local knowledge, trust, and context in collection-building and preservation efforts. Martinez and Tallman (2024) stressed that such collaborations also help academic libraries to bridge gaps in representation in more traditional archives.

With these developments, this research is motivated by the need to scrutinise the responsibilities and practices of academic libraries in archiving migrant and refugee narratives, which includes how policies are formed, how ethical issues are handled (e.g. consent, ownership, access), how narratives are collected (oral histories, testimonies, multimedia), and how libraries work with displaced communities to preserve authenticity. Understanding this will help institutions design better archives, promote social justice, and prevent loss of cultural heritage.

OBJECTIVES

This study is guided by the following specific objectives, which were formulated in line with the topic. The study seeks to:

1. To evaluate approaches used by academic libraries in developing accessible and culturally sensitive archival systems for migrant and refugee narratives.
2. To evaluate/analyse the implications of academic libraries in developing accessible and culturally sensitive archival systems for migrant and refugee narratives.
3. To highlight the challenges in archiving displaced communities' narratives

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The systematic literature review was conducted using the PRISMA guidelines. (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses) which provides new standards to identify, select and evaluate studies more reliably (Page *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the following section in the result will describe the eligibility criteria of the articles, sources of information and search strategies, the data selection and extraction processes, as well as the synthesis methods and those applied to assess the risk of bias

RESULTS

The results are presented following the tables below.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature Review

Include	Exclude
Articles published from 2020 and written only	Studies excluded included articles published in English before 2020 and non-English publication
Articles must be peer-reviewed empirical studies, books or literature	The following were excluded: opinion studies, case pieces, unpublished dissertations/theses reviews
Documents addressing refugees, misplaced communities, roles of libraries to migrant communities	Articles not addressing refugees, misplaced communities, roles of libraries to migrant communities

The following sub-section provides each step that occurred during the literature review.

Information Sources

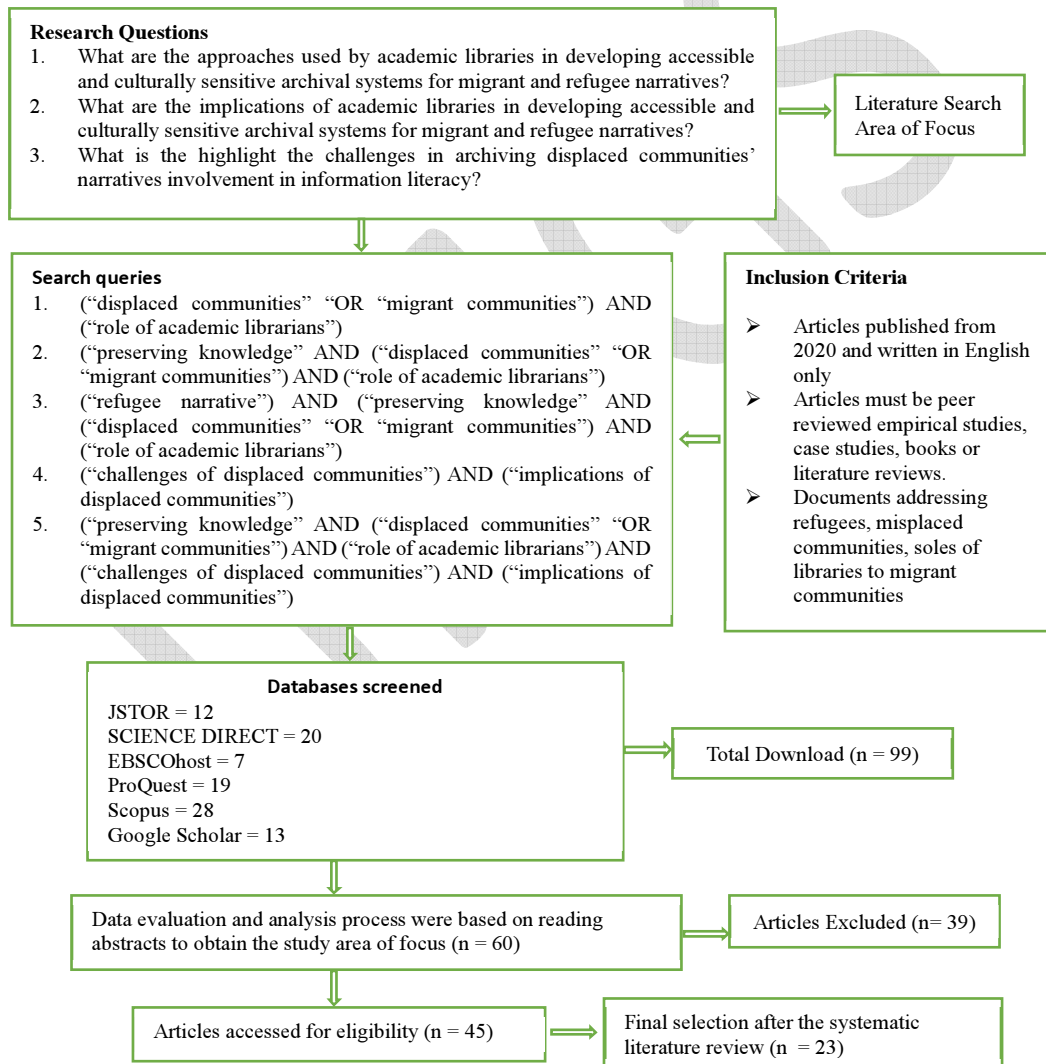
The search queries considered during the search process were:

1. (“displaced communities” “OR “migrant communities”) AND (“role of academic librarians”)
2. (“preserving knowledge” AND (“displaced communities” “OR “migrant communities”) AND (“role of academic librarians”)
3. (“refugee narrative”) AND (“preserving knowledge” AND (“displaced communities” “OR “migrant communities”) AND (“role of academic librarians”)
4. (“challenges of displaced communities”) AND (“implications of displaced communities”)

5. (“preserving knowledge” AND (“displaced communities” “OR “migrant communities”) AND (“role of academic librarians”) AND (“challenges of displaced communities”) AND (“implications of displaced communities”)

To systematically address the study objectives on preserving the knowledge of displaced communities: The responsibility of academic libraries in archiving migrant and refugee narratives, a structured strategy was employed, as illustrated in

Figure 1: PRISMA



The search initially produced 99 downloads. From the data evaluations, abstracts were screened to ensure that the research questions aligned with the remaining articles, resulting in the selection of 23 articles for full review. A data extraction table was developed to collect findings on preserving the knowledge of displaced communities. This process is a means to systematically generate findings to explain the issues surrounding the preservation and knowledge of displaced communities, the role of academic librarians in archiving migrants and refugee narrative.

The outcome of the literature search and screening process is presented in Table 2, showing the number of retrieved, included, and excluded articles.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Summary

Criteria	Count
Total Articles Retrieved	99
Articles Meeting Inclusion Criteria	23
Articles Excluded (Irrelevant to Study Focus)	73

Summary of literature search findings on library approaches, implications and challenges is shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Literature Search

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
1	AWWAD. G., DUNAGAN, L., GAMBA, D., Rayan – arXiv, T.D. 2025. Collective Memory and Narrative Cohesion: A Computational Study of Palestinian Refugee Oral Histories in Lebanon	The study employs community-based digital archiving, computational semantic analysis, multilingual access, and ethical stewardship to preserve Palestinian oral histories.	Enhance representation, thematic search, gender awareness, accessibility, and respectful handling	Libraries face challenges in building trust with communities, avoiding political bias, handling multilingual and technical complexities, upholding ethical standards, and ensuring narratives remain authentic without oversimplification.	The study demonstrates high methodological innovation and scalability through computational analysis, though cultural depth and qualitative nuance are more limited.
2	ABDALLA, M. Z., NDIRITIRO, R., OMAR, S., REED, K., & others. (2021). Opportunities and challenges of oral history research through refugee voices, narratives,	It adopts participatory, co-created oral history platforms that embed refugee lived experience into metadata and archival design.	- Promotes inclusivity and authentic representation of displaced voices, enhances cultural sensitivity and improves access to refugee-centred materials.	histories (consent, confidentiality, narrative ownership) - Risk of misrepresentation or erasure of refugee voices if archives privilege dominant narratives	The methodology is strong in participatory and interdisciplinary design, but constrained by limited resources and contextual specificity.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
	and memories: History dialogues		- Positions libraries as allies in academic freedom and social justice. - Supports epistemic diversity and challenges Western-centric archival norms.	- Practical difficulties in accessing displaced populations and ensuring inclusivity - Balancing academic mobility with the lived immobility of refugees - Limited resources and institutional support for sustained oral history projects- Ethical concerns in collecting refugee oral	
3	STROJA, J. (2022). Displaced persons' experiences of trauma and responses to contemporary crisis in Europe: An oral history of engagement with refugees.	The approach integrates oral histories of refugee trauma into library collections to support reconciliation, education, and empathetic access.	- Preserves lived experiences and fosters empathy-driven access to refugee narratives. - Addresses archival gaps and promotes representation of under-documented refugee communities.	- Ethical concerns in documenting trauma among displaced persons - Limited understanding of resettlement in regions with low cultural and linguistic diversity	The study offers rich qualitative depth and authentic oral histories, with moderate generalisability due to its context-specific European focus.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
4	OPFERMANN, L. S. (2024). Sharing stories, food and passports: Forced migration, museum and memory activism in contemporary Germany. <i>Journal of Intercultural Studies</i> , 45(1), 1–25	The study employs collaborative archiving with museums and activists, using digital platforms and material culture as memory artifacts.	- Enhances relevance and responsiveness of archives to current global displacement issues, Positions libraries as facilitators of intercultural dialogue and historical understanding.	- Lack of pre-existing refugee support networks in host communities - Risk of erasure of refugee voices if oral histories are not systematically archived - Balancing confidentiality with accessibility of narratives	The research shows high cultural and narrative insight through qualitative triangulation, though findings are limited in empirical generalisability.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
				- Multilingual and gender-sensitive access - Balancing activism with institutional neutrality	
5	HIGH, S. (2021). Oral history as creative practice at Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling. <i>Bulletin de l'AFAS. Sonorités</i> , 46(1), 1–15	Community-centred archiving - Participatory curation with survivors & marginalised groups - Integration of oral histories into creative outputs (theatre, exhibitions)	Democratisation of knowledge - Empowerment of communities through co-creation - Interdisciplinary innovation bridging history, art, and media - Pedagogical impact: experiential learning for students	Institutional tensions (oral history vs. traditional history) - Ethical responsibilities (consent, representation, safeguarding sensitive testimonies) - Sustainability of digital archives - Balancing creativity with accuracy - Maintaining community trust	Methodologically innovative and inclusive, the study excels in creative and community collaboration but has moderate traditional scholarly rigor.
6	CAO, J. (2021). <i>Relational bonds as method: Oral history and design within the</i>	The initiative fosters interdisciplinary partnerships and culturally resonant	Addresses invisibility and erasure of the Vietnamese diaspora - Empowers communities to	Limited representation in mainstream archives - Ethical concerns in handling trauma	The study is methodologically strong in innovation and decolonial

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
	<i>Vietnamese diaspora</i> [Master's thesis, OCAD University]. Open Research OCADU.	archiving to preserve marginalised voices and transnational storytelling, positioning libraries as safe spaces for continuity and post-trauma engagement.	process and heal intergenerational trauma - Promotes inclusive design as a method for cultural preservation Democratises historical narratives by centering marginalised voices	narratives - Sustaining community archives and digital repositories - Risk of reductive or racist perspective if narratives are not carefully curated	design, though replicability and generalisability are limited.
7	CALABRIA, V. (2023). An exploration of the function of nostalgia in oral histories of institutional care. In D. Anderson & S. Jones (Eds.), <i>Memory, anniversaries and mental health</i> (pp. 145–162). Springer	Co-produced oral histories with ex-patients and retired staff - Archival preservation of lived experiences of institutional care - Emphasis on memory as both a personal and a collective resource	Nostalgia as a lens to understanding identity and belonging. - Offers therapeutic potential for participants reflecting on past care. - Contributes to mental health history by centering lived experiences - Challenges dominant institutional narratives by foregrounding	Risk of romanticising or sanitising institutional care - Selective remembering may obscure trauma or systemic issues - Ethical dilemmas in representing vulnerable populations - Balancing scholarly analysis with	The methodology is theoretically grounded and interdisciplinary, but selective memory and ethical complexity limit analytical certainty.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
		- Oral histories used to interrogate institutional narratives		participants' emotional needs	
8	AHMED, H. D. S. (2021). <i>Memory and identity: Inter-generational resilience and construction of diasporic identities among Somali refugees</i> [Master's thesis, University of San Francisco]. USF Scholarship Repository.	The study emphasises multilingual, culturally sensitive oral history archiving to support intergenerational knowledge transmission among Somali refugees	- Develop oral history archives and digital storytelling projects - Partner with refugee organisations to curate culturally relevant materials - Offer community programmes that encourage intergenerational dialogue - Train librarians in trauma-informed and culturally competent practices - Facilitate workshops on identity, resilience, and cultural heritage preservation	- Trauma from violence and displacement - Intergenerational struggles with identity and resilience - Youth issues: substance abuse, gang violence, depression - Loss of cultural continuity in diaspora - Reliance on oral storytelling traditions for memory transmission	The study demonstrates strong qualitative and comparative insight into identity and resilience, with moderate replicability.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
9	JAMIL, H. (2025). Cultural memory in the art of diaspora communities. <i>International Journal of Innovative Research</i> , 3(1), 45–60.	Archival preservation of diaspora art and cultural artifacts - Digital repositories to document migration narratives - Community-based oral history projects - Interdisciplinary cataloging	Strengthens collective identity and cultural resilience - Enhances intercultural dialogue and heritage awareness - Provides frameworks for memory transmission across generations - Encourages inclusivity in academic and public libraries	Limited resources for archiving diverse diaspora art - Risk of cultural homogenisation in institutional settings - Difficulty in capturing intangible heritage (oral traditions, performance art) - Political and social barriers to representation - Sustainability of community-driven projects	Methodological strength lies in creative and interdisciplinary integration, though reliance on qualitative methods limits generalisability.
10	CHOWDHURY, L. (2021). <i>Geographies of Memory and Spaces of Belonging: Journeys of the Mind and Displaced Populations – Words & Silences /</i>	The approach establishes narrative archives and storytelling spaces to document displaced populations' memories and	- Libraries as custodians of displaced communities' cultural memory - Need to document and archive refugee experiences across geographies	- Displacement leading to fragmented identities and loss of homeland connections - Negotiating belonging in new geographies while maintaining ties to	The study is methodologically robust in theory and discourse analysis, but limited by qualitative scope and contextual specificity.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
	<i>Palabras y Silencios</i> , KOHA, 2021)	belonging across geographies.	- Importance of creating inclusive spaces that foster belonging - Libraries must balance preservation of origin culture with integration into the host culture - Providing access to oral histories, migration studies, and memory scholarship	the memory of origin - Emotional and psychological struggles of refugees and displaced populations - Risk of erasure of cultural memory in host societies - Tension between personal memory and collective narratives	
11	BROWNLIE , S. (2022). Travelling memory, transcreation, and politics: The case of <i>Refugee Tales</i> . In M. Wolf & M. Baker (Eds.), <i>The Routledge handbook of translation and memory</i> (pp. 365–377). Routledge.	It archives refugee narratives through multilingual, transcreated texts and oral testimonies to mediate cultural and political memory.	- Libraries must curate multilingual and politically sensitive collections - Need to preserve refugee narratives in both original and translated forms - Libraries as mediators of cultural memory and political discourse Importance of	Translating and transcreating refugee narratives across languages and cultures - Navigating political sensitivities in representing refugee experiences - Ensuring authenticity while adapting oral/written testimonies,	The methodology is strong in theoretical and political analysis, but offers only moderate empirical depth given its literary focus.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
			archiving oral testimonies alongside transcreated texts - Providing access to scholarship on translation, memory, and refugee studies	Addressing ethical concerns in memory transmission - Balancing collective memory with individual voices	
12	OLUMBA, E. E. (2024). Preserving the future through the past: Collective memory and immobility in adversity. <i>Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology</i> , 30(4), 483–494	The initiative focuses on preserving collective memory by documenting communities facing adversity through oral histories, cultural artifacts, and digital storytelling, while positioning libraries as safe spaces for resilience and the transmission of identity.	Reinforces resilience by connecting past struggles to future survival - Provides frameworks for understanding immobility as cultural resistance - Strengthens collective identity in marginalised communities Offers educational resources for scholars and policymakers - Encourages inclusive heritage preservation	Limited resources for documenting marginalised voices - Risk of erasure or distortion of collective memory - Political and social barriers to representation - Difficulty in preserving intangible heritage (rituals, oral traditions) - Sustaining archives in contexts of adversity and displacement	The study shows high theoretical and cultural rigor, though qualitative reliance limits replicability.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
13	CHOWDHURY, N., SHOKRI, N., VALERA, C. H. (2024). Politics of the past: Understanding the role of memory, postmemory, and remembrance in navigating the history of migrant families. In <i>Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '24)</i> (pp. 1123–1135). Association for Computing Machinery	The approach preserves migrant family narratives using oral histories, cultural artifacts, and transcultural digital archives.	- Libraries must recognise and include marginalised migrant literatures - Need to archive and preserve “other” voices alongside mainstream works - Libraries as spaces for transcultural dialogue and representation - Importance of curating collections that highlight migrant identity and cultural hybridity - Providing access to scholarship on South Asian migration and transcultural studies	- Marginalisation of migrant voices in mainstream Bangladeshi literature - Struggles of migrants to assert identity and belonging through cultural production - Risk of erasure of “other” narratives in dominant national discourse - Tensions between local and global perspectives in transcultural humanities - Limited platforms for migrant communities to share their stories	Methodologically strong in oral history and postmemory analysis, but context-specific and limited in empirical generalisation.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
14	RUMBI, F. P., PALARI, Y. B., & RANDO, A. A. (2023). Collective memory, martyrdom monument, and Christian–Muslim reconciliation in Seko, North Luwu, Indonesia. <i>Dialog: A Journal of Theology</i> , 62(4), 345–360. Wiley Online Library.	It documents reconciliation through oral histories, monuments, and inclusive archival collections in interfaith contexts.	Strengthens interfaith harmony between Christian and Muslim communities - Provides a framework for peacebuilding through collective memory - Enhances cultural heritage preservation in conflict-affected regions - Offers educational resources for scholars of religion, anthropology, and peace studies	Political sensitivities in narrating martyrdom and reconciliation - Risk of selective memory or biased representation - Limited resources for documenting oral traditions and local monuments - Difficulty in sustaining reconciliation narratives across generations	The study demonstrates solid qualitative and interdisciplinary rigor, with limited scalability beyond its local context.
15	PARISH, N., & RUGO, D. (2021). <i>Memories from the margins: Violence and counter-narratives – Introduction</i> [Book chapter]. Brunel	The study archives counter-narratives of violence using oral histories and digital repositories to amplify marginalised voices.	Provides visibility to marginalised communities and their lived experiences - Challenges dominant historical narratives and promotes inclusivity - Strengthens	Political sensitivities in documenting violence and resistance - Risk of censorship or suppression of counter-narratives - Limited resources for grassroots	Methodological quality is high in narrative and interdisciplinary insight, though constrained by qualitative focus and contextual specificity.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
	University Research Repository		collective memory by integrating counter-narratives - Offers resources for critical pedagogy and social justice scholarship	archival projects - Ethical concerns in handling traumatic testimonies - Sustainability of digital repositories in resource-poor contexts	
16	SATARAVALA, S. (2023). Parsi identity: Myth and collective memories. <i>South Asia Research</i> , 43(1), 82–97	Archival preservation of Parsi oral traditions and mythic narratives - Cataloging of community manuscripts and religious texts - Digital repositories for collective memory and identity studies - Community-based oral history projects within Parsi diaspora	Strengthens Parsi identity through preservation of myths and collective memories - Provides frameworks for understanding minority cultural resilience - Enhances intercultural dialogue and heritage awareness - Offers resources for scholars of South Asian studies, diaspora, and religion	Limited resources for documenting minority voices - Risk of mythologisation overshadowing lived experiences - Difficulty in preserving intangible heritage (rituals, oral traditions) - Political and social marginalisation of small communities Sustainability of archives in diaspora contexts	The study demonstrates high methodological quality in cultural and theoretical insight through authentic oral histories and interdisciplinary design, but remains moderate in replicability and generalisability due to its qualitative, qualitative,

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
		- Interdisciplinary approaches linking anthropology, religion, and cultural studies			context-specific approach.
17	BROWNIE, S. (2022). Travelling memory, transcreation, and politics: The case of <i>Refugee Tales</i> . In M. Wolf & M. Baker (Eds.), <i>The Routledge handbook of translation and memory</i> (pp. 365–377). Routledge.	The approach combines oral histories with transcreated literary narratives to archive travelling refugee memory.	Highlights the role of translation and adaptation in shaping refugee narratives - Strengthens awareness of asylum seekers lived experiences from Africa, Pakistan, and the Middle East - Provides frameworks for understanding how memory travels across borders and genres - Encourages libraries to act as mediators of cultural and political narratives	Political sensitivities in representing refugee voices - Risk of erasure of cultural memory when narratives are transcreated - Limited resources for documenting diverse refugee experiences - Ethical concerns in adapting oral histories into literary forms - Sustaining archives of politically charged narratives	Methodologically innovative in transcreation analysis, but constrained by qualitative emphasis and contextual focus.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
18	VIRDEE, P. (2022). Histories and memories in the digital age of Partition studies. <i>The Oral History Review</i> , 49(2), 207–220. Taylor & Francis.	It digitally archives intergenerational oral histories of Partition refugees through community-driven documentation.	Highlights the importance of collective memory in shaping community identity - Provides frameworks for understanding Partition through intergenerational refugee accounts - Strengthens inclusivity by integrating marginalised voices into historical discourse Enhances accessibility of Partition studies through digital platforms	Risk of digital divide limiting access to archives - Political sensitivities in narrating contested histories of Partition - Challenges in preserving oral traditions authentically in digital formats - Limited resources for sustaining large-scale digital repositories - Ethical concerns in handling trauma narratives	The methodology is strong in digital and theoretical innovation, though sustainability and access issues affect robustness.
19	GREEN, S., NGUYEN AUSTEN, A., & KANDASAMY, N. (2024). Refugee livelihood	The initiative preserves refugee lived experiences by building oral history archives and community-	Shows how individual and collective traumas can motivate refugees toward civic engagement - Strengthens	Ethical concerns in documenting trauma narratives - Language and cultural barriers in oral history	The study shows strong comparative qualitative design but lacks

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
	perspectives: Post-traumatic growth in histories of Vietnamese, Bosnian, and Tamil refugees in Australia. <i>Journal of Refugee Studies</i> , 37(2), 471–485. Oxford University Press.	based ethnographic collections, integrating post-traumatic growth narratives into library resources, creating digital repositories for testimonies and civic engagement, and applying interdisciplinary cataloging that connects trauma, refugee, and memory studies.	understanding of resilience and adaptation in refugee communities - Provides resources for scholars in anthropology, migration, trauma, and livelihood studies - Encourages participatory knowledge production in libraries and archives	preservation - Limited institutional resources for refugee-centred archives - Risk of underrepresentation of smaller refugee groups - Sustaining long-term archival projects in politically sensitive contexts	quantitative validation.
20	SLEIMAN, H. (2023). History as a cautionary tale. <i>History of the Present</i> , 13(2), 215–232. Duke University Press.	It preserves Palestinian refugee memory through oral history interviews, community archives, and digital special collections.	Highlights how collective memory serves as a cautionary framework in contexts of displacement - Provides insight into the lived temporality of refugees and its societal significance	Political sensitivities in narrating Palestinian refugee histories - Risk of erasure or distortion of collective memory - Limited resources for documenting oral	The methodology is theoretically rigorous and narratively rich, though limited in generalisability due to political specificity.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
			- Strengthens understanding of resilience and identity among marginalised communities - Offers resources for scholars of Middle Eastern studies, oral history, and cultural memory	traditions and lived temporality - Ethical concerns in handling trauma narratives - Sustainability of archives in contested political contexts	
21	KIM, J., ROESCHLEY, A., & BYUN, M. (2024). Building bridges and preserving voices: Key factors in community oral history stewardship. <i>Journal of Documentation</i>, 80(6), 1345–1362. Emerald Publishing.	The approach applies collaborative community stewardship models to develop digital oral history archives of refugee voices.	Strengthens community-building and intercultural dialogue through oral history stewardship - Preserves marginalised voices and lived experiences of refugees - Provides frameworks for inclusive archival practices - Enhances accessibility of refugee narratives for scholars and the public	Gaps in documentary and archival resources for refugee communities - Ethical concerns in handling trauma narratives - Limited institutional support for community-driven stewardship - Risk of underrepresentation of smaller refugee groups. Sustainability of oral history	Methodological strength lies in participatory stewardship and community engagement, with sustainability challenges affecting scalability.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
			- Encourages participatory knowledge production in libraries	projects in resource-constrained contexts	
22	TAZZIOLI, M. (2021). Towards a genealogy of migrant struggles and rescue: The memory of solidarity at the Alpine border. <i>Citizenship Studies</i> , 25(3), 303–320. Taylor & Francis	It archives migrant solidarity practices using oral histories, activist documents, and grassroots digital repositories.	Highlights how citizen solidarity becomes part of collective memory at contested borders - Provides frameworks for understanding migrant struggles beyond state-centric refugee crisis narratives - Strengthens awareness of grassroots rescue practices and their historical significance - Offers resources for scholars of migration, citizenship, and cultural memory	Political sensitivities in documenting migrant solidarity against state narratives - Risk of erasure or suppression of activist voices - Limited resources for preserving grassroots archives - Ethical concerns in handling testimonies of vulnerable migrants - Sustainability of archives in transnational and contested border contexts	The study is methodologically strong in genealogical and oral history analysis, though context-bound and qualitatively driven.

S/N	AUTHOR (S)	Archival Approaches and Practices Adopted by Academic Libraries	Implications for Access, Representation, and Cultural Sensitivity	Key Challenges Libraries face in Archiving Displaced Communities' Narratives	Methodological Quality
23	VOGL, A. (2024). <i>Judging refugees: Narrative and oral testimony in refugee status determination.</i> Cambridge University Press	The study preserves refugee oral testimonies within legal and administrative archival collections supported by digital platforms.	Highlights how narrative and oral testimony shape refugee identity in legal processes - Shows how refugees are judged against cultural and political discourses of the receiving state - Provides frameworks for understanding the intersection of law, memory, and refugee lived experience - Enhances inclusivity in archives by preserving refugee voices beyond bureaucratic categorisation	Political sensitivities in documenting refugee status determination - Risk of reducing refugees to “productive others” within state discourses - Ethical concerns in handling testimonies tied to trauma and legal vulnerability - Limited resources for integrating legal and oral history archives - Sustainability of archives in contested political and cultural contexts	The methodology is robust in interdisciplinary legal–narrative analysis, with limited empirical replication.

The systematic literature review identified 99 articles, of which 23 met the inclusion criteria for full analysis. These studies provided a diverse range of perspectives on how academic libraries engage with the preservation of migrant and refugee narratives. Several key themes emerged from the analysis.

First, libraries are increasingly adopting participatory and community-centred approaches to archiving. Oral histories, co-created platforms, and collaborations with displaced communities, museums, and activists were frequently highlighted as effective strategies. Digital repositories, multilingual access systems, and creative practices such as theatre and exhibitions were also employed to ensure inclusivity and broaden representation. In some cases, trauma-informed methods were integrated into archival processes, allowing refugee experiences of displacement and resilience to be preserved with sensitivity.

Second, the implications of these practices extend beyond preservation. The reviewed studies emphasised that archives play a vital role in promoting authentic representation, cultural sensitivity, and social justice. By curating multilingual and culturally resonant collections, libraries foster intercultural dialogue, empower marginalised voices, and support identity formation and resilience among displaced populations. In this way, libraries are positioned not only as custodians of knowledge but also as agents of integration and allies in academic freedom.

Third, significant challenges were identified. Ethical concerns around consent, confidentiality, and ownership were common, particularly when dealing with sensitive testimonies and trauma narratives. Resource limitations, including funding and institutional support, hindered the sustainability of oral history projects and digital repositories. Other difficulties included risks of misrepresentation, political sensitivities, and technical barriers such as multilingual complexities. The challenge of preserving intangible heritage, such as oral traditions and performance art, was also noted, alongside the broader issue of ensuring that archives remain accessible and authentic across diverse contexts.

The methodological quality of the studies varied. While many demonstrated strong qualitative depth and participatory design, generalisability was often limited by context-specific focus. Innovative approaches, such as computational semantic analysis and interdisciplinary collaborations, showed promise for scalability, though they sometimes lacked cultural nuance. Overall, the findings reveal both the potential

and the limitations of current archival practices in safeguarding the narratives of displaced communities.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the reviewed literature reveal that academic libraries are increasingly adopting innovative, participatory, and interdisciplinary approaches to archiving the narratives of displaced communities. These approaches reflect a shift from traditional custodianship toward collaborative and socially responsive frameworks that prioritise inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and accessibility.

Approaches used by academic libraries in developing accessible and culturally sensitive archival systems for migrant and refugee narratives

Community-centred and participatory practices dominate the archival landscape. High (2021) and Cao (2021) emphasise participatory curation, where survivors and marginalised groups co-create archives to ensure that oral histories are preserved authentically rather than filtered through institutional biases. Abdalla *et al.* (2021) highlight the embedding of refugee voices in metadata and cataloging systems, thereby challenging Western-centric archival norms and promoting epistemic diversity. Digital innovations further expand archival possibilities. Awwad *et al.* (2025) introduce computational methods, such as semantic analysis and multilingual indexing, to enhance accessibility and scalability, while Virdee (2022) and Jamil (2025) emphasize the role of digital repositories and multimedia platforms in preserving intergenerational accounts and diaspora art. Interdisciplinary collaborations also enrich archival practices, with Opfermann (2024) and Rumbi *et al.* (2023) demonstrating how partnerships with museums and activists integrate food, artifacts, and monuments into archives, embedding cultural resonance and reconciliation narratives. Collectively, these approaches position libraries as active agents of cultural preservation and social justice. However, most remain context-specific, limiting scalability and generalisability (Awwad *et al.*, 2025; Stroja, 2022).

Implications of Archival Practices in developing accessible and culturally sensitive archival systems for migrant and refugee narratives.

The implications of these archival systems are profound, extending beyond preservation to representation, resilience, and identity formation. By centering displaced voices, archives foster inclusivity and challenge dominant institutional discourses (Parish & Rugo, 2021; Stroja, 2022; Calabria, 2023). Opfermann (2024) and Olumba (2024) argue that archives facilitate reconciliation and resilience by

connecting past struggles to future survival, while Ahmed (2021) highlights their role in supporting intergenerational resilience among Somali refugees. Rumbi *et al.* (2023) further illustrate how archives strengthen interfaith harmony by documenting narratives of reconciliation.

Libraries also contribute to knowledge democratisation and pedagogy. High (2021) demonstrates how archives empower communities through creative practice while enriching student learning, Abdalla *et al.* (2021) position libraries as allies in academic freedom and social justice, and Brownlie (2022) underscores their role as mediators of cultural memory and political discourse through translation and transcreation. Archives thus serve therapeutic, educational, and political functions, positioning libraries as agents of cultural continuity and social justice. Few studies provide quantitative evidence of impact, and sustainability in resource-poor contexts remains underexplored (Virdee, 2022; Olumba, 2024).

Challenges in archiving displaced communities' narratives

Despite these advances, significant challenges persist. Ethical dilemmas dominate, including issues of consent, confidentiality, narrative ownership, and the risk of romanticising trauma (Abdalla *et al.*, 2021; Stroja, 2022; High, 2021; Calabria, 2023). Political sensitivities complicate archival work, particularly in contexts of contested histories or reconciliation, where selective memory or censorship can distort narratives (Rumbi *et al.*, 2023; Virdee, 2022; Parish & Rugo, 2021). Resource limitations also hinder sustainability, with Ahmed (2021) and Olumba (2024) noting the difficulty of maintaining archives in contexts of adversity, and Virdee (2022) pointing to the digital divide as a barrier to equitable access. Institutional tensions between oral history and traditional scholarship further constrain innovation (High, 2021). Technical and methodological challenges add strain: Awwad *et al.* (2025) caution against reducing complex narratives to quantitative metrics; Jamil (2025) highlights the difficulty of capturing intangible heritage, such as oral traditions and performance art; and Cao (2021) and Opfermann (2024) note multilingual complexities and replicability issues.

CONCLUSION

Academic libraries are adopting participatory, digital, and interdisciplinary methods to preserve the narratives of displaced communities. These approaches strengthen inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and resilience, positioning libraries as agents of social justice and cultural continuity. By embedding refugee voices into archival systems, libraries challenge dominant discourses and foster authentic representation, while also

serving therapeutic, educational, and political roles that promote reconciliation, resilience, and dialogue.

However, significant challenges persist. Ethical dilemmas around consent, confidentiality, and ownership complicate archival practices, while limited resources hinder sustainability, especially in contexts of displacement. Political sensitivities risk selective memory and distortion, and methodological tensions between qualitative richness and scalability constrain replicability. These issues highlight the need for balancing innovation with cultural nuance to ensure archives remain authentic and accessible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Academic libraries should embed displaced communities into participatory, culturally sensitive archiving while leveraging digital innovations to ensure authentic, accessible, and scalable preservation of refugee voices.
2. Libraries must act as agents of social justice by integrating trauma-sensitive practices, fostering intergenerational dialogue, embedding refugee narratives in education, and advocating for policy recognition to sustain inclusive archives.
3. To overcome challenges, libraries should enforce ethical safeguards, secure sustainable resources, and embrace methodological pluralism, balancing technological scalability with cultural nuance to protect and empower displaced communities.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All contributions were made solely for academic and research purposes, without any financial, personal, or institutional interests that could have influenced the outcomes of this study.

REFERENCES

- Abdalla, M. Z., Ndiritiro, R., Omar, S., Reed, K., Rer, S., Schenck, M. C., & Teferra, G. (2021). Opportunities and challenges of oral history research through refugee voices, narratives, and memories: History dialogues. In *Global South scholars in the Western academy* (pp. 171–185). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003109808-18>
- Ahmed, H. D. S. (2021). *Memory and identity: Inter-generational resilience and construction of diasporic identities among Somali refugees* (master's thesis). University of San Francisco. <https://repository.usfca.edu/thes/1365/>
- Austen, A. N. (2022). *Vietnamese migrants in Australia and the global digital diaspora: Histories of childhood, forced migration, and belonging*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003169574>
- Awad, G. A., Rayan, T. N., Dunagan, L., & Gamba, D. (2025, January). Collective memory and narrative cohesion: A computational study of Palestinian refugee oral histories in Lebanon. In *Proceedings of the First International Workshop on Nakba Narratives as Language Resources* (pp. 83–102). <https://aclanthology.org/2025.nakbanlp-1.10/>
- Bönisch-Brednich, B., Christou, A., Meyer, S., Karner, M. J., & Escher, A. J. (Eds.). (2024). *Migrant narratives: Storytelling as agency, belonging and community*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003120520>
- Brownlie, S. (2022). Travelling memory, transcreation, and politics: The case of *Refugee Tales*. In L. Bond, C. Craps, & P. Vermeulen (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and memory* (pp. 123–137). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003273417-11>
- Calabria, V. (2023). An exploration of the function of nostalgia in oral histories of institutional care. In *Memory, anniversaries and mental health in international historical perspective: Faith in reform* (pp. 231–255). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22978-7_10
- Cao, J. (2021). *Relational bonds as method: Oral history and design within the Vietnamese diaspora* (Doctoral dissertation). OCAD University. <https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/3497/>
- Chibuzor, L. D., & Osadebe, N. E. (2009). The role of public libraries in the preservation of cultural heritage in Nigeria: Challenges and strategies. *Journal*

of *Applied Information Science and Technology*.
https://www.jaistonline.org/ChibuzoOsadebe_2k09.pdf

- Chowdhury, I. (2021). Geographies of memory and spaces of belonging: Journeys of the mind and displaced populations. *Words & Silences / Palabras y Silencios*, 10(1). https://ioha.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/IOHA_Chowdhury_English.pdf
- Chowdhury, N., Shokri, N., Valera, C. H., Sp, A. M., Marquez, C. R., Rifat, M. R., ... & Ahmed, S. I. (2024, May). Politics of the past: Understanding the role of memory, postmemory, and remembrance in navigating the history of migrant families. In *Proceedings of the 2024 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1-17). <https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3613904.3642496>
- Chowdhury, R. R. (2022). Migrant voices: An inquisition of the 'other' literature in Bangladesh. In *Transcultural humanities in South Asia* (pp. 184-196). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003039549-18>
- Farzana, K. F., Sammonds, P., & Ahmed, B. (2024). *Sounding resilience and resistance: Tarana songs of Rohingya refugees in Malaysia*. Amsterdam University Press. https://dx.doi.org/10.5117/9789463726160_CH08
- Gerasimidou, D., Bolt, N., Rakočević Uvodić, M., Siebens, A., Okerson, A., & IFLA co-authors. (2024). *IFLA guidelines for libraries supporting displaced persons: Refugees, migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers*. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. <https://repository.ifla.org/items/7ce3fe3e-ce77-4dcb-9912-2e7d2dfcaab5>
- Green, S., Nguyen Austen, A., & Kandasamy, N. (2024). Refugee livelihood perspectives: Post-traumatic growth in histories of Vietnamese, Bosnian, and Tamil refugees in Australia. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 37(2), 471-485. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feae016>
- High, S. (2021). Oral history as creative practice at Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling. *Bulletin de l'AFAS. Sonorités*, (47), 108-121. <https://journals.openedition.org/afas/6359>
- High, S., Tasong, E., Lopera, F. L., & Almahr, H. (2022). The pedagogy and practice of listening to Rwandan exiles and genocide survivors. *Oral History*, 50(1), 115-126. https://storytelling.concordia.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2022-2023-COHDS-Annual-Report_compressed-1_compressed.pdf
- Hobbs, M. M.

- (2021). *Return to Vietnam: An oral history of American and Australian veterans' journeys*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108972987>
- Jamil, H. (2025). Cultural memory in the art of diaspora communities. *International Journal of Innovative Research*, 3(1), 30–42.
<https://ijirjournal.com/index.php/ijir/article/view/27>
- Kim, J., Roeschley, A., & Byun, M. (2024). Building bridges and preserving voices: Key factors in community oral history stewardship. *Journal of Documentation*, 80(6), 1458–1474. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-01-2024-0018>
- Martinez, R., & Tallman, N. (2024). Fostering collaboration between research libraries and community archives to preserve the “network of mutuality.” In *iPRES 2024 conference proceedings*. <https://doi.org/10.21428/5676bf2d.6ce0dcfd>
- Olumba, E. E. (2024). Preserving the future through the past: Collective memory and immobility in adversity. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2025-04907-001>
- Opfermann, L. S. (2025). Sharing stories, food and passports: Forced migration, museum and memory activism in contemporary Germany. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 46(3), 380–404.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2024.2398993>
- Parish, N., & Rugo, D. (2021). *Memories from the margins: Violence and counter-narratives—Introduction*. British Academy.
<https://bura.brunel.ac.uk/handle/2438/23119>
- Patil, S. V. (2023). The role of libraries in preserving cultural heritage materials and making them accessible to future generations. *ECONSPEAK: A Journal of Advances in Management, IT & Social Sciences*, 14(8). <https://skirec.org/wp-content/uploads/Econ25Aug23-VS-1.pdf>
- Rommes, E., & Chaer, N. (2024). Counter-narratives against hardships among Syrian refugee youth and parents. *Trans cultural Psychiatry*, 61(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615231191993>
- Rumbi, F. P., Palari, Y. B., & Rando, A. A. (2023). Collective memory, martyrdom monument, and Christian–Muslim reconciliation in Seko, North Luwu, Indonesia. *Dialog*, 62(2), 208–215. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dial.12815>

- Sataravala, S. (2022). Parsi identity: Myth and collective memories. *South Asia Research*, 43(1), 34–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026272802211>
- Sleiman, H. (2023). History as a Cautionary Tale. *History of the Present*, 13(1), 133–135. <https://read.dukeupress.edu/history-of-the-present/article-abstract/13/1/133/344080/History-as-a-Cautionary-Tale>
- Stewart, E., & Shaffer, M. (2021). The ethical and practical challenges of archiving refugee accounts: Reflections from two research projects in the UK. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology*, 150(1), 51–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0759106321995707>
- Stroja, J. (2022). Displaced persons' experiences of trauma and responses to contemporary crisis in Europe: an oral history of engagement with refugees. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 41(2), 218–237. <https://academic.oup.com/rsq/article-abstract/41/2/218/6540048>
- Tazzioli, M. (2021). Towards a genealogy of migrant struggles and rescue. The memory of solidarity at the Alpine border. *Citizenship Studies*, 25(5), 603–619. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13621025.2021.1923657>
- University of Arizona Confluence Center for Creative Inquiry. (n.d.). *Reclaiming the border narrative*. University of Arizona. Retrieved January 13, 2026, from <https://confluentcenter.arizona.edu/reclaiming-border-narrative>
- Vogl, A. (2024). *Judging refugees: Narrative and oral testimony in refugee status determination*. Cambridge University Press.

Trans-Border Crime Along Nigeria-Benin Republic Borderlines

Godwin Onu, Aniefiok Emeka-Okereke & Arinze Ngwube

¹Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. ²Department of Development Studies, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria. ³Department of Political Science, Federal University of Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Corresponding author's email: aokereke@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

Trans-border crime along the Nigeria–Benin Republic borderlines has emerged as a pressing security and socio-economic challenge with far-reaching implications for both countries and the wider West African subregion. The porous nature of the border, coupled with weak surveillance capacity, inadequate law enforcement cooperation, and high levels of informal cross-border trade, has created an enabling environment for illicit activities. These include smuggling of petroleum products, arms trafficking, drug trade, human trafficking, cattle rustling, and the proliferation of counterfeit goods. Such activities not only undermine national security but also erode government revenue, distort local economies, and weaken public trust in state institutions. The situation is further complicated by the deep historical, cultural, and economic ties between border communities, which blur distinctions between legitimate and illicit cross-border interactions. Criminal networks exploit these linkages, often outpacing the capacity of security agencies to respond effectively. Additionally, high levels of poverty and unemployment in border areas incentivise local participation in trans-border crimes, making enforcement strategies more complex. This paper examines the dynamics of trans-border crime along the Nigeria–Benin border, analysing its drivers, manifestations, and implications for regional security. It argues that addressing the challenge requires a multifaceted approach, including enhanced joint border patrols, improved intelligence sharing, community-based policing, and stronger regional collaboration through frameworks such as ECOWAS. Beyond security measures, sustainable solutions must also address socio-economic deprivation in border communities to reduce vulnerability to criminal recruitment. Strengthening governance and development in these areas is therefore central to curbing trans-border crime and fostering long-term stability. Policy implementation should be evidence-based, adequately funded, and monitored through transparent metrics. Universities, civil society, and border communities can contribute data, trust, and oversight. Investments in infrastructure, education, and livelihoods would complement enforcement, while legal harmonisation between states would close loopholes and reduce incentives for cross-border criminal enterprise activities.

Keywords: Transborder, Crime, Criminal, Security, West Africa

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/g556-fk39>

La criminalité transfrontalière à la frontière Nigéria-Bénin

Résumé

La criminalité transfrontalière le long de la frontière entre le Nigéria et le Bénin constitue un défi socio-économique et sécuritaire majeur, aux répercussions considérables pour les deux pays et l'ensemble de la sous-région ouest-africaine. La porosité de la frontière, conjuguée à des capacités de surveillance insuffisantes, à une coopération policière inadéquate et à l'importance du commerce transfrontalier informel, crée un environnement propice aux activités illicites. Celles-ci comprennent la contrebande de produits pétroliers, le trafic d'armes, le trafic de stupéfiants, la traite des êtres humains, le vol de bétail ainsi que la prolifération de produits contrefaits. Ces activités compromettent non seulement la sécurité nationale, mais érodent également les recettes publiques, perturbent les économies locales et affaiblissent la confiance du public envers les institutions étatiques. La situation est davantage compliquée par les liens historiques, culturels et économiques profonds qui unissent les communautés frontalières, brouillant ainsi la distinction entre les interactions transfrontalières légitimes et illicites. Les réseaux criminels exploitent ces liens, souvent plus rapidement que les services de sécurité ne peuvent y répondre efficacement. De plus, les niveaux élevés de pauvreté et de chômage dans les zones frontalières incitent les populations locales à participer à la criminalité transfrontalière, ce qui complexifie les stratégies de lutte. Ce document examine la dynamique de la criminalité transfrontalière le long de la frontière entre le Nigéria et le Bénin, en analysant ses causes, ses manifestations et ses implications pour la sécurité régionale. Il soutient que relever ce défi exige une approche multidimensionnelle, incluant le renforcement des patrouilles frontalières conjointes, l'amélioration du partage de renseignements, le développement de la police de proximité et le renforcement de la collaboration régionale, notamment par le biais d'organisations telles que la CEDEAO. Au-delà des mesures de sécurité, des solutions durables doivent également s'attaquer aux vulnérabilités socio-économiques des communautés frontalières afin de réduire leur exposition au recrutement criminel. Le renforcement de la gouvernance et du développement dans ces zones est donc essentiel pour endiguer la criminalité transfrontalière et favoriser une stabilité à long terme. En outre, la mise en œuvre des politiques doit reposer sur des données probantes, bénéficier de financements adéquats et faire l'objet d'un suivi à l'aide d'indicateurs transparents. Les universités, la société civile et les communautés frontalières peuvent contribuer à la production de données, à la consolidation de la confiance et au contrôle citoyen. Enfin, les investissements dans les infrastructures, l'éducation et les moyens de subsistance viendraient compléter les mesures répressives, tandis que l'harmonisation juridique entre les États permettrait de combler les lacunes et de réduire les incitations aux activités criminelles transfrontalières.

Mots-clés : Transfrontalier, criminalité, sécurité, Afrique de l'Ouest

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria shares a border of approximately 700 kilometers with the Republic of Benin (Ashafa, 2018). This boundary has historically served as a centre for socio-economic interaction, particularly in the southwest corridor, where Lagos and Badagry in Nigeria and Cotonou and Porto Novo in Benin function as major commercial hubs (Agbo-Sossou, 2011). Since colonial times, these markets have maintained close economic integration, facilitating both legal trade and informal cross-border exchanges. The high permeability of the border has enabled goods, services, and people to move freely, but it has also created opportunities for illicit activities, including smuggling, human trafficking, arms trade, and drug trafficking (Afrika et al., 2012).

Geographically, the border connects major urban consumption centres in both countries, enhancing its economic importance. Benin relies heavily on informal re-export trade with Nigeria, making this corridor vital for its economy (Lares, 2005). The porous nature of the boundary is further reinforced by shared ethnic, cultural, and kinship ties. Groups such as the Yoruba, Egun, Bariba, and Hausa live on both sides of the border, maintaining social and commercial networks that often override formal national boundaries.

This cultural continuity, while beneficial for trade and integration, also facilitates the movement of illicit goods and the operations of human trafficking networks. Economically, the border region is central to the flow of goods. Subsidised petroleum in Nigeria incentivises fuel smuggling into Benin, while commodities such as rice, frozen foods, and textiles are smuggled into Nigeria to bypass import restrictions.

Additionally, the region has become a route for small arms and light weapons trafficking, contributing to insecurity in southwestern Nigeria and neighboring areas. The corridor also plays a role in drug trafficking, with cannabis, cocaine, and heroin moving through the border en route to Europe and North America. Human trafficking is another significant concern, as women and children are trafficked for forced labor or sexual exploitation, facilitated by irregular migration across the border. Livestock theft and illegal grazing frequently provoke conflicts between herders and farmers, further complicating security dynamics.

Several factors drive these criminal activities. The extensive length of the border and limited surveillance resources allow numerous unofficial crossing points to flourish. Economic disparities, particularly differences in fuel and commodity prices,

incentivise smuggling. Poverty and unemployment in border communities push residents to participate in illicit trade, while corruption among border officials enables criminal networks to operate with relative impunity. The presence of extremist groups in the broader West African region further increases demand for arms trafficking routes.

The consequences of trans-border crime are manifold. Economically, smuggling deprives governments of revenue and distorts local markets. Security-wise, arms trafficking and organised crime contribute to violence, banditry, and terrorism. Human trafficking and irregular migration endanger vulnerable populations, while corruption erodes public trust in governance.

Regionally, criminal networks undermine ECOWAS's objectives by destabilising cross-border trade and cooperation. Effectively addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts at the national, bilateral, and regional levels, integrating robust border management, anti-corruption measures, community engagement, and socio-economic development strategies. By strengthening governance and law enforcement while promoting legitimate trade and development in border communities, Nigeria and Benin can mitigate the risks associated with trans-border crime and enhance regional stability.

This paper examines the factors behind cross-border crime at the Nigeria-Benin border and efforts to combat it. This is an important case study for these two main reasons. First, this zone is known for cross-border crime and trafficking. Secondly, the two countries are both members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) and the Non-Aligned Movement, the Guinea Commission, the Nigeria-Benin Joint Commission, among other bilateral and multilateral engagements.

Thirdly, their colonial masters are members of the United Nations Security Council. This paper is divided into three sections: firstly, introduction, secondly, objectives, thirdly, results, fourth, discussion, fifth, conclusion.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research article are to:

1. Identify the major forms of trans-border crimes prevalent along the Nigeria–Benin border.
2. Examine the socio-economic and political factors that drive trans-border crime in the border communities.
3. Analyse the impact of trans-border crime on national security, economic development, and social stability in both countries.
4. Assess the effectiveness of existing border security measures and bilateral cooperation mechanisms.
5. Examine the role of local communities in either facilitating or preventing trans-border crime.
6. Propose sustainable policy and security strategies for reducing trans-border crime along the Nigeria–Benin border.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper will report the materials and methods used. Secondary sources of data for this paper include books, journals, monographs, and internet materials. The secondary sources constitute the greater percentage of the data sources of this paper. The internet serves as a research tool, functioning much like a modern library: it provides access to a broad range of primary and secondary sources, rather than being a source of knowledge.

For this paper, the internet was primarily used to locate peer-reviewed articles, policy reports, official statistics, and digital archives, which informed the analysis of trans-border crime, informal trade, and trafficking dynamics. While online sources facilitated efficient access to data, they were carefully cross-checked against official publications and field reports to ensure reliability, validity, and academic rigor. In this sense, the internet is a conduit to credible sources, complementing traditional research methods without replacing them.

RESULTS

The findings from this paper underscore the complexity and persistence of trans-border crime along the Nigeria–Benin frontier. Evidence drawn from academic literature, policy reports, and documented cases reveals that cross-border criminality

in this corridor is both structurally embedded and institutionally enabled. Rather than isolated criminal incidents, trans-border crimes between Nigeria and Benin constitute a networked system sustained by economic incentives, governance weaknesses, and regional integration dynamics.

First, the results show that porous borders remain a primary enabler of criminal activity. The over 700-kilometer Nigeria–Benin boundary, particularly through corridors such as Badagry–Seme and Ogun State’s multiple unofficial crossings, facilitates smuggling, human trafficking, and arms proliferation (Flynn, 1997; Ebaye & Okon, 2021). The existence of more than eighty informal crossing points in Ogun State alone illustrates the limitations of conventional border control mechanisms. These vulnerabilities are compounded by weak institutional coordination, corruption among border officials, and inadequate surveillance infrastructure.

Second, economic asymmetries between Nigeria and Benin significantly drive informal and illicit trade. Benin’s liberal import policies and re-export economy contrast sharply with Nigeria’s protectionist trade regime. This disparity, coupled with differences in currency valuation (the Naira and the CFA franc), creates strong incentives for smuggling petroleum products, vehicles, textiles, frozen foods, and pharmaceuticals. Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT), while technically illegal in many instances, functions as a survival mechanism for border communities. Estimates that the informal sector accounts for approximately 75 percent of Benin’s GDP and 20 percent in Nigeria highlight its structural importance (Medina & Schneider, 2018).

Thus, enforcement-only approaches fail to account for the livelihood dimension of cross-border exchange.

Third, the results confirm that transnational organised crime (TOC) in West Africa is increasingly sophisticated and globally connected. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), organised crime generates hundreds of billions of dollars annually worldwide (UNODC, 2011). West Africa’s strategic geographic position between South America and Europe makes it a transit hub for narcotics trafficking. Evidence from the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) and joint ECOWAS–INTERPOL operations reveals that millions of kilograms of narcotics have transited through Benin en route to Nigerian and international markets (GIABA, 2011). Criminal networks now operate through flexible transnational linkages connecting actors across Senegal, Côte

d'Ivoire, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. This networked model blurs the line between local and global criminal economies.

Fourth, human trafficking remains one of the most devastating manifestations of trans-border crime. Reports indicate that an estimated 200,000 children in West and Central Africa are victims of trafficking and forced labor, with Benin often functioning as a transit state and Nigeria as a major destination (INTERPOL, 2019). Joint operations such as Épervier II demonstrate that bilateral enforcement can produce measurable successes; however, the persistence of trafficking networks reflects deeper structural drivers, including poverty, unemployment, and weak social protection systems (INTERPOL, 2019). Vulnerable populations, especially women and children, are frequently coerced or deceived into acting as couriers or laborers within illicit supply chains.

Fifth, arms proliferation through the Nigeria–Benin corridor contributes to broader regional instability. It is estimated that a significant proportion of small arms circulating in West Africa are located in Nigeria, many entering through neighboring states (Small Arms Survey, 2018). The northern Benin frontier's proximity to Sahelian conflict zones has further intensified concerns about militant infiltration and weapons flows. This dynamic underscores the interconnectedness of West African security challenges and the inadequacy of isolated national responses.

DISCUSSIONS

Studies on African borderlands are extensive (Asiwaju & Mosselman, 1997), yet a brief conceptual overview remains necessary for understanding the dynamics of cross-border movement and interaction. Research by Okorn and Ndum (2020), for instance, provides valuable insight into the nature of transnational crime in the Mfum border area between Nigeria and Cameroon. Their study identifies the harsh socio-economic conditions experienced by residents of the border community as a major factor driving involvement in illicit economic activities. Poor living standards and limited employment opportunities have led some residents to engage in smuggling and other informal survival strategies. The Nigeria–Benin border reflects the enduring consequences of colonial boundary-making. Communities of common ancestry, especially the Yoruba, were divided between two states. Settlements such as Ketu, Ogori, and Anago straddle the frontier, sharing kinship ties that long predate colonial intervention (Asiwaju, 1990). Within Ogun State, four local government areas, Imeko-Afon, Yewa North, Yewa South, and Ipokia — border Benin, yet many of these areas

lack natural barriers or visible demarcations, making effective policing difficult. The cultural continuum between southwestern Nigeria and southeastern Benin is especially pronounced among Yoruba subgroups such as the Anago and Egun, who maintain mutual linguistic intelligibility, intermarriage, and active trade relations (Afolayan, 2000).

Historical accounts of the Oyo Empire's influence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries further explain these enduring ties (Ayandele & Akinjogbin, 1980).

Contemporary interactions through weekly markets and kin-based exchanges blur the distinction between national territories, illustrating how colonial borders remain socially permeable. Economic life along the Ogun–Benin corridor exists in a grey zone between legality and informality. Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) dominates the region's economy, driven by stark differences in tariff regimes and currency values. Benin's liberal import policies contrast sharply with Nigeria's protectionist measures, incentivising smuggling through unregulated routes that long predate formal border institutions (Golub, 2012).

The informal sector contributes an estimated 75 percent of Benin's GDP and around 20 percent in Nigeria, reflecting its role as a survival economy for border communities (Afrika & Ajumbo, 2012). Commonly traded commodities include petroleum products, textiles, second-hand goods, food items, and pharmaceuticals. While technically illegal, these transactions sustain livelihoods in areas where formal employment is scarce. This dual economy formal in appearance but informal in practice illustrates how state policies inadvertently sustain cross-border smuggling. One of the major illicit economic activities that has persisted along the Nigeria–Benin border since the mid-1980s is the smuggling of contraband goods. Contraband refers to commodities that are either prohibited from entering a country or subject to high import tariffs intended to discourage their importation through official channels such as seaports and regulated land borders. In Nigeria, successive governments have implemented protectionist trade policies, including embargoes and high tariffs on certain commodities, primarily to protect domestic industries and promote local production.

These policies are also intended to stimulate economic growth and generate employment opportunities for Nigerian citizens. Despite these protectionist measures, smuggling has remained widespread along Nigeria's borders, particularly along the frontier with the Republic of Benin (Hoffmann & Melly, 2015). The persistence of

smuggling activities has been attributed to factors such as porous borders, weak enforcement mechanisms, and the significant economic incentives associated with cross-border trade. In response to the scale of illicit trade, the Nigerian government temporarily closed sections of the Nigeria–Benin border in 2003 under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo to curb smuggling activities (Okoro,2003).

A substantial proportion of the goods exchanged between traders in Nigeria and Benin occurs through informal or illegal channels. Many goods officially imported into Benin are subsequently re-exported or smuggled across the border into Nigeria. This pattern reflects the broader dynamics of informal cross-border trade in West Africa, where regulatory disparities and economic incentives encourage traders to bypass formal customs procedures. The unofficial nature of this trade has had significant economic and security implications for Nigeria. The smuggling of substandard and counterfeit products, including adulterated pharmaceutical goods and other fake commodities, has posed serious risks to public health and consumer safety.

In addition, the prevalence of informal and undocumented trade has resulted in considerable revenue losses for the Nigerian government, as goods entering the country through illegal routes remain largely untaxed and unrecorded (Hoffmann & Melly, 2015). According to Osuntokun, a substantial portion of trade between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin occurs outside formal regulatory frameworks, primarily through smuggling networks. This situation not only weakens state revenue generation but also undermines economic planning and national security (Osuntokun,2003). International assessments further illustrate the magnitude of the problem. World Bank reports estimate that goods worth approximately ₦750 billion (about \$5 billion) are smuggled into Nigeria annually through the Benin corridor alone. (Gateway,2011) The report also indicates that more than \$400 million in import duties is lost each year due to smuggling activities across Nigeria’s sub-regional borders (Gateway, 2011). These developments demonstrate the high economic costs of illicit cross-border trade and highlight the challenges Nigerian authorities face in regulating trade along the Nigeria–Benin frontier.

One of the major features of Nigeria-Benin relations is informal cross-border trade, which is vital to both countries and the sub-region. This forms an informal dynamic for interaction and integration. The Beninese economy depends on this informal cross-border trade with Nigeria, especially in the re-exportation of imported goods. The attractiveness stems from the non-harmonisation of the currencies of both countries

(the Naira and the CFA franc). This has its roots in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. Security is a determining factor in the relationship among countries with contiguous borders. This becomes the case with Nigeria and Benin. Poor governance and weak institutional oversight have contributed to inadequate border management and pervasive corruption along the Nigeria–Benin frontier.

The porous nature of this boundary exposes both states to diverse transnational threats, posing severe risks to national and regional security. As Shelley (1995) notes, transnational criminal activities are inherently destabilising, generating regional and global tensions that erode state authority. Such crimes not only divert public resources but also undermine governance structures by competing with legitimate economic systems and promoting systemic corruption. Smuggling and political suspicion particularly Nigerian accusations that Benin permitted humanitarian supplies to reach Biafran secessionists through the port of Cotonou during the 1967–1970 Nigerian Civil War further aggravated tensions between the two countries. These allegations contributed to deterioration in bilateral relations and were associated with a series of border clashes between Nigeria and Benin in 1969 (Aluko, 1977; Omede, 2006). Such episodes illustrate how weak governance, cross-border smuggling, and mutual insecurity historically entrenched cycles of instability along the Nigeria–Benin frontier.

Porous borders have created opportunities for various forms of transnational crime. Ogun State reportedly contains more than eighty unofficial crossing points (The Cable, 2014), which facilitate smuggling, human trafficking, and arms proliferation. Weak institutional capacity, corruption, and limited inter-agency coordination further undermine enforcement. Illicit arms trafficking represents a critical security concern. It is estimated that about 70 percent of small arms circulating in West Africa are in Nigeria, many entering through Benin (WANEP, 2013). These weapons fuel local conflicts and insurgencies. Similarly, the narcotics trade exploits weak border governance. Benin functions as a key transit hub for narcotics destined for Nigerian markets and beyond (GIABA, 2012). Globalisation has further complicated border management. As Duvell (2003) observes, global trade liberalisation and mobility have weakened traditional notions of sovereignty. Regional policies such as the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, while designed to enhance integration, inadvertently facilitate the movement of contraband and irregular migrants. Poor infrastructure and pervasive extortion by officials exacerbate these vulnerabilities (Ibeanu, 2007). Over the past two decades, the operations of global criminal organisations have expanded significantly in scope and complexity (Albanese, 2011).

Contemporary transnational crime no longer involves isolated or autonomous groups; rather, it operates through flexible networks that connect state and non-state actors in mutually beneficial arrangements (Zabyelina, 2009). This transformation has created major challenges for West African states, including Nigeria and Benin, where weak governance and porous borders provide fertile ground for illicit activities.

In Nigeria's case, international criminal actors originating from regions such as Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Western Europe have become embedded within local trafficking and smuggling systems (Picarelli, 2010). These groups typically operate through loosely organised networks that rely on financial and logistical links across countries like Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. Unlike informal cross-border traders who depend on small-scale survival economies, these transnational criminals function within sophisticated global supply chains designed to conceal financial flows and evade detection.

Evidence from the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA, 2012) highlights the scale of the problem. A joint ECOWAS–INTERPOL operation uncovered nearly 7.9 million kilograms of narcotics trafficked through Benin, confirming its role as a key regional hub. Vehicle smuggling and the illegal importation of commodities, particularly Nigerian petroleum products, remain widespread (Sasse & Carsten, 2017). Nigerian criminal groups also exploit Benin's seaports, taking advantage of administrative corruption to facilitate these operations (Bavier, 2013). Beyond narcotics and contraband, human trafficking and child labor have intensified across the continent, reflecting broader socioeconomic disparities and weak law enforcement mechanisms (Bhalla, 2018). These developments underscore the growing interconnectedness of global and regional criminal economies and highlight the urgent need for coordinated international action to address the structural enablers of organised crime in West Africa. Nigeria's relatively large and diversified economy has long served as a magnet for both licit and illicit cross-border activities within the West African subregion. The country's porous borders, coupled with weak enforcement mechanisms, have made it particularly vulnerable to drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and human trafficking networks that operate across neighboring states such as Benin (Iziengbe, 2017). Most official entry and exit points, as well as numerous informal crossings, are exploited by criminal actors to facilitate the movement of narcotics and contraband goods into and out of the country.

West Africa's geographical position between South America and Europe makes it a strategic transit corridor for the international cocaine trade (Ellis, 2009). Reports from

the United States Drug Enforcement Administration highlight the region's growing role in global narcotics flows, with Nigerian and Beninese ports frequently implicated in transshipment routes (Adetula, 2015). The political and socioeconomic conditions in many West African states, characterised by limited law enforcement capacity, corruption, and high unemployment, create a conducive environment for these criminal enterprises. Smuggling and trafficking operations are often tolerated or indirectly supported by corrupt officials and poorly motivated security personnel. In some instances, political elites have been implicated in facilitating or benefiting from these illicit networks, further weakening institutional integrity and public trust. Consequently, the persistence of transnational crime poses serious threats to peace, governance, and sustainable development in West Africa. The intersection of economic opportunity, governance failure, and criminal enterprise thus underscores the need for a coordinated regional response to border management and security reform.

A major implication of Nigeria's porous borders and evolving trafficking networks is the increasing sophistication of methods used by drug traffickers to evade law enforcement. Trafficking syndicates frequently employ intermediaries or unsuspecting individuals to transport narcotics across borders, making detection and prosecution more complex (Hamilton, 2016). These couriers, often children, women, or individuals in vulnerable socioeconomic conditions, are sometimes deceived about the nature of the goods they carry or coerced into participation through financial inducement or intimidation. In certain cases, influential members of society have also been implicated in facilitating or shielding such operations, thereby undermining enforcement efforts. The Nigerian government has occasionally attempted to address these challenges through border control policies. One notable example was the closure of Nigeria's land borders between 2019 and 2020. The policy was introduced partly to curb smuggling and protect domestic agricultural production, particularly the rice industry. While the closure contributed to increased local production in some sectors, it also generated significant economic disruption for traders and border communities (Adeniran & Adejumo, 2020). Critics argued that the policy undermined the principles of regional integration established under the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of goods and persons.

The reliance on human couriers persists largely due to structural weaknesses in law enforcement institutions and limited capacity for advanced surveillance. High levels of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment make many citizens susceptible to recruitment by trafficking networks. Similarly, systemic corruption and poor

governance enable traffickers to operate with relative impunity. The intersection of vulnerability and criminal exploitation thus reveals that combating drug trafficking in West Africa requires not only border control measures but also broader socioeconomic reforms aimed at addressing the root causes of participation in illicit activities.

Recent data indicate that smuggling through the Badagry–Seme axis remains extensive, accounting for roughly one-third of illicit trade between both countries in 2024 (Vanguard, 2025). Smuggled goods range from petroleum and frozen foods to vehicles and fast-moving consumer goods. Law enforcement occasionally reports major seizures; for example, the Federal Operations Unit intercepted a syndicate that was forging customs documents for over 600 vehicles valued at ₦501.4 million (Babalola, 2023). In human trafficking, joint operations such as Épervier II have rescued hundreds of victims trafficked across the Nigeria–Benin border (Interpol, 2019). Additional cases in 2024 involved the interception of trafficked persons en route to Burkina Faso and the rescue of victims by the Nigerian Navy (The Guardian, 2024; Daily Post, 2024). The northern Benin frontier has also become a hotspot for arms and militant infiltration due to its proximity to conflict-affected Sahelian states such as Niger and Burkina Faso (Global Initiative, 2024). These dynamics underscore the interconnectedness of insecurity across the region. While Nigeria and Benin have established multiple bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to enhance border cooperation, implementation remains inconsistent. Differences in tariff regimes, subsidy structures, and fuel prices continue to create incentives for smuggling. Structural poverty and lack of alternative livelihoods push local residents into the informal economy. Scholars note that enforcement remains largely reactive rather than preventive (Adenipekun, 2022). Institutional corruption further undermines enforcement. Border officials are often implicated in document forgery and the facilitation of illicit activities (Luqman et al., 2023). The absence of harmonised data systems or coordinated patrols allows criminal networks to exploit regulatory loopholes. Revenue losses from smuggling are substantial, estimated at over US\$3 billion annually for both countries combined. The human cost of trans-border crime is severe. Victims of trafficking, particularly minors, experience abuse, forced labor, and social marginalisation. Periodic border closures aimed at curbing smuggling also disrupt legitimate trade and kinship networks, threatening livelihoods in already fragile communities. These measures often exacerbate poverty and distrust toward state authorities. Moreover, persistent crime undermines the credibility of state institutions. When policy pronouncements fail to translate into tangible improvements, public confidence erodes. The challenge, therefore, lies in reconciling security imperatives with socioeconomic realities.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of trans-border crime along the Nigeria–Benin Republic border represents a complex interplay of historical, socio-economic, political, and institutional dynamics that have long defined interactions between both states. Over the years, the porous and poorly policed nature of these borders has made them susceptible to a multiplicity of illicit activities, including smuggling, human trafficking, arms proliferation, drug trade, currency counterfeiting, and the movement of stolen vehicles and contraband goods. The persistence of such crimes underscores the structural weaknesses of border management regimes in West Africa and reflects the deep-seated socio-economic interdependence between border communities, which often operate beyond the effective reach of central authorities. This conclusion synthesizes the study's central findings, draws implications for national and regional security, and outlines policy pathways to address trans-border crime along the Nigeria–Benin Republic frontiers.

Historically, the Nigeria–Benin border was an artificial colonial creation that divided ethnic and kinship groups such as the Yoruba, Egun, and Bariba across two distinct sovereignties. These communities maintained cultural and economic interactions despite formal state boundaries. Consequently, cross-border trade became a vital source of livelihood but also created a social space in which legal and illegal economic activities are deeply intertwined. The colonial and postcolonial state failed to integrate these peripheral regions effectively, leaving them marginalised from state development programs. This marginalisation provided fertile ground for informal economic networks that evolved into entrenched smuggling and trafficking networks. As such, trans-border criminality along the Nigeria–Benin corridor cannot be understood merely as a product of individual deviance but must be interpreted as a structural outcome of historical neglect, weak governance, and socio-economic inequality.

The economic dimension of trans-border crime is particularly profound. The Nigeria–Benin border is one of the busiest trade corridors in West Africa, linking Nigeria's commercial centres, such as Lagos, to Benin's Cotonou port and beyond. The heavy flow of goods, people, and vehicles facilitates both legitimate trade and criminal enterprise. Smuggling of petroleum products from Nigeria to Benin has been especially pervasive, driven by differences in fuel pricing regimes and subsidy policies. Similarly, Benin serves as a conduit for the importation of prohibited or high-tariff goods, such as used vehicles and rice, into Nigeria through informal routes.

These economic crimes, while often portrayed as illegal, are embedded in the survival strategies of border populations who rely on smuggling as a primary source of livelihood in the absence of viable alternatives. Therefore, trans-border crime cannot be effectively addressed without tackling the economic dislocations and policy inconsistencies that incentivise it.

Security implications are equally significant. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons across the Nigeria–Benin border has contributed to rising insecurity in the region. Banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence in northwestern Nigeria are indirectly sustained by the availability of illicit arms trafficked through Benin and other neighboring states. The inability of security forces to effectively monitor border routes, coupled with corruption among customs and immigration officials, has allowed criminal syndicates to operate with relative impunity. In recent years, transnational criminal networks have expanded their activities beyond smuggling to include drug trafficking and money laundering, linking local actors to global illicit economies. These developments blur the boundaries between local criminality and international organised crime, thereby escalating the security threat to both nations and the broader ECOWAS subregion.

Institutional weaknesses further exacerbate the situation. Both Nigeria and Benin suffer from limited border management capacity, overlapping jurisdictional mandates, and weak inter-agency coordination. Corruption among border officials undermines enforcement efforts, as bribes and informal payments enable smugglers to pass through checkpoints with minimal resistance. In addition, the vast and often unmarked nature of the border terrain makes effective surveillance nearly impossible. The deployment of security personnel is often concentrated in formal entry points, leaving hundreds of informal routes unmonitored. As a result, state control is effectively absent across large swaths of the borderland, which has become a semi-autonomous economic and social space governed by local power brokers, traders, and criminal intermediaries.

Regional cooperation mechanisms have made some progress but remain inadequate. Institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have promoted frameworks for regional security collaboration and border management, including the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment. However, the practical implementation of these instruments has been limited by weak political commitment, resource constraints, and conflicting national interests. The ECOWAS principle of free

movement, while economically beneficial, has inadvertently facilitated the movement of criminals and contraband. Consequently, effective responses to trans-border crime must reconcile the tension between regional integration and national security imperatives.

From a governance perspective, the persistence of cross-border crime exposes the inadequacy of conventional state-centric approaches to security. The state's monopoly over the legitimate use of force and regulation of trade is constantly undermined by non-state actors who control alternative networks of authority and commerce. Therefore, addressing trans-border criminality requires a paradigm shift from purely militarised, enforcement-driven strategies to inclusive, development-oriented approaches. Border communities must be integrated into the design and implementation of security policies. Community-based intelligence networks, participatory policing, and livelihood diversification programmes can strengthen social resilience against criminal recruitment and reduce dependence on illicit economies.

Another critical dimension is the need for harmonised economic and customs policies between Nigeria and Benin. The recurring conflicts arising from Nigeria's unilateral border closure, most notably in 2019, demonstrate the fragility of economic relations and the counterproductive nature of isolated national actions. Such closures, intended to curb smuggling, often inflict severe hardship on legitimate traders and border communities, while failing to dismantle entrenched criminal networks. Sustainable solutions must therefore focus on aligning tariff structures, simplifying customs procedures, and strengthening joint border patrols and intelligence-sharing mechanisms. The establishment of bilateral or joint border management commissions could provide a formal platform for sustained cooperation and policy coordination. Technological innovation also offers promising prospects. The use of satellite surveillance, biometric data systems, and digital customs management tools can enhance transparency and monitoring along the borders. However, technology must complement, not substitute, institutional reforms. Without addressing corruption, political interference, and institutional inertia, technological solutions alone will have a limited impact. Investment in training, logistics, and inter-agency collaboration is equally essential to ensure that border security personnel are equipped, motivated, and accountable.

In the final analysis, trans-border crime along the Nigeria–Benin Republic borderlines is both a symptom and a cause of broader governance and developmental deficits. It

thrives in the interstices of state weakness, economic disparity, and social exclusion. Effective management of this phenomenon demands a multidimensional strategy that integrates security, development, and governance reforms. Both countries must recognise that borderlands are not merely peripheries of national sovereignty but critical frontiers of integration, opportunity, and shared responsibility. Strengthening bilateral relations, deepening regional cooperation under ECOWAS, and investing in borderland development can transform these zones from spaces of insecurity into corridors of legitimate commerce and regional connectivity.

Ultimately, the fight against trans-border crime is inseparable from the quest for human security, inclusive growth, and regional stability. The Nigeria–Benin border, long characterised by informality and contestation, can evolve into a model of cooperative governance if underpinned by political will, institutional innovation, and community participation. By confronting the socio-economic roots of cross-border criminality, harmonising economic policies, and reinforcing collective security mechanisms, Nigeria and Benin can not only curtail illicit activities but also promote a new vision of border management that aligns national interests with regional aspirations. Such a transformation would signify not merely the containment of crime but the realisation of a more integrated, secure, and prosperous West African subregion.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: There is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Adenipekun, L. O. (2022). National security policies of Nigeria and Benin Republic as strategies for curbing cross-border crimes. *African Journal of Stability and Development*, 14(1–2), 37–72.
- Adetula, V. (2015). Nigeria's response to transnational organised crime and jihadist activities in West Africa (Discussion Paper X). Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Adeyinka, A. M. (2014). Trans-border movement and trading activities across Nigeria–Benin Republic border. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(1), 415–423.
- Afrika, J.-G., & Ajumbo, G. (2012). Informal cross-border trade in Africa: Implications and policy recommendations. *African Economic Brief*, 3(10).
- Akinyemi, A. (2021). Nigeria's border closure and its implications for trade and security in West Africa. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 36(3), 421–437.
- Albanese, J. (2011). *Transnational crime and the 21st century: Criminal enterprise, corruption and opportunity*. Oxford University Press.
- Aluko, O. (1977). *The foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. George Allen & Unwin.
- Anderson, J., & O'Dowd, L. (1999). Borders, border regions and territoriality: Contradictory meanings, changing significance. *Regional Studies*, 33(7), 593–604. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343409950078648>
- Asiwaju, A. I. (1985). *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic relations across Africa's international boundaries 1884–1984*. Hurst.
- Asiwaju, A. I. (2001). *African boundaries: Barriers, conduits and opportunities*. Routledge.
- Bavier, J. (2013). Insight: Nigerian pirate gangs extend reach off West Africa. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com>
- Bhalla, N. (2018, July 31). Africa's human trafficking is flourishing and South Africa is on its route. BusinessLive. <https://www.businesslive.co.za>
- Boister, N. (2003). Transnational criminal law. *European Journal of International Law*, 14, 953–977.

- Bouët, A., & Roy, D. (2012). Trade protection and tax evasion: Evidence from Kenya, Mauritius, and Nigeria. *Journal of International Trade & Economic Development*, 21(2), 287–320.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner.
- Danelo, D. J. (2008). *The border: Exploring the U.S.–Mexico divide*. Stackpole Books.
- Dottridge, M. (2002). *Trafficking in children in West and Central Africa*. UNICEF/International Labour Organisation.
- Ebaye, S., & Okon, B. (2021). Porous borders and weapons proliferation: A threat to Nigeria's security. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 9(12), 56–66.
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). (2012). *ECOWAS–INTERPOL operation Atakora: Regional drug trafficking enforcement results*.
- Ellis, S. (2009). West Africa's international drug trade. *African Affairs*, 108(431), 171–196.
- Flynn, D. (1997). We are the border: Identity, exchange and the state along the Benin–Nigeria border. *American Ethnologist*, 24(2), 311–330.
- Gateway Nigerian. (2011). *News smuggling and the Nigerian economy*. <https://www.gatewaynigeriatv/relocate/category/nigerianews>
- GIABA (Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa) (2012) 2012 Annual Report. <http://giaba.org/reports/annual/reports.html>, accessed 1 November 2013.
- Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime. (2014). *Illicit trafficking and instability in Mali: Past, present and future*. GITOC.
- Golub, S. S. (2012). Entrepôt trade and smuggling in West Africa: Benin, Togo and Nigeria. *The World Economy*, 35(9), 1139–1161.
- Hashim, Y., & Meagher, K. (1999). *Cross-border trade and the parallel currency market: Trade and finance in the context of structural adjustment*. Nordic Africa Institute.

- Hoffmann, L., & Melly, P. (2015). Nigeria's booming borders: The drivers and consequences of unrecorded trade. Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Howard, A. M. (2010). Actors, places, regions and global forces: An essay on the spatial history of Africa since 1700. In U. Engel & P. Nugent (Eds.), *Respacing Africa* (pp. xx–xx). Brill.
- Ibeanu, O. (2007). Beyond declarations: Law enforcement officials and ECOWAS protocols on free movement of persons and goods in West Africa. CLEEN Foundation.
- International Organisation for Migration. (2011). Review of research and data on human trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa. IOM.
- Interpol. (2019). Human trafficking: Hundreds rescued in West Africa. <https://www.interpol.int>
- Iziengbe, P. O. (2017). The economy of international prostitution in Benin and the place of the Purray boys (IFRA-Nigeria Working Paper No. 34).
- Lanre, A., & Oluyemi, F. (2012). The political and security implications of cross-border migration between Nigeria and her Francophone neighbours. *International Journal of Social Science*, 1(3), 6–7.
- LARES. (2005). Le trafic illicite des produits pétroliers entre le Bénin et le Nigeria: Vice ou vertu pour l'économie béninoise? LARES.
- Luqman, S. A. K. A., Bakare, A. R., Nwaorgu, H. C., & Oladejo, S. A. (2023). Transborder crimes and the challenges of regional integration in West Africa: Insights from the Nigeria–Benin Republic borders. *Bulletin of Carol National Defence University*, 12(1), 62–79.
- Meagher, K. (2003). A back door to globalisation? Structural adjustment, globalisation and transborder trade in West Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, 30(95), 57–75.
- Medina, L., & Schneider, F. (2018). Shadow economies around the world: What did we learn over the last 20 years? IMF Working Paper.
- Newman, D. (2006). The lines that continue to separate us: Borders in our 'borderless' world. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30(2), 143–161.

- Nugent, P., & Asiwaju, A. I. (1996). Introduction: The paradox of African boundaries. In P. Nugent & A. I. Asiwaju (Eds.), *African boundaries: Barriers, conduits and opportunities*. Pinter.
- Okoro, C. (2003, August 20). Politics of cross-border crimes. *Daily Champion*.
- Okunola, R., & Agbiboa, D. (2019). The criminalisation of informal cross-border trade in West Africa. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 57(4), 515–537. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X19000424>
- Omede, A. J. (2006). Nigeria's relations with her neighbours. *Studia Tribes Tribals*, 4(1), 7–17.
- Onuoha, F., & Ezirim, G. (2013). Terrorism and transnational organised crime in West Africa. Al Jazeera Centre for Studies.
- Osumah, O. (2020). Security governance and Nigeria's border management: Trends and challenges. *African Security Review*, 29(2), 126–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2020.1749362>
- Prosper, A. (2006). Cross-border criminal activities in West Africa: Options for effective responses (KA IPTC Paper No. 12).
- Ramutsindela, M. (1999). African boundaries and their interpreters. *Geopolitics*, 4(2), 180–198.
- Relwende, S. W. (2012). The challenges of transnational human trafficking in West Africa. *African Studies Quarterly*, 13(1–2), 98.
- Sasse, A., & Carsten, P. (2017). Nigeria recession deals blow to smuggling hub Benin. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com>
- Small Arms Survey. (2018). Estimating global civilian-held firearms numbers. Small Arms Survey.
- Sossou-Agbo, A. (2011). Dynamique territoriale à la frontière bénino-nigériane: Rôle des marchés du sud-est. Paper presented at Les frontières mobiles Conference, Geneva.
- UN Women. (2024). Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat trafficking in persons in Africa. UN Women
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2011). Estimating illicit financial flows resulting from drug trafficking and other transnational crimes. UNODC.

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2021). Drug trafficking trends in West Africa. UNODC.
- West Africa Network for Peacebuilding. (2013). Is the African giant drowning but not waving? Exploring a coordinated approach to Nigerian security challenges.
- World Bank. (2017). World development indicators. <https://data.worldbank.org>
- Wrigley-Asante, C. (2013). Survival or escaping poverty? The perspectives of poverty and well-being among Ghanaian women in cross-border trading. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 22(3), 320–334.

IJMGs

Internal Labour Migration and Social Integration in Nigeria's Industrial Zones: A Sociological Analysis¹

Hope Imuetinyan Iguodala-Cole
Department of Sociology
Bingham University, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Email: hopecole420@gmail.com

Abstract

Internal migration has increased due to Nigeria's urban-industrial economic boom, especially from rural villages to urban industrial states such as Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano. These internal migrants, many of whom are young people from underprivileged backgrounds, frequently work in manufacturing industries with precarious working conditions without social protections. This study's main goal is to examine how internal labour migration influences Nigeria's industrial employment trends and how migrant workers' access to jobs and social status are shaped by factors such as gender, ethnicity, social class, and place of origin. A mixed-methods approach was used, including focus groups in Kano (Bompai Industrial Estate), Nnewi (Anambra State), and the Lagos-Ogun Industrial Corridor, purposively selected as key industrial hubs attracting internal labour migrants for comparative analysis of migration and social integration, alongside qualitative interviews with 40 migrant factory workers and supervisors, and quantitative summaries supporting demographic profiling and patterns of employment. Secondary data on labour policies, employment trends, and migrant flows were analysed to support this. The results show that migrant workers undergo social marginalisation based on ethnic and geographical variations and typically face exploitative labour conditions, including irregular hours, low pay, and no formal contracts. However, many employees form unofficial support networks to address these difficulties. The study concludes that an increase in labour inequality in Nigeria's industrial economy is a result of internal migration. It suggests better labour laws, inclusive social policies, and organised integration initiatives to safeguard and empower internal migrants in the industrial workforce.

Keywords: Employment inequality, Industrial zones, internal migration, Labour process theory, Social integration

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/37nz-nn37>

Migration interne de travail et intégration sociale dans les zones industrielles du Nigéria : une analyse sociologique

Résumé

La migration interne s'est intensifiée en raison du boom économique industriel urbain au Nigéria, notamment des zones rurales vers des centres industriels urbains tels que Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt et Kano. Ces migrants internes, dont beaucoup sont de jeunes issus de milieux défavorisés, travaillent fréquemment dans les industries manufacturières dans des conditions précaires, sans protection sociale. L'objectif principal de cette étude est d'examiner l'influence de la migration interne de travail sur les dynamiques de l'emploi industriel au Nigéria, ainsi que la manière dont l'accès à l'emploi et le statut social des travailleurs migrants sont façonnés par des facteurs tels que le genre, l'ethnicité, la classe sociale et le lieu d'origine. L'étude adopte une approche mixte combinant des méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives. Elle s'appuie sur des discussions de groupe organisées à Kano (zone industrielle de Bompai), à Nnewi (État d'Anambra) et dans le corridor industriel Lagos-Ogun, sélectionnés de manière raisonnée comme principaux pôles industriels attirant les migrants internes, afin de permettre une analyse comparative des processus de migration et d'intégration sociale. Elle intègre également des entretiens qualitatifs avec 40 ouvriers migrants et superviseurs d'usine, ainsi que des analyses quantitatives permettant d'établir des profils démographiques et d'identifier les tendances de l'emploi. Des données secondaires relatives aux politiques du travail, aux tendances de l'emploi et aux flux migratoires ont été mobilisées pour compléter l'analyse. Les résultats montrent que les travailleurs migrants font l'objet de marginalisation sociale fondée sur des différences ethniques et géographiques, et qu'ils sont généralement confrontés à des conditions de travail exploitantes, notamment des horaires irréguliers, des rémunérations faibles et l'absence de contrats formels. Toutefois, nombre d'entre eux développent des réseaux de solidarité informels pour faire face à ces difficultés. L'étude conclut que l'accroissement des inégalités du travail dans l'économie industrielle nigériane est étroitement lié à la migration interne. Elle recommande le renforcement de la législation du travail, la mise en œuvre de politiques sociales inclusives et le développement d'initiatives structurées d'intégration afin de protéger et d'autonomiser les travailleurs migrants dans le secteur industriel.

Mots-clés : Inégalités d'emploi, zones industrielles, migration interne, théorie du procès de travail, intégration sociale.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of industrial zones in major urban centres such as Lagos, Ogun, and Aba has accelerated rural–urban migration in Nigeria. Studies indicate that about 60% of internal migrants in the country reside in urban areas, reflecting the strong pull of industrial and commercial hubs that offer greater employment opportunities and infrastructure (IOM, 2014; World Bank, 2021). Many of these migrants are young people from rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas who move in search of improved livelihoods and better living conditions. However, they often find employment in industrial sectors characterised by precarious work and limited labour protections.

Although internal migration is commonly perceived as a pathway to upward mobility, it frequently exposes migrants to vulnerability and social isolation. Low wages, long working hours, lack of formal contracts, and poor occupational safety conditions remain common features of such precarious employment. They also encounter social obstacles to integration, such as marginalisation in urban government procedures, poor housing conditions, restricted access to basic services, and prejudice based on race and culture.

With a focus on how gender, ethnicity, class, and regional background influence access to employment and urban inclusion, this study examines the effects of internal labour migration on Nigeria's industrial workforce. Marxist labour process theory (Braverman, 1974; Burawoy, 1979), which frames the analysis, criticizes the capitalist labour system for encouraging exploitation, particularly in emerging nations that rely significantly on flexible, low-wage labour. This study contributes to broader conversations on internal migration, labour patterns, and social cohesion in urban Africa by focusing on three important industrial centres: Lagos (Ogun-Osun Industrial Corridor), Nnewi (Anambra State), and Kano (Bompai Industrial Estate).

Nigeria's major industrial cities continue to attract an increasing number of internal migrants, particularly young people from impoverished rural communities seeking better job prospects. However, the employment conditions awaiting them in urban industrial zones are often far from ideal. Many of these workers find themselves in insecure, low-paid, and hazardous jobs in the informal sector, without legal protections or employment benefits. In the Ogun Industrial Corridor, for example, internal migrants are regularly engaged in physically demanding roles with limited safety

training or proper equipment, earning wages that are often below the statutory minimum.

In addition to economic vulnerability, these migrants struggle with integrating into the urban social fabric. Migrants, especially those who belong to minority ethnic groups or originate from distant rural areas, face barriers such as social discrimination, poor access to housing and public services, and exclusion from community life. In industrial hubs like Bompai in Kano and Nnewi in Anambra State, such migrants often experience cultural isolation and limited opportunities for upward mobility.

Although Nigeria has existing labour regulations and urban policies intended to safeguard workers and promote inclusive development, weak implementation allows exploitation and marginalisation to persist. Furthermore, academic research on how internal migration influences industrial labour dynamics and worsens urban inequality remains limited.

This study aims to bridge that gap by exploring how internal labour migration influences patterns of employment and social integration in Nigeria's industrial centres, it critically examines the structures that perpetuate labour exploitation and social exclusion in these settings.

OBJECTIVES

The study's main goal is to examine how internal labour migration influences Nigeria's industrial employment trends and how migrant workers' access to jobs and social status are shaped by factors such as gender, ethnicity, social class, and place of origin. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the nature and conditions of employment faced by internal migrant workers in selected industrial zones in Nigeria.
2. Analyse how socio-demographic factors such as ethnicity, gender, and place of origin influence migrant workers' access to industrial employment and workplace experiences.
3. Investigate the social integration challenges faced by internal migrant workers in their host urban communities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to explore the relationship between internal labour migration and industrial employment patterns in Nigeria. By integrating focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs), the study captures both the depth of lived experiences and the broader structural dynamics that influence migrant labour in industrial zones. This approach enhances the validity and comprehensiveness of the findings, especially when examining the intersection of social identity, employment conditions, and spatial mobility.

Study Areas

Three major industrial hubs were purposively selected due to their high concentration of internal migrant workers and manufacturing activities, viz:

- Bompai Industrial Estate, Kano State
- Nnewi Industrial Cluster, Anambra State
- Ogun-Lagos Industrial Corridor (Agbara, Ota, and Ikeja axis)

These sites represent diverse regional, ethnic, and industrial contexts, providing a comprehensive picture of internal labour migration patterns across Nigeria.

Sampling and Participants

The study employed a multi-stage purposive sampling strategy. First, three states with major industrial hubs, which are Kano (Bompai Industrial Estate), Nnewi (Anambra State), and the Lagos-Ogun Industrial Corridor, were purposively selected due to their high concentration of internal migrant workers. Within these locations, participants were purposively chosen based on specific inclusion criteria, including being internal migrants employed in factories and having resided in the study area for at least six months. A total of forty (40) participants were selected, comprising thirty (30) migrant workers (75% of the sample) and ten (10) supervisors, drawn from key manufacturing sectors such as plastics, textiles, automotive parts, and food processing. The sample included both male and female workers across diverse age groups and ethnic backgrounds. Data were collected through six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted across the three industrial zones, in which participants shared detailed accounts of their migration experiences, job conditions, employment instability, and challenges related to social integration.

The remaining ten (10) individuals, representing 25% of the sample, were line managers or factory supervisors. Through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), these

people offered organisational perspectives on hiring procedures, labour management, job conditions, and migrant worker integration in manufacturing environments. Their assistance was crucial in situating the workers' experiences within broader structural and institutional frameworks. A thorough investigation of the relationship between internal labour migration, precarious work, and social integration in Nigerian industrial environments was made possible by the purposeful selection of participants.

DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 10-line managers who participated. These interviews focused on employment history, working conditions, recruitment pathways, housing, social networks, experiences of discrimination, and coping strategies. Interviews were conducted in English and local pidgin languages (with translation where necessary) and audio-recorded with participants' consent.

Focus Group Discussions

Six focus group discussions (two in each location) were conducted with groups of five (5) migrant workers from different factories. FGDs enabled participants to share collective experiences, reflect on social integration, and discuss coping mechanisms within peer networks. Group discussions helped reveal patterns not always visible in individual interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs were transcribed and analysed thematically using NVivo software. Coding categories were developed based on the research objectives and emerging themes from the data (e.g., exploitation, marginalisation, gendered experiences, and informal networks). Quantitative summaries were used to support demographic profiling and patterns of employment characteristics.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Bingham University Institutional Review Board (Approval No: BHU/ERC/25/H002). Oral informed consent was obtained from all participants after the study aims, confidentiality assurances, and voluntary participation were explained. Pseudonyms were used, and all records were securely stored. In addition, participants emphasised the need to keep their workplace identities undisclosed due to fear of victimisation or job loss. As a result, the names of the factories have been withheld and instead labeled alphabetically (Factory A to Z) across

the three industrial zones to protect the identities of both workers and organisations involved in the study.

RESULTS

Qualitative Analysis

Precarious Working Conditions and Exploitation

A dominant theme that emerged from interviews and focus group discussions was the precarity of employment faced by internal migrants in industrial zones. Most workers described long working hours, low wages, and the absence of formal contracts as the basic challenges they faced. Many were paid on a daily or weekly basis, with no access to job security, health insurance, or pension benefits. Female workers in Kano's textile sector, for example, described earning between ₦10,000–₦18,000 per month, far below the national minimum wage.

Respondents also recounted a widespread avoidance of labour laws by employers. One male worker from factory "C" in Agbara, Ogun State, noted:

"The factory doesn't give us anything like contract. If you complain or ask questions, they will just tell you not to come tomorrow."

A line manager interviewed from factory "A" during a Key Informant Interview (KII), who admitted, further corroborated this perception:

"To be honest, many of these workers are taken on as casuals. The company prefers it that way because it reduces overhead costs and avoids union issues. We just need people who can deliver, and if they don't, they are easily replaced."

These patterns reflect Marxist Labour Process Theory's assertion that employers in capitalist systems seek to extract maximum labour at minimal cost, often by weakening workers' rights and suppressing collective bargaining.

Gendered Labour and Discrimination

Gender emerged as a powerful axis of inequality. Female workers reported experiences of sexual harassment, unequal pay, and being assigned to more physically demanding or monotonous roles without additional compensation. In one Lagos-based food-processing factory, women complained that they were routinely asked to clean equipment after hours, unpaid.

Amina, a 25-year-old from Bauchi working in Kano, recounted:

“He (the supervisor) used to touch me and say if I want to keep my job, I must not shout. I was afraid to talk.”

Women also noted that maternity-related absences often led to job loss, as factories preferred “always available” workers. This pattern confirms existing literature on gendered precarity in industrial employment settings in the Global South.

Three supervisors from Factory C, B and Factory G, during Key Informant Interviews, openly acknowledged the systemic bias faced by female workers. One of them from factory B highlighted the gendered power dynamics in the workplace, observing:

“Honestly, some of the boys in charge take advantage because they know the women won’t speak up. It’s a sensitive issue, but it happens more than management wants to admit.”

Another from factory C noted:

“It’s not that we don’t want to support female workers, but from the company’s view, someone who might go on maternity leave or request time off regularly is seen as less reliable. That’s just how the system works.”

In addition, a different supervisor from factory G recounted:

“When we recruit, we consider who can be present all the time. Women are often seen as having more ‘interruptions,’ so they’re usually not the first choice for certain roles.”

These statements collectively reveal how ingrained institutional practices, discriminatory hiring standards, and imbalanced power relations contribute to the marginalisation of female workers. They also reflect broader structural and cultural barriers in Nigeria’s industrial sector, where inadequate protection and prevailing social norms often leave women vulnerable to exploitation and exclusion.

Social Marginalisation and Ethnic Discrimination

Social integration challenges were prevalent, especially for migrants from the North-East and South-East. Many respondents described discriminatory practices in housing, limited access to public services, and language-based exclusion. In Nnewi, several Hausa workers revealed they were frequently overcharged for rent and excluded from community gatherings as well as sometimes stereotyped or labelled as bandits.

An Igbo worker in Kano stated:

“They don't trust us here. Even to rent house, they ask you; which village you come from.”

These narratives highlight how ethnic and regional identities shape the migrant experience, contributing to marginalisation in both social and economic spheres.

Informal Support Networks

Despite systemic challenges, many workers had developed coping strategies and informal support systems. These included ethnic-based housing clusters, informal savings groups (ajo or esusu), and shared childcare arrangements. These networks provided emotional, financial, and social support, enabling migrants to navigate life in urban-industrial settings.

One male respondent in Nnewi noted:

“We all from Ebonyi are in the same compound. If one person get problem, others go help. We be like family.”

This point to the resilience of migrant communities and the role of kinship and social capital in mitigating the harshness of industrial labour environments.

Quantitative Summaries

The quantitative component of the study primarily provided demographic profiling and revealed employment patterns across the three locations. Below is a presentation of the key findings:

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Participants (N = 40)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	24	60%
	Female	16	40%
Age Group	18–25	12	30%
	26–35	20	50%
	36 and above	8	20%
Region of Origin	North-East	10	25%
	South-East	15	37.5%
	North-West	5	12.5%
	South-South	6	15%
	North-Central	4	10%

Educational Attainment	Primary	6	15%
	Secondary	25	62.5%
	Tertiary	9	22.5%
Marital Status	Single	18	45%
	Married	22	55%

Source: Field survey (2025)

The demographic profile of the participants reveals important insights about the composition of internal migrant workers in Nigeria's industrial zones. Firstly, the workforce is predominantly male, accounting for 60%, while females make up a significant 40%, indicating active female participation despite a slight male majority. Moreover, the age distribution shows that most migrants are young adults, with 50% falling within the 26-35-year age group and 30% between 18 and 25 years, reflecting early entry into the labour market and the productive prime of the working population. Furthermore, the regional origins of the migrants are concentrated primarily in the South-East (37.5%) and North-East (25%), highlighting the influence of regional disparities and insecurity in driving migration from underdeveloped areas. In addition, educational attainment among migrants is relatively low, as 62.5% possess only secondary education, while less than a quarter have tertiary qualifications, highlighting their semi-skilled or low-skilled status and vulnerability in the labour market. Finally, the marital status data reveals that a slight majority (55%) are married, suggesting that many migrants bear family responsibilities alongside their work, which may compound their economic pressures.

Table 2

Patterns of Employment (N = 40)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Employment Type	Daily-paid (informal)	28	70%
	Contractual	8	20%
	Permanent	4	10%
Working Hours per Day	8–10 hours	10	25%
	10–12 hours	22	55%
	Above 12 hours	8	20%
Monthly Income Range	₦10,000–₦15,000	14	35%
	₦15,001–₦25,000	20	50%
	₦25,001 and above	6	15%
Access to Benefits	Yes	5	12.5%
	No	35	87.5%

Source: Field survey (2025)

The data in the table above further illustrates the precarious conditions these migrants face. Significantly, 70% of respondents are engaged in daily-paid informal work, lacking permanent contracts or job security, which confirms widespread employment instability. Correspondingly, working hours are excessively long: 55% work between 10 and 12 hours daily, and 20% exceed 12 hours, far surpassing standard labour regulations and contributing to physical exhaustion and poor work-life balance. Additionally, the reported earnings are low: half of workers earn between ₦15,001 and ₦25,000 monthly, and 35% earn less than ₦15,000, amounts that fall below a livable wage given the current economic conditions. Moreover, access to social benefits is almost nonexistent, as only 12.5% have any form of employment benefits, such as health insurance or a pension, reflecting significant regulatory shortcomings and the informal nature of most workplaces.

Consequently, the quantitative data complements the qualitative findings by highlighting a young, largely semi-educated workforce employed under insecure and exploitative conditions. Therefore, these findings align with Marxist Labour Process Theory, demonstrating how capitalist production in developing contexts commodifies labour, perpetuates insecurity, and limits workers' rights to maximise employer profits. Together, the demographic and employment patterns provide a comprehensive picture of the vulnerabilities faced by internal migrants in Nigeria's industrial labour market.

DISCUSSION

The study provides important insights into the lived experiences of internal migrant workers in Nigeria's industrial zones, directly addressing the research objectives. Demographic analysis revealed that most internal migrants are young adults aged 18–35, possess secondary-level education, and often originate from economically disadvantaged areas, particularly in the North-East and South-East (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). These patterns align with Objective 1, which aimed to analyse the characteristics of internal migrant workers, and underscore that geographical disparities and economic deprivation are key drivers of internal migration, supporting prior studies on socio-economic inequalities in Nigeria (Abdulquadri et al., 2017). KII responses validated these findings, highlighting that local authorities and industry supervisors recognise the persistent rural-urban disparities that push young people into industrial employment.

The study further shows that 70% of migrants work in informal, daily-paid positions with limited contracts, social protection, or job security, often enduring long hours and

inadequate wages. Female migrants were especially vulnerable, facing sexual harassment, wage inequities, and disproportionate workloads (Ogunlela, 2018; Oduwole & Olutayo, 2019; Oyelade, 2018, 2020). These observations align with Objective 2, which examined employment circumstances and socio-demographic factors influencing access to work. KII insights reinforced these patterns, with supervisors noting structural labour practices that maintain low-cost, flexible labour, particularly affecting young women. This supports Standing's (2011) "precariat" concept, illustrating how internal migration can perpetuate exploitative labor dynamics for marginalised groups.

Social integration challenges also emerged prominently. Migrants, particularly from Hausa and Igbo backgrounds, experienced discrimination in housing, access to public services, and participation in community activities (Uche & Nwachukwu, 2020a, 2020b). Objective 3, which examined barriers to social integration, is addressed by these findings, which show how ethnic and regional identities exacerbate vulnerability. KIIs highlighted the role of informal support networks, such as kinship-based housing clusters and community savings programs, which act as critical resilience mechanisms. These observations indicate that migrants actively negotiate marginalisation through social capital (Afolayan, 2011).

Institutional and policy gaps were another major theme. Weak enforcement of labour laws and resistance to unionisation perpetuated hazardous work conditions (Iwayemi & Fadayomi, 2020). These findings relate to Objective 4, demonstrating that regulatory failures amplify exploitation and constrain the prospects for secure and inclusive workplaces. KII perspectives from labor officers confirmed that policy enforcement is inconsistent and that systemic neglect reinforces informal, precarious employment arrangements.

Finally, the findings illustrate that internal labour mobility in Nigeria influences both employment trends and social integration, while capitalist labour structures, intersecting with socio-cultural and ethnic hierarchies, intensify vulnerabilities. Despite these challenges, migrants demonstrate resilience through informal networks, family ties, and community support. The study reinforces policy recommendations for stronger enforcement of labor laws, inclusive urban planning, and community-based programs to protect the rights and dignity of internal migrant workers.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that internal labour migration in Nigeria reinforces labour exploitation and social exclusion, yet migrant workers persist through informal networks in the absence of institutional protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen Institutional Capacity for Labor Regulation:**

The government should prioritise funding and capacity-building for labour inspection and regulatory agencies, ensuring they have the human, technical, and logistical resources to enforce compliance with minimum wage laws, occupational safety standards, and contractual obligations. This includes regular factory audits, real-time reporting mechanisms, and digital monitoring systems to track violations. Policies should also mandate transparency in wage payments and enforce penalties for non-compliance. Such interventions would reduce precarious employment, protect vulnerable migrant workers, and promote equitable labor practices across industrial zones.

2. **Integrate Inclusive Urban Development and Social Equity Measures:**

Urban planning and development strategies should embed inclusive housing policies, affordable rental schemes, and anti-discrimination measures to improve the social integration of internal migrants. Municipal authorities could implement community-led zoning regulations that ensure access to safe, affordable housing near industrial areas, paired with awareness campaigns that foster intercultural understanding and reduce ethnic or regional discrimination. Through linking housing, transport, and public service provision, policymakers can address structural barriers that exacerbate social isolation and marginalisation of migrant workers.

3. **Mobilise NGOs, Labor Unions, and Community Networks for Migrant Empowerment:**

Civil society organisations, labour unions, and NGOs should facilitate structured migrant support programs that combine legal aid, workplace education, and financial literacy training. Initiatives could include workshops on labour rights, negotiation skills, reporting mechanisms for harassment or exploitation, and community savings schemes to build economic resilience. Also, collaborative platforms between unions, employers, and migrant associations would enable advocacy for policy reforms,

giving migrants a voice in decision-making processes that affect their welfare and employment conditions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no financial or personal ties that could have affected the work described in this study. Therefore, the author declares no conflict of interest.

IJMG

REFERENCES

- Abdulquadri, A. F., Omotesho, O. A., & Tijani, A. A. (2017). Gendered patterns in rural-urban labour migration and household welfare in Nigeria. *African Journal of Economic Policy*, 24(2), 77–92.
- Abubakar, M. (2018). Internal migration and urban conflict in Nigeria: Evidence from Jos and Lagos. *Journal of African Urban Studies*, 3(1), 12–30.
- Adepoju, A. (2005). Patterns of migration in West Africa. In T. Manuh (Ed.), *At home in the world? International migration and development in contemporary Ghana and West Africa* (pp. 24–54). Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Adepoju, A. (2021). Migration in West Africa: Patterns, issues, and challenges. *African Studies Review*, 64(3), 528–545. <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2021.40>
- Adewale, J. G. (2005). Socio-economic factors associated with urban-rural migration in Nigeria: A case study of Oyo State. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 17(1), 13–17.
- Adewumi, F., & Adenugba, A. (2010). *The state of workers' rights in Nigeria: An examination of the banking, oil and gas and telecommunication sectors*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Afolayan, A. A. (2011). Migration and social disruption in Nigeria. In A. Adepoju (Ed.), *International migration within, to and from Africa in a globalised world* (pp. 163–183). Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Ajaero, C. K., & Onokala, P. C. (2013). The effects of rural-urban migration on rural communities of Southeastern Nigeria. *International Journal of Population Research*, 2013, Article 610193. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2013/610193>
- Ajayi, A., & Akpan, T. (2016). Language barriers and migrants' access to public services in urban Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, 6(2), 55–65.
- Babatunde, J. M., & Oyatoye, E. O. (2015). Urban insecurity and the dilemma of migrant youths in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Problems*, 18(2), 45–62.
- Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and monopoly capital: The degradation of work in the twentieth century*. Monthly Review Press.

- Burawoy, M. (1979). *Manufacturing consent: Changes in the labor process under monopoly capitalism*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ezeh, A., Chepnego-Langat, G., & Toure, F. (2016). Urban governance and the marginalisation of migrants in African cities. *Cities Alliance Working Paper Series*, 4(1), 1–28.
- International Organisation for Migration. (2020). *Migration in Nigeria: A country profile 2020*. <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-nigeria-country-profile-2020>
- Iwayemi, A., & Fadayomi, T. O. (2020). Labour standards enforcement and the informal economy in Nigeria. *ILO Country Report Series*, 2(5), 1–26.
- Oduwole, T. A., & Olutayo, A. O. (2019). The political economy of precarious work in Nigeria's urban informal sector. *Review of African Political Economy*, 46(159), 342–359.
- Ogunlela, Y. I. (2018). Informal employment in Nigeria's urban manufacturing sector: Evidence from firm-level data. *Journal of African Development Studies*, 10(2), 45–59.
- Ogunyemi, A., & Fabiyi, O. (2019). Ethnic segregation and residential exclusion in Nigerian cities: A study of Ibadan and Kaduna. *Urban Studies*, 56(5), 1093–1111.
- Olajide, O. (2015). Rural–urban migration and urban informal sector development in Nigeria. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 31(4), 419–435.
- Olanrewaju, F. O., Omiyefa, M. O., & Olowookere, E. I. (2021). Internal migration and urban social integration in Nigeria: Evidence from Lagos metropolis. *Journal of Urban Studies and Public Administration*, 4(2), 12–25.
- Olujide, M. G., & Bello, R. S. (2019). Precarious employment and the informal labour market in Nigeria: Implications for decent work agenda. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 17(1), 58–73.
- Oyelade, R. (2018). Women on the move: Gender dimensions of internal labour migration in Nigeria. *African Journal of Gender and Development*, 6(1), 55–71.

- Oyelade, R. (2020). Urban labour, gender, and social protection: Insights from female migrant workers in Southwestern Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Gender Studies*, 8(1), 74–88.
- Oyeniyi, B. A. (2013). Internal migration in Nigeria: A positive contribution to human development. UNDP Human Development Report Office.
- Standing, G. (2011). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Uche, I., & Nwachukwu, I. (2020a). Migration, social discrimination and access to services in urban Nigeria. *African Journal of Social Issues*, 23(1), 85–103.
- Uche, O. A., & Nwachukwu, J. (2020b). Internal migration, urbanisation and housing stress in Nigeria: Challenges and policy implications. *African Population Studies*, 34(1), 4814–4825.
- World Bank. (2021). *Urbanisation and migration in Nigeria: Building inclusive and resilient cities*. World Bank Group.

An Analysis of Stakeholders' Human Security Interventions in Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Guma and Makurdi Local Government Areas in Benue State, Nigeria¹

Samson Ojonugwa Adegbe¹ & Simeon Onuche Isah²

¹Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Social Sciences
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

&

²Department of Political Science, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Kogi State College of
Education, Ankpa, Kogi State.

Corresponding Author's Email: adesamugwa@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores stakeholders' human security interventions in internally displaced persons' camps in selected local government areas of Benue State. It relies on a descriptive survey utilising a concurrent triangulation design. The study population consisted of 72,993 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from seven IDP camps in the Makurdi and Guma LGAs, Benue State, Nigeria, who were purposively selected. A sample of 400 IDPs was selected using the Taro Yamane formula. A quota sampling technique was used to determine the number of questionnaires distributed per IDP camp. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, yielding a 95.5% response rate with 382 questionnaires returned; focus group discussions conducted in seven IDP camps; semi-structured in-depth interviews with seven IDP leaders and seven key informants; and unstructured personal observations. Secondary data was also sourced from journals, government records, and scholarly websites. Thematic and content analysis were used for qualitative data, while descriptive statistics and SPSS software were used for quantitative data analysis. The study discovers that major stakeholders providing human security interventions in IDP camps in Benue are international organisations, NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, religious organisations, and self-help. At the same time, the majority of respondents disagree with the government's efforts. The pattern of intervention is the maintenance of law and the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. The challenges are paucity of funds, lack of capacity and experts, sustainability issues and population explosion. The study concludes that stakeholder interventions in the IDP camps are largely focused on short-term humanitarian assistance, with limited emphasis on long-term human security strategies that prioritise IDP empowerment and participation to ensure lasting solutions, and recommends that the government should develop context-specific strategies to address human security challenges, establish a centralised coordination mechanism for stakeholders and establish transparent and accountable mechanisms for managing resources.

Keywords: Human Security, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Stakeholder Intervention, Displacement Governance, and Benue State, Nigeria

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/f7s4-1571>

Analyse des interventions des parties prenantes en matière de sécurité humaine dans les camps de personnes déplacées internes dans les zones de gouvernement local de Guma et Makurdi, État de Benue, Nigéria

Résumé

Cette étude examine les interventions des parties prenantes en matière de sécurité humaine dans les camps de personnes déplacées internes (PDI) situés dans certaines zones de gouvernement local de l'État de Benue. Elle s'appuie sur une enquête descriptive utilisant un dispositif de triangulation concomitante. La population de l'étude était composée de 72 993 PDI provenant de sept camps situés dans les zones de gouvernement local de Makurdi et de Guma, dans l'État de Benue, au Nigéria, sélectionnés de manière raisonnée. Un échantillon de 400 PDI a été déterminé à l'aide de la formule de Taro Yamane. Une technique d'échantillonnage par quotas a été utilisée pour répartir le nombre de questionnaires administrés par camp de PDI. Les données ont été collectées au moyen d'un questionnaire structuré, avec un taux de réponse de 95,5 %, soit 382 questionnaires retournés. Elles ont également été complétées par des discussions de groupe (focus groups) menées dans sept camps de PDI, des entretiens approfondis semi-directifs réalisés auprès de sept leaders de PDI et de sept informateurs clés, ainsi que par des observations personnelles non structurées. Des données secondaires ont également été recueillies à partir de revues scientifiques, de documents gouvernementaux et de sites académiques. L'analyse thématique et l'analyse de contenu ont été utilisées pour les données qualitatives, tandis que les statistiques descriptives et le logiciel SPSS ont servi à l'analyse des données quantitatives. Les résultats montrent que les principaux acteurs impliqués dans les interventions en matière de sécurité humaine dans les camps de PDI de l'État de Benue sont les organisations internationales, les ONG, les organisations de la société civile, les organisations religieuses ainsi que les initiatives d'auto-assistance. Par ailleurs, la majorité des répondants exprime une insatisfaction vis-à-vis des efforts du gouvernement. Les interventions observées se concentrent principalement sur le maintien de l'ordre et la fourniture des besoins de base tels que l'alimentation, l'hébergement et l'habillement. Les principaux défis identifiés sont l'insuffisance des ressources financières, le manque de capacités et d'expertise, les problèmes de durabilité et la croissance rapide de la population des camps. L'étude conclut que les interventions des parties prenantes dans les camps de PDI sont largement axées sur une assistance humanitaire à court terme, avec une attention limitée accordée aux stratégies de sécurité humaine à long terme, qui devraient pourtant privilégier l'autonomisation et la participation des PDI afin de garantir des solutions durables. Elle recommande que le gouvernement élabore des stratégies adaptées au contexte pour répondre aux défis de la sécurité humaine, mette en place un mécanisme centralisé de coordination des parties prenantes et instaure des dispositifs transparents et responsables de gestion des ressources.

Mots-clés : Sécurité humaine, personnes déplacées internes (PDI), intervention des parties prenantes, gouvernance du déplacement, État de Benue, Nigéria.

INTRODUCTION

Forced displacement has become a major global humanitarian concern, particularly in regions affected by persistent armed conflicts and insecurity. Across Africa, violent conflicts and communal clashes have significantly increased the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) (UNHCR, 2025; IDMC, 2025). In Nigeria, multiple security challenges have intensified internal displacement across several regions (Aboh & Ubom, 2021). In North-Central Nigeria, however, the farmers–herders' conflict, particularly in Benue State, has emerged as a major driver of displacement and humanitarian crises for affected communities. These protracted forms of violence have devastated rural settlements, undermined livelihoods, and forced thousands of people into displacement camps. The Institute for Economics & Peace (2019) ranks Nigeria among countries with a high projected risk of conflict, a situation further exacerbated by socio-economic vulnerability, inequality, and food insecurity (IEP, 2019). The persistence of insecurity, therefore, requires urgent attention; otherwise, innocent citizens will continue to experience forced displacement and prolonged humanitarian crises. This situation aligns with the observation attributed to former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that forced displacement remains one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges in the contemporary world.

Globally, forced displacement has reached unprecedented levels. By the end of 2024, an estimated 123.2 million people were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, and events seriously disturbing public order (UNHCR, 2025). Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for approximately 38.8 million internally displaced persons by the end of the same year, representing nearly half of the global total (IDMC, 2025). Nigeria remains one of the countries most affected by internal displacement on the continent due to a combination of violent conflicts, insecurity, and environmental pressures (African Centre for Strategic Studies, 2022). One of the major drivers of displacement in Nigeria is the escalating conflict between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farming communities, particularly in the North-Central region. According to the International Crisis Group (2017), clashes in Benue State alone resulted in an estimated 2,500 deaths in 2016, rivalling the lethality of the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. In the first half of 2018, over 1,300 Nigerians were killed in herder–farmer violence, with Benue State recording the highest number of casualties (International Crisis Group, 2018). These attacks have gradually evolved from spontaneous clashes into coordinated assaults on rural communities, often characterised by scorched-earth tactics and night raids (Patrick & Terungwa, 2022). Abah (2023) further argues that the conflict has claimed more civilian lives than the

Boko Haram insurgency in some periods and poses significant threats to national stability and food security (Odifa, 2022). Benue State, historically regarded as Nigeria's "food basket," has increasingly become a theatre of violent conflict driven largely by competition over land, grazing routes, and livelihood resources (Ode, 2018). Major attacks such as those in Agatu (2016), Logo and Guma (2018), and Mgbani and Otukpo (2023) have displaced thousands of residents into internally displaced persons camps across the state (Nwankwo, 2023).

To understand the conditions experienced by displaced populations, this study draws on Human Needs Theory, originally advanced by John Burton (1979) in *Deviance, Terrorism, and War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems*. Human Needs Theory posits that all human beings possess fundamental, universal needs, and that when these needs are not adequately satisfied, conflict and social instability are likely to emerge. According to Burton (1997), these needs are non-negotiable and include security, recognition, participation, identity, and development. When individuals are unable to fulfil these needs within existing social or political systems, they may seek alternative mechanisms to address them. In the context of internal displacement, the theory provides a useful framework for analysing the conditions under which displaced populations experience deprivation and vulnerability. Issues such as distributive justice, participation, safety, dignity, access to healthcare, employment opportunities, and effective government response constitute critical dimensions of the broader human security discourse (Hadgu et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of literature on internal displacement and humanitarian responses in Nigeria, much of the existing scholarship has primarily focused on the causes of displacement, conflict dynamics, and national policy frameworks. Comparatively fewer empirical studies have examined the nature and effectiveness of stakeholder interventions within IDP camps, particularly from a human security perspective. In Benue State, where displacement has persisted for several years due to recurring farmers–herders' conflict, limited attention has been given to how humanitarian interventions address broader human security concerns such as livelihood sustainability, dignity, participation, and long-term resilience. This gap is significant because prolonged displacement requires more than temporary humanitarian relief; it demands interventions that promote comprehensive human security and sustainable recovery for affected populations. Therefore, this study examines stakeholder interventions in IDP camps in Makurdi and Guma Local Government Areas of Benue State to assess the extent to which these interventions

address the human security needs of internally displaced persons. The following Research Questions guided the study which stakeholders are involved in the provision of human security interventions in IDP camps in Guma and Makurdi LGAs? What is the nature and pattern of human security interventions provided in the IDP camps in the study area? What challenges do stakeholders encounter in providing human security interventions in IDP camps in Guma and Makurdi LGAs?

OBJECTIVES

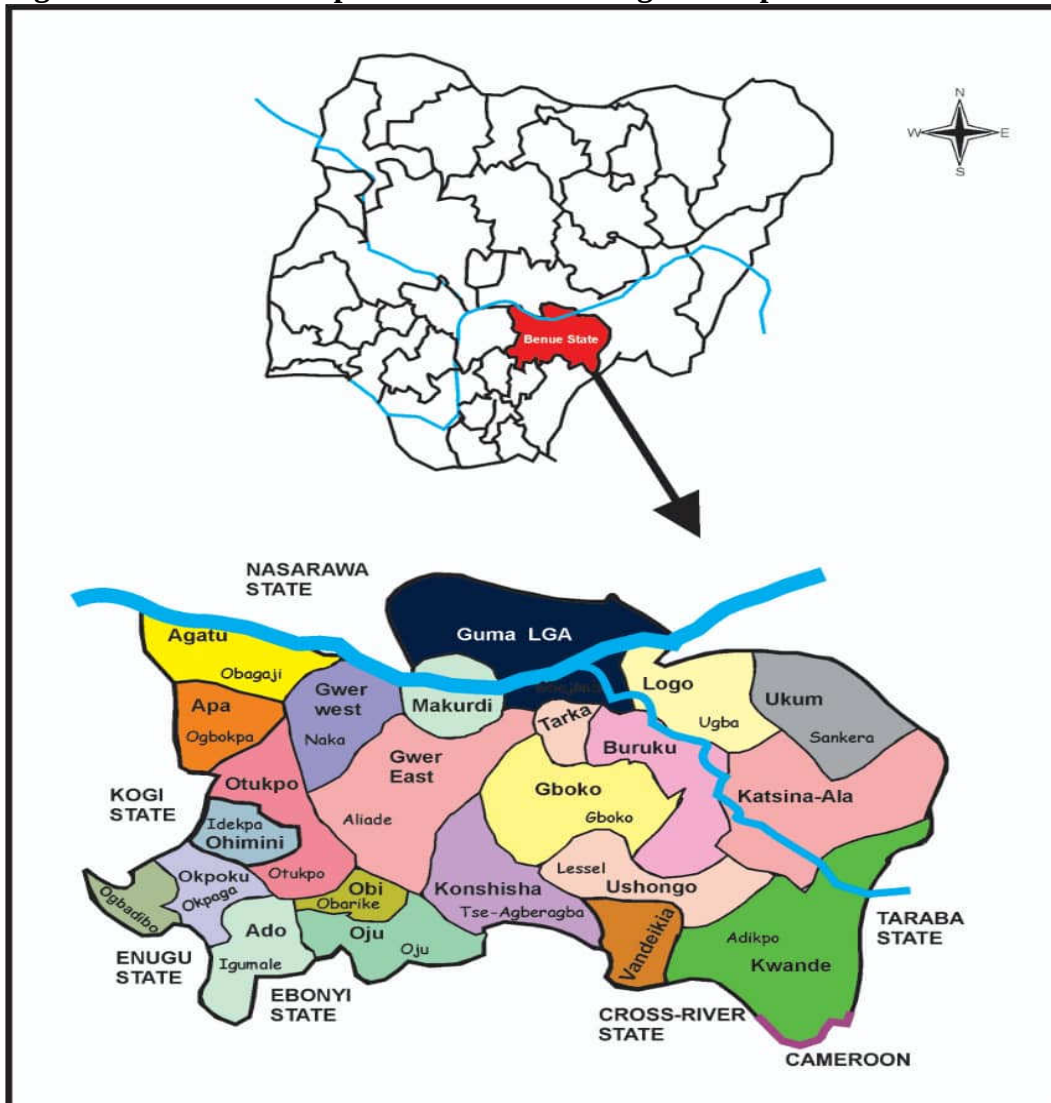
The study seeks to:

1. Investigate the stakeholders involved in human security intervention in IDP camps in Guma and Makurdi LGAs.
2. Assess the nature and pattern of human security intervention in the IDP camps in the study area
3. Analyse the challenges facing stakeholders in providing human security interventions in the IDP camps in Guma and Makurdi LGAs.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Benue State, located in North-Central Nigeria, within the lower Benue River basin. The state lies between latitudes 6°25'N and 8°08'N and longitudes 7°47'E and 10°00'E, and shares boundaries with Nasarawa, Taraba, Cross River, Enugu, and Kogi States. Benue is predominantly agrarian and widely known as Nigeria's "food basket." However, persistent farmers–herders' conflicts and communal violence have resulted in significant internal displacement and the establishment of several internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, making the state an important setting for examining stakeholders' human security interventions in IDP camps.

Fig 1.1: Benue State Map Carved Out from Nigeria Map



Source: Ajayi (2024), Geography and Planning Department, PAAU Anyigba

This study employed a descriptive survey design with a concurrent triangulation mixed-method approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from IDPs in Benue State, Nigeria. The study population comprised 72,993 IDPs across seven purposively selected communities, identified by the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) as having substantial displaced populations. Inclusion

was limited to camps listed in the permission letter issued by NEMA, while camps inaccessible due to security concerns and without permission were excluded. A sample of 400 IDPs was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) and proportionately allocated to camps using quota sampling. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), yielding 382 valid responses (95.5% response rate). Instrument reliability was tested through a pilot study, producing a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews with IDP leaders and key informants, and unstructured observations. Secondary sources included journals, government records, and scholarly websites. Quantitative data were analysed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analysed using thematic and content analyses. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and securing ethical clearance from the relevant institutional ethics committee.

RESULTS

Table 1

S/N	Stakeholders involved in human intervention in IDP camps	S A	A	N	D	S D	Total	Mean	Std.D	Decision
		Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq.	$\bar{x}$	σ	
1	Humanitarian organisation and international organisation support system	267 (69.89)	76 (19.89)	2 (0.52)	19 (4.97)	18 (4.71)	382	4.45	1.06	Agreed
2	Civil societies and non-governmental organisation's assistance	189 (49.47)	152 (39.79)	23 (6.02)	16 (4.18)	2 (0.52)	382	4.34	.81	Agreed
3	Government aid and security support, e.g. police, NSCDC, etc.	107 (28.01)	51 (13.35)	122 (31.93)	28 (7.32)	74 (19.37)	382	3.23	1.43	No strong consensus
4	Religious bodies support system	153 (40.05)	165 (43.19)	17 (4.45)	11 (2.87)	36 (9.42)	382	4.02	1.19	Agreed
5	Self-help, host communities' assistance and individual donations	179 (46.85)	65 (17.01)	59 (15.44)	27 (7.06)	52 (13.61)	382	3.76	1.44	Agreed

Source: Field Report, 2024.

In Table 1 above, 69.89% and 19.89% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that IDP camps have been receiving interventions from humanitarian organisations and support systems of international organisations. Also, 4.71% and 4.97% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 0.52% were neutral. The high mean score of 4.45 indicates a strong positive perception of humanitarian organisations' and international organisations' support systems in IDP camps, suggesting that the camps have been benefiting from interventions by these organisations. The low SD score of 1.06 indicates a high level of consensus and minimal variability in the responses, indicating that respondents are largely unified in their positive perception of humanitarian and international organisations' support in the IDP camps. This was strongly corroborated in an in-depth interview with one of the camp chairmen, who stated that, The IDPs have been receiving aid from some international and humanitarian organisations like UNICEF and Action Aid (IDI 04).

Also, in FGDs (B), the participants agreed that Several humanitarian and international organisations like the IOM, MSF, and the Red Cross have been supporting the IDP camps through several means.

Table 1 indicates that 49.47% and 39.79% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations have been helping the IDP camps in the study area. Also, 0.52% and 4.18% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 6.02 respondents were neutral. The high mean score of 4.34 indicates strong positive sentiment in support of the statement, showing that a significant proportion of respondents strongly agreed that civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations have been contributing substantially to the welfare of IDP camps in the study area. The SD score of 0.81 indicates a relatively low level of variability in responses, suggesting a high level of consensus among respondents regarding the positive impact of civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations on the welfare of IDP camps in Makurdi and Guma. In other words, the majority of respondents are in agreement that these organisations have been providing substantial support to the IDP camps, and there is little deviation from this opinion. This was strongly agreed with a key informant interview with one of the SEMA IDP camp managers, NGOs and CSOs have been of great help to bring succour to the plight of the IDPs (KII 05).

This was also supported by FGDs (E) in which the participants acknowledged that, we have been receiving aid from NGOs and support from civil society organisations like the Foundation for Justice, Development, and Peace (FJDP).

One member of the group retorted that, The NGO is out to protect and promote the totality of the dignity of the human person, especially of the poor and marginalised populations, which aligns with human security.

In Table 1, 28.01% and 13.35% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, on government aid and security support. Also, 19.37% and 7.32% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 31.93% were neutral. The SD score of 1.43 indicates a moderate to high level of variability in the responses, reflecting diverse opinions and attitudes among respondents regarding government aid and security support in IDP camps. This variability, combined with the neutral tendency (31.93% neutral) and the moderate mean score (3.23), indicates that while some respondents acknowledged government aid and security support (e.g., police, NSCDC), others were more sceptical or undecided, leading to a mixed assessment of government efforts. The findings from IDP leaders and SEMA officials are further supported by official government actions, in which the Benue State Government distributed food and non-food items to 15 IDP camps, with the flag-off ceremony held on 10th November 2025 and marked by a speech on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of Benue-SEMA. The Permanent Secretary emphasised that this exercise reflects the state's commitment, under the leadership of His Excellency Rev. Fr. Dr Hyacinth Iormem Alia, to alleviating the suffering of displaced persons (Anyanwu, 2025). Also, findings from in-depth interviews further clarify these mixed perceptions. The head of the sanitation unit/household leader in one of the IDP camps stated:

The previous leadership in the state did not effectively handle the IDP camp situation. The past administration refused to recognise some IDP camps, but under the current administration, all IDP camps in Benue State are recognised. Also, the current government is trying, but this is just one year into its administration, which is a small period to measure its impact on the camp" (IDI 07).

The above narratives highlight a difference in leadership over time: earlier administrations were largely perceived as neglecting IDP needs, whereas the current administration has taken steps to recognise all camps and improve aid and security support. The mixed quantitative responses reflect this transition, showing both acknowledgement of current government efforts and continued scepticism among IDPs, emphasising the need for sustained leadership, coordination, and monitoring to ensure meaningful impact.

Table 1 shows that 40.05% and 43.19% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, on the support of religious bodies. Also, 9.42% and 2.87% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 4.45% of respondents were neutral. The high mean score of 4.02 indicates strong positive sentiment, suggesting that IDP camps have significantly benefited from interventions by religious organisations. The SD score of 1.19 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses, suggesting that while there is strong consensus on the positive impact of religious organisations' support in IDP camps, there are some differing opinions among respondents. This moderate variability reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives of respondents regarding the role of religious organisations in providing support to IDP camps. In an in-depth interview with one of the household leaders of the IDP camp, he emphatically stressed that, Various religious organisations have been coming around to help (IDI 06).

Also, this was confirmed in FGDs (G), where all the participants mentioned that *several* religious bodies have been supportive, e.g. The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) and Sons and Daughters of Zion Ministry International have been assisting the IDPs in Benue state.

Table 1 shows that 46.85% and 17.01% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the IDP rely on self-help, the host community, and individual donations to the camp. Also, 13.61% and 7.06% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 15.44% were neutral. The mean score of 3.76 indicates a moderate-to-high level of reliance on self-help, host-community, and individual donations among IDPs. The SD score of 1.44 indicates a moderate to high level of variability in the responses, suggesting that there are differing opinions and attitudes among respondents regarding the extent to which IDPs rely on self-help, host community, and individual donations. This is affirmed in an in-depth interview with the chairman of one of the camps, who narrated that, Our people normally go to people's farms with the permission of the owners of the farm after the owners have harvested their produce, so that they can glean or gather the leftovers of the farm produce (IDI 05).

Also, this was further buttressed in FGDs (D), where the participants revealed that, some of the host communities are benevolent because some of them give us permission to farm on some portions of their land, harvest firewood, and use their water. We use their available resources for our needs. Reverend Father Solomon always comes around to give relief materials as an individual donor, too.

Table 2

S/N	Stakeholders' human security intervention in IDP camps	S A Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	N Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	S D Freq. (%)	Total Freq.	Mean $\bar{x}$	Std.D σ	Decision
1	Provision of jobs and safe net	107 (28.01)	22 (5.75)	19 (4.97)	50 (13.08)	238 (62.30)	382	2.36	1.56	Disagreed
2	Availability of vigilante, neighbourhood watch and civilian joint task force	129 (33.76)	67 (17.53)	92 (24.08)	40 (10.47)	54 (14.13)	382	3.46	1.41	No strong consensus
3	Creation of skill acquisition centres, education and training on human security	123 (32.19)	69 (18.06)	122 (31.93)	45 (11.78)	23 (6.02)	382	3.59	1.22	Agreed
4	Maintenance of law and order in the camp and adherence to environmental safety	243 (63.61)	91 (23.82)	28 (7.32)	5 (1.30)	15 (3.92)	382	4.42	.97	Agreed
5	Provision of basic needs e.g. food, shelter, health care etc.	172 (45.02)	110 (28.79)	74 (19.37)	16 (4.18)	10 (2.61)	382	4.09	1.02	Agreed
6	Protection of fundamental human rights, advocating for policy change and justice for vulnerable people	134 (35.07)	168 (43.97)	53 (13.87)	19 (4.97)	8 (2.09)	382	4.05	.93	Agreed
7	Implementation of programmes that address the root cause of IDPs and promote peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts	169 (44.24)	133 (34.81)	28 (7.32)	33 (8.63)	19 (4.97)	382	4.05	1.14	Agreed

Source: Field Report 2024

Table 2 indicates that 62.30% and 13.08% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, with the provision of jobs and a safety net for the IDPs. Also, 13.87% and 5.75 respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, while 4.97% were neutral. The mean score of 2.36, closer to the lower end of the scale, reflects negative sentiment, suggesting that respondents are dissatisfied with efforts related to employment and safety-net provision in the IDP camps. This indicates that a significant proportion of respondents do not believe that the human security interventions in the IDP camps are effectively providing jobs or a safety net. The SD score of 1.56 indicates a relatively high level of variability in responses, suggesting differing opinions among respondents regarding the effectiveness of employment and safety net provisions in the IDP camps. In a key informant interview, this was corroborated by one of the Assistant NEMA camp managers in the IDP camp, The government is not paying anything, even when we have one or two graduates and NCE holders among the internally displaced persons (KII 01).

Table 2 reveals that 33.76% and 17.53% strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that there is availability of vigilante or neighbourhood watch. Also, 14.13% and 10.47% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 24.08 were neutral. The mean score of 3.46 indicates a moderate level of availability of vigilante or neighbourhood watch. The SD score of 1.41 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses, suggesting differing opinions among respondents regarding the availability of vigilantes or neighbourhood watch. This was substantiated in an in-depth interview with one of the chairmen of the IDP camp, who testified that, In the absence of conventional security personnel, the youths in the camp have to organise themselves to play the role of security watch at night (IDI 03).

Also, in FGDs (F), it was confirmed by the participants that, they have vigilante groups within the camp that run shifts. In FGDs (A), too, it was affirmed by the participants that, We have to watch over ourselves at night with the warning that no one moves around from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., and if you go out of the camp and you cannot make it back before the set time, you have to find a place to sleep over before coming to the camp the next morning; it is as serious as that.

Table 2 indicates that 32.19% and 18.06% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the creation of skills acquisition centres, education, and training on human security are some of the interventions by stakeholders in the camp. Also, 6.02% and 11.78% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 31.93% were neutral. The mean score of 3.59 indicates a moderate level of agreement

with the statement. The SD score of 1.22 indicates a relatively low level of variability in the responses, suggesting a moderate level of consensus among respondents regarding stakeholders' interventions in the camp with respect to the creation of skill acquisition centres, education, and training on human security. In an in-depth interview with the chairman of one of the IDP camps, he clarifies that, there is no establishment of skills acquisition centres meant for the IDPs, but NGOs, CSOs, and humanitarian organisations normally organise skill acquisition programs for them once in a while (IDI 01).

FGDs (C) participants attested to the fact that, NGOs normally organise training for those who are interested. However, one chairman of another camp lamented that, I learnt that skills acquisition training was organised for some IDPs, but nothing of the sort happens in our camp here. This is one of the initiatives governments should have done by training IDPs on lifelong living skills, and in the future, wherever the beneficiaries find themselves, they will be useful to themselves and society because they have been empowered by the skill economically (IDI 02).

During the fieldwork, it was observed that an organisation came to one of the camps to enquire if anyone was interested in learning any trade or skill so that the person would be attached to a shop offering such trade or skills for service in the town, and the bills would be paid by the organisation to cover the period of the training (personal observation).

Table 2 indicates that 63.61% and 23.82% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there is maintenance of order and law in the camps and adherence to personal safety. Also, 3.92% and 1.30% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 7.32% were neutral. The high mean score of 4.42 indicates a strong positive sentiment among respondents regarding the maintenance of law and order in the camp. The SD score of 0.97 indicates relatively low variability in responses, suggesting a high level of consensus and agreement among respondents regarding the maintenance of law and order in the camp. In a key informant interview with the SEMA manager of one of the camps, he stated that, We do not have a challenge in maintaining order in the camp, but we can still do more because there are one or two persons in the camp, when the IDP camp leaders try to caution them on some attitudes, they despise them. After all, they see them as IDPs too, but if the SEMA manager or any other government official addresses them on the same matter, they obey (KII 02).

Table 2 indicates that 45.02% and 28.79% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, while 2.61% and 4.18% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively. Also, 19.37 were neutral, and the high mean score of 4.09 indicates strong positive sentiment among respondents regarding the availability of basic needs interventions in the camp, such as food, shelter, and health care. The SD score of 1.02 indicates a relatively low level of variability in responses, indicating that there is a high level of consensus and agreement among respondents regarding the provision of basic needs interventions in the camp. A camp chairman confirmed this in one of the in-depth interviews that, International organisations like the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Médecins Sans Frontières, also known as Doctors Without Borders, have been helping in terms of making shift shelters, health care, and clothing, among others (IDI 01).

In the FGDs (G), one of the participants commented that, The current governor of the state normally supplies them with food every month. Another participant retorted that the food was too small. However, the majority of the participants echoed that the current government of the state is trying their best compared to the former administration because the new administration normally shares up to 280 to 350 bags of rice among us every month since they came on board.

Table 2 shows that 35.07% and 43.97% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, while 2.09% and 4.97% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively. Also, 13.87% were neutral, and the high mean score of 4.05 indicates a strong positive sentiment among respondents regarding the protection of human rights and justice for vulnerable persons. The SD score of 0.93 indicates relatively low variability in responses, suggesting strong consensus among respondents regarding the protection of human rights and justice for vulnerable persons in the IDP camps. In a key informant interview with the Benue State SEMA manager in one of the camps, he testifies that, The government is doing everything possible to advocate for the positive well-being of internally displaced persons in Benue State (KII 03).

Table 2 shows that 44.24% and 34.81% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that programs exist to address the root causes of IDPs and promote peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Benue State. 7.32% were neutral, reflecting uncertainty or limited awareness of the interventions, while 8.63% disagreed and 4.97% strongly disagreed, indicating that some respondents question the visibility or effectiveness of these programmes. The mean score of 4.05 reflects a moderate-to-

high perception of these interventions among respondents, while the SD of 1.14 indicates moderate variability, suggesting that opinions are generally positive but not entirely uniform across camps. Qualitative insights provide further context. A key informant from Benue State SEMA noted that there are series of security and development strategies ongoing that cannot be disclosed because of their sensitive nature (KII 05).

The above finding highlights that, although respondents generally perceive the interventions positively, the absence of concrete details limits the ability to empirically verify specific programme activities or outcomes. Consequently, while stakeholders are recognised as actively addressing the root causes of displacement, the confidential nature of some initiatives constrains the empirical validation of these efforts.

Table 3

S/N	Challenges confronting stakeholders	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	N Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Total Freq. (%)	Mean $\bar{x}$	Std.D σ	Decision ◆
1	Paucity of funds and insufficient resources	289 (75.65)	37 (9.68)	11 (2.87)	6 (1.57)	39 (10.20)	382	4.39	1.27	Agreed
2	Accessibility constraints and safety concerns	63 (16.49)	69 (18.06)	7 (1.83)	31 (8.11)	212 (55.49)	382	2.32	1.64	No strong consensus
3	Language barriers and cultural differences	53 (13.87)	58 (15.18)	51 (13.35)	79 (20.68)	141 (36.91)	382	2.48	1.46	Disagreed
4	Non-collaboration and coordination among stakeholders	141 (36.91)	89 (23.29)	74 (19.3)	45 (11.78)	33 (8.63)	382	3.68	1.31	Agreed
5	Regulatory and administrative obstacles	46 (12.04)	213 (55.75)	63 (16.49)	29 (7.59)	31 (8.11)	382	3.56	1.06	Agreed
6	Lack of capacity and shortage of experts	281 (73.56)	43 (11.25)	13 (3.40)	16 (4.18)	29 (7.59)	382	4.39	1.21	Agreed
7	Sustainability issues and long-term goals	267 (69.89)	85 (22.25)	8 (2.09)	5 (1.30)	17 (4.45)	382	4.52	.95	Agreed
8	IDP population explosion and inaccurate data on actual IDPs	251 (65.70)	77 (20.15)	38 (9.94)	9 (2.35)	7 (1.83)	382	4.46	.90	Agreed
9	Corruption, conspiracy and the Nigerian factor	209 (54.71)	111 (29.06)	29 (7.59)	13 (3.40)	20 (5.23)	382	4.25	1.08	Agreed

Source: Field Report, 2024

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents (75.65% agreed and 10.20% strongly agreed) strongly concurred that a paucity of funds and insufficient resources are significant challenges, with a mean score of 4.39, indicating a high level of concern. Conversely, only 2.87% disagreed, and 1.57% strongly disagreed with this position. A small proportion of respondents (9.68%) remained neutral on the issue. While there was a moderate level of variation in responses, with a standard deviation of 1.27, the overall consensus was clear: inadequate funding and resources are critical issues that require attention and support.

In a key informant interview with one humanitarian worker, who explained that one major area is the lack of adequate finance, and many people here are volunteers just like me, that i was in academia before, but I need field experience (KII 04).

Table 3 shows a varied response to accessibility constraints and safety concerns, with 16.49% respondents strongly agreeing and 18.06% agreed, while (1.83%) remaining neutral. Also, 8.11% respondents disagreed, and 55.49% strongly disagreed. The mean score was 2.32, indicating a slightly negative leaning, while the high standard deviation of 1.64 revealed a wide range of opinions. Overall, the results indicate no strong consensus among respondents. This suggests that accessibility constraints and safety concerns are contentious issues, with respondents holding diverse views. At the time of this fieldwork, it was advised not to visit Logo IDP camps while the official letter granting permission to access the IDP camps in Benue was limited to Makurdi and Guma LGAs, probably because of security issues.

An interview with a security officer who explained that there are areas you might not be able to access unless you have an escort. On Naka Road leading to Kogi, the security checkpoint there normally provides escort for government officials who ignorantly travel through the place without escort (KII 08).

Table 3 shows that language barriers and cultural differences elicited a striking divide in responses. A significant proportion of respondents 36.91% strongly disagreed, and 20.68 % disagreed that language barriers and cultural differences are a major concern, suggesting that many individuals do not perceive these differences as a significant obstacle. In contrast, 13.87% of respondents strongly agreed that language barriers and cultural differences are a major issue, 15.18% agreed, and 13.35% were neutral, indicating that a substantial minority of respondents are deeply concerned about the impact of these differences. The overall mean score was 2.48, suggesting that respondents tend to disagree that language barriers and cultural differences are a major

concern. However, the standard deviation of 1.46 revealed a high level of variation in responses, indicating that opinions on this issue are sharply polarised.

All the focus group discussions (FGD A-G) testified to the fact that language and culture are never barriers; we are all Tivs except an insignificant number of non-indigenes among us, and we can also communicate in pidgin English even if the majority do not have formal education or do not further their studies.

Table 3 above indicates that 36.91% strongly agreed and 23.29% respondents agreed respectively with the statement that non-collaboration and coordination among stakeholders is an issue, suggesting a significant proportion of respondents have experienced or witnessed a lack of collaboration and coordination, while 19.3% were neutral, suggesting they may not have a strong opinion about the issue. In contrast, 11.78% disagreed and 8.63% strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that a smaller proportion of respondents do not perceive non-collaboration and coordination as significant issues. The mean response score of 3.68 indicates that respondents tend to agree that non-collaboration and coordination among stakeholders are issues. The standard deviation of 1.31 suggests a moderate level of variation in responses, indicating that opinions on the issue are not uniformly distributed.

The SEMA manager of one of the camps opined that it will be very good if all the stakeholders work together to create the necessary synergy to achieve the main goal of intervention with the IDPs, because what I have seen so far is that individual stakeholders try making efforts to bring succour to them, but things can be planned centrally (KII 03).

The responses from Table 3 indicate that 55.75% agreed and 12.04% strongly agreed that regulatory and administrative obstacles are a significant issue. Additionally, 16.49% were neutral, suggesting they may not have a strong opinion about the issue. In contrast, 7.59% disagreed and 8.11% strongly disagreed, indicating that a smaller proportion of respondents perceive regulatory and administrative obstacles as a significant issue. The mean response score of 3.56 indicates that respondents tend to agree that regulatory and administrative obstacles are a significant issue. Furthermore, the standard deviation of 1.06 suggests a relatively low level of variation in responses, indicating that opinions on the issue are fairly consistent. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that regulatory and administrative obstacles are a significant issue.

One of the SEMA managers opined that things should be done properly because IDP issues are sensitive. For instance, I would not have attended to you if not for the official letter that permits you to access the camp (KII 02).

Table 3 indicates that 73.56% agreed that the lack of capacity and shortage of experts is a significant issue, while 11.25% 1strongly agreed, highlighting a strong perception of this challenge. Additionally, 3.40% were neutral, suggesting they may not have a strong opinion about the issue. In contrast, 4.18% disagreed and 7.59% strongly disagreed, indicating that a smaller proportion of respondents do not perceive a lack of capacity and a shortage of experts as significant issues. The mean response score of 4.39 indicates that respondents strongly agree that the lack of capacity and shortage of experts are significant issues. Furthermore, the standard deviation of 1.21 suggests a relatively low level of variation in responses, indicating that opinions on the issue are fairly consistent. The consistency in opinions suggests that respondents have fairly uniform perceptions of the challenge posed by a lack of capacity and shortage of experts. The chairman of one of the IDP camps lamented that there are no experts on the ground to help us, ranging from medical personnel to educators. Doctors Without Borders have finished their tenure with us, and they have left our camp, so any health emergency here will take God's grace for the victim to survive (IDI 04)

The responses in Table 3 indicate that 69.89% agreed that sustainability issues and long-term goals are a significant consideration, while 22.25% strongly agreed, highlighting a strong emphasis on sustainability and long-term thinking. Additionally, 2.09% were neutral, suggesting they may not have a strong opinion on the issue. In contrast, 1.30% disagreed, and 4.45% strongly disagreed, indicating a small proportion of respondents do not prioritise sustainability issues and long-term goals. The mean response score of 4.52 indicates that respondents tend to strongly agree that sustainability issues and long-term goals are significant considerations. Furthermore, the standard deviation of 0.95 suggests a relatively low level of variation in responses, indicating that opinions on the issue are fairly consistent. A humanitarian worker and researcher narrated that keeping people in camps like this and feeding them is not sustainable. They have been here for the past seven to eight years; the government should have proposed long-term goals to bring lasting solutions and not a child's play approach. If the issues linger on like this no hope (KII 04)

The responses in Table 3 indicate that 65.70% agreed that IDP population explosion and inaccurate data of actual IDPs are significant challenges, while 20.15% strongly agreed, highlighting a strong concern about the rapid growth of IDP populations and

the accuracy of related data. Additionally, 9.94% were neutral, suggesting they may not have a strong opinion about the issue. In contrast, 2.35% disagreed and 1.83% strongly disagreed, indicating that a small proportion of respondents do not consider the IDP population explosion and inaccurate data on actual IDPs to be significant challenges. The mean response score of 4.46 indicates that respondents tend to strongly agree that the IDP population explosion and inaccurate data on actual IDPs are significant challenges. Furthermore, the standard deviation of 0.90 suggests a relatively low level of variation in responses, indicating that opinions on the issue are fairly consistent. A member of the host communities and a senior civil servant opined that we don't even know the sincerity of this IDP thing again. Is like some people are using it for business. When visitors come around to distribute relief items to the IDPs, you will see many people claiming to be IDPs so that they can get their share (KII 06).

Table 3 shows that 29.06% agreed and another 54.71% strongly agreed that corruption, conspiracy, and the "Nigeria factor" are significant issues. This suggests an overwhelming consensus among respondents that corruption is a major challenge. Only 7.59% were neutral, while 3.40% disagreed and 5.23% strongly disagreed. The mean response score of 4.25 indicates that respondents strongly agree that corruption, conspiracy, and the "Nigeria factor" are significant issues. The standard deviation of 1.08 suggests a relatively low level of variation in responses. This highlights the need for effective anti-corruption measures and institutional reforms. In one of the key informant interviews, a businessman who stated that just wandering in a country with a government and some citizens will be driven out of their communities for the past eight years. I even learnt that the assailants occupy some of the communities the IDP forcefully migrated from, and the government can not go after them. Something must be wrong somewhere. And so many other stories like diversion of relief materials, IDP been used to get money from donor agency so if you implement a lasting solution, it will mark a close of business for some persons (KII 07).

DISCUSSION

The study found that interventions in the IDP camps largely reflect a humanitarian model centred on temporary relief provisions such as food distribution, makeshift shelter, and skeletal health services. Ozcelik (2025) argues that humanitarian interventions are essential during emergencies for immediate relief; however, when displacement becomes prolonged, continued reliance on such measures can undermine the dignity and well-being of displaced persons. This situation also limits the broader objectives of the human security framework, which emphasises economic

sustainability and psychosocial well-being (Hadgu et al., 2025). The relief-oriented support observed in this study highlights a significant gap in economic empowerment initiatives, particularly employment opportunities and vocational skill acquisition, that could enable displaced persons to achieve livelihood independence and social reintegration (Ozcelik, 2025).

While the study suggests that responses to internal displacement in Benue State remain largely humanitarian, the findings presented in Table 2 reveal elements consistent with the human security framework. For instance, relatively high mean scores for the protection of fundamental human rights (4.05) and programmes addressing the root causes of displacement and promoting peacebuilding (4.05) suggest that certain interventions extend beyond emergency relief. However, the relatively high rating for human rights protection may reflect respondents' subjective perceptions of safety and assistance rather than a comprehensive understanding of broader legal standards. In prolonged displacement contexts, beneficiaries may evaluate rights protection based on the availability of basic relief services and relative security compared to previous living conditions, highlighting a common limitation in perception-based survey research.

According to the human security perspective advanced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994), human security involves not only the provision of immediate humanitarian assistance but also the protection of human rights, conflict prevention, and promotion of sustainable livelihoods. The evidence from this study indicates that these broader interventions remain limited, sporadic, and insufficiently institutionalised. Respondents and key informants acknowledged peacebuilding and rights-based initiatives, yet specific programme details were unavailable or could not be disclosed because of their sensitivity. Furthermore, the low mean score for provision of jobs and social safety nets (2.36) signals a critical gap in long-term livelihood support, an essential component of human security. Consequently, although aspects of human security interventions are emerging, the overall response remains predominantly humanitarian, focused on immediate survival needs rather than on comprehensive strategies for long-term security and resilience.

Integrating Human Needs Theory, social conflicts persist when fundamental human needs such as identity, recognition, participation, and development remain unmet (Burton, 1997). Interpreting the findings through this lens highlights structural limitations of the current response framework: while humanitarian interventions satisfy immediate survival needs, higher-order needs related to dignity, economic

participation, and decision-making remain largely unaddressed. The persistence of these unmet needs reinforces vulnerability and dependency among displaced populations, suggesting that sustainable displacement governance requires a transition from short-term humanitarian relief to interventions that more comprehensively address the broader spectrum of human security needs (Earle et al., 2025; Babister, 2020).

Despite the Nigerian National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons outlining durable solutions and rights-based protections, the findings reveal a significant gap between policy and practice. Weak inter-agency coordination, funding constraints, and inadequate integration of development planning within displacement governance undermine effective implementation (Hadgu et al., 2025; Ozcelik, 2025). The absence of coordinated planning among stakeholders reinforces fragmentation, echoing broader governance deficits in displacement management (Brown et al., 2024). Overall, displacement governance in the study area remains relief-centric rather than transformative. Reorientation toward an approach grounded in the human security framework and Human Needs Theory is essential to transition from short-term humanitarian assistance to sustainable, dignity-based displacement management (Brown et al., 2024; Babister, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study examined stakeholders and the nature of their human security interventions in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in the Guma and Makurdi LGAs of Benue State, Nigeria. The challenges encountered by stakeholders were also evaluated. It was discovered that the government, international organisations, non-government organisations, and religious bodies are part of the stakeholders rendering support to the IDP. Challenges faced by stakeholders were IDP explosion, inaccurate data and non-central planning. The nature of the intervention was food, makeshift shelters, and minimal health services, which may not be sustainable because there is no employment or job opportunity or safe net for IDPs or adequate training in hard skills. Saliently, the IDPs in this study have been displaced for more than eight years; therefore, it is no longer a matter of humanitarian intervention but of human security intervention, which focuses on the security and development of the individual, thereby restoring and protecting their dignity as humans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government should establish a centralised machinery that involves all stakeholders to encourage collaboration and a united effort in responding to the human security needs of the IDP.
2. There should be strict compliance with working with scientific data or verifiable information about IDPs to promote accountability and transparency, which will ensure that corruption is checked and integrity is ensured.
3. The community should be carried along in the affairs of the IDP as important stakeholders, so that the community challenges will be solved, and they will be willing to support human security initiatives for the IDP.
4. All stakeholders should focus on a long-term solution for the IDP, where humanitarian intervention goes hand in hand with developmental programmes, which align with the essence of human security.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Abah, H. E. (2023). IDP camp crisis worse in Benue than Borno – UN. *Daily Trust*.
<https://dailytrust.com/idp-camps-crisis-worse-in-benue-than-borno-un/>.
- Aboh, J. A., & Ubom, B. E. (2021). Bakassi after the International Court of Justice
judgment (ICJ): Matters arising. *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social
Studies*, 1(4).
- African Centre for Strategic Studies. (2022). *Nigeria's displacement crisis and
security implications*. <https://africacenter.org/>.
- Anyanwu, S. (2025). The Benue government is committed to the welfare of displaced
persons. *Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation*.
[https://fmino.gov.ng/benue-government-committed-to-the-welfare-of-
displaced-person](https://fmino.gov.ng/benue-government-committed-to-the-welfare-of-displaced-person).
- Babister, E. (2020). Ownership and participation in local–global partnerships: The
recovery of shelter and settlements after humanitarian crises. *Journal of
International Development*, 32(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3445>.
- Brown, A., Mackie, P., & García-Amado, P. (2024). The displacement economies
framework. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 1–18.
- Burton, J. (1979). *Deviance, terrorism, and war: The process of solving unsolved
social and political problems*. Martin Robertson.
- Burton, J. (1997). *Violence explained: The sources of conflict, violence, and crime and
their prevention*. Manchester University Press.
- Earle, L., Dajani, D., Barratt, S., & McAteer, B. (2025). A good life in exile:
Understanding and measuring the well-being of refugees living in protracted
displacement. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 1–16.
- Hadgu, G. H., Gebrihet, H. G., Tikue, M. A., Haile, T. G., Assefa, G. T., &
Gebremedhn, G. A. (2025). Human security under siege: Displacement,
deprivation and agony among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Tigray,
Ethiopia. *Social Sciences*, 14(11), 653.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14110653>.
- Institute for Economics & Peace. (2019). *Global peace index 2019: Measuring peace
in a complex world*. Institute for Economics & Peace.
<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/resources>.

- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2025). *Global report on internal displacement 2025*. Norwegian Refugee Council. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2025/>
- International Crisis Group. (2017). *Herders against farmers: Nigeria's expanding deadly conflict*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/>.
- International Crisis Group. (2018). *Stopping Nigeria's spiralling farmer-herder violence*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/>.
- Kelman, H. C., & Fisher, R. J. (1990). Applying a human needs perspective to the practice of conflict resolution: The Israeli-Palestinian case. In H. C. Kelman & R. J. Fisher (Eds.), *Herbert C. Kelman: A pioneer in the social psychology of conflict analysis and resolution* (pp. 13–26). Springer.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Addison-Wesley.
- Nwankwo, C. (2023). The moral economy of the Agatu “massacre”: Reterritorializing farmer-herder relations. *Society*, 1–13.
- Ode, E. O. (2018). Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Guma Local Government Area of Benue State and their information needs. *IP Indian Journal of Library Science and Information Technology*, 3(1), 1–7. <https://www.ijlsit.org/>.
- Odifa, D. (2022). 2022 flooding destroys crops and livestock across states. *BusinessDay*. <https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/2022>.
- Ozcelik, A. (2025). From emergency relief to development holds: The developmental shift in the ICRC's humanitarian assistance in protracted conflict. *Journal of Conflict & Security Law*, 30, 1–22.
- Patrick, I. U., & Terungwa, P. J. J. (2022). Socio-economic consequences of conflict: The predicament of internally displaced persons in Benue State. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, 5(5), 10–26. <https://abjournals.org/>.
- Rubenstein, R. E. (1999). Introduction: Conflict resolution and social justice. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 6(1), 1. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol6/iss1/1/>.
- Sites, P. (1973). *Control: The basis of social order*. Associated Faculty Press.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1994). Human development report 1994: New dimensions of human security. Oxford University Press.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2025). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2024*. <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>.

Effect of a Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model on Reintegration and Academic Achievement of Displaced Senior Secondary Students in Benue State, Nigeria¹

Jane Ngunan Adzape¹, & Paul Terkura Torkula²

¹Joseph Sawuan Tarka University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

¹Department of Chemistry Education

&

²Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State, Nigeria

Department of Integrated Science, School of Sciences

Corresponding Author's Email: janetadzape@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the effect of a Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model (TIICM) on the reintegration and academic achievement of displaced senior secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. The persistent herdsman-farmer conflicts and inter-communal crises in Benue State have produced a growing population of internally displaced students whose educational continuity has been severely disrupted, yet no empirical study has investigated a trauma-sensitive instructional framework specifically designed for chemistry learning among this population. A quasi-experimental pre-test post-test non-equivalent control group design was adopted. A purposive and stratified sample of 70 displaced Senior Secondary School Two (SSS II) Chemistry students drawn from two resettlement schools in Makurdi and Gboko were assigned to experimental ($n = 35$) and control ($n = 35$) groups. Two instruments were developed and validated: the Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT; $KR-20 = 0.84$) and the Reintegration Index Scale (RIS; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$). Data were analysed using means, standard deviations, and Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that students taught using the TIICM significantly outperformed those taught through the conventional lecture method on both academic achievement, $F(1, 67) = 53.96, p < .001, \eta^2 = .44$, and reintegration, $F(1, 67) = 41.22, p < .001, \eta^2 = .38$. Significant differences were found by gender and displacement duration within the TIICM group. The study concludes that TIICM is an effective, context-sensitive instructional approach for improving chemistry learning and school reintegration among conflict-affected students and recommends its systematic adoption in schools serving displaced populations in Benue State.

Keywords: Trauma-Informed Instruction, Chemistry Achievement, School Reintegration, Displaced Students, Benue State.

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/e3x1-8z89>

Effets d'un modèle d'enseignement de la chimie sensible aux traumatismes sur la réintégration scolaire et la réussite académique des étudiants déplacés : une étude quasi expérimentale dans l'État de Benue (Nigéria)

Résumé

Cette étude examine l'effet d'un modèle d'enseignement de la chimie sensible aux traumatismes (Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model, TIICM) sur la réintégration scolaire et la réussite académique des élèves déplacés du secondaire supérieur dans l'État de Benue, au Nigéria. Les conflits persistants entre éleveurs et agriculteurs, ainsi que les crises intercommunautaires dans cet État, ont engendré une augmentation du nombre d'élèves déplacés internes dont la continuité éducative a été gravement perturbée. Toutefois, aucune étude empirique n'avait jusqu'à présent examiné un cadre pédagogique sensible aux traumatismes spécifiquement conçus pour l'enseignement de la chimie auprès de cette population. Un dispositif quasi expérimental de type prétest–post-test avec groupe témoin non équivalent a été adopté. Un échantillon raisonné et stratifié de 70 élèves déplacés de Senior Secondary School Two (SSS II), inscrits en chimie et issus de deux écoles de réinstallation situées à Makurdi et Gboko, a été réparti en groupe expérimental ($n = 35$) et groupe témoin ($n = 35$). Deux instruments ont été élaborés et validés : le test de performance en chimie (Chemistry Achievement Test, CAT ; $KR-20 = 0,84$) et l'échelle d'indice de réintégration (Reintegration Index Scale, RIS ; α de Cronbach = 0,81). Les données ont été analysées à l'aide de moyennes, d'écart-types et d'une analyse multivariée de covariance (MANCOVA) au seuil de signification de 0,05. Les résultats indiquent que les élèves ayant bénéficié du modèle TIICM obtiennent des performances significativement supérieures à celles des élèves ayant suivi un enseignement traditionnel magistral, tant en termes de réussite académique, $F(1, 67) = 53,96$; $p < 0,001$; $\eta^2 = 0,44$, que de réintégration scolaire, $F(1, 67) = 41,22$; $p < 0,001$; $\eta^2 = 0,38$. Des différences significatives ont également été observées selon le genre et la durée du déplacement au sein du groupe TIICM. L'étude conclut que le TIICM constitue une approche pédagogique efficace et adaptée au contexte pour améliorer l'apprentissage de la chimie et la réintégration scolaire des élèves affectés par les conflits. Elle recommande son adoption systématique dans les établissements accueillant des populations déplacées dans l'État de Benue.

Mots-clés : Enseignement sensible aux traumatismes, réussite en chimie, réintégration scolaire, élèves déplacés, État de Benue.

INTRODUCTION

The socio-political landscape of Benue State has been profoundly shaped by prolonged herdsman-farmer conflicts, inter-communal violence, and periodic flooding that have displaced over 1.4 million persons across various local government areas, with children constituting approximately 42% of this population (SEMA, 2023; Iorbo et al., 2024). The educational consequences for displaced school-age children are severe: interrupted schooling, loss of learning materials, psychological trauma, and abrupt severance from familiar classroom environments (Duru & Agbo, 2025). For many, returning to formal education is fraught with psychological barriers that conventional instructional approaches are ill-equipped to address.

Chemistry, central to Nigeria's national development agenda and to students' advancement into STEM careers, remains among the worst-performing subjects in external examinations in Benue State (WAEC, 2022; Omwirhiren, 2015). Its inherent challenges abstract concepts, laboratory requirements, and mathematical reasoning are exponentially amplified for students carrying the weight of traumatic displacement experiences into the classroom (Ajayi & Ogbeba, 2017). Yet empirical investigations into trauma-sensitive instructional models specifically designed for chemistry learning in Nigerian conflict-affected settings remain virtually non-existent.

Trauma-Informed Education (TIE) represents a paradigmatic reorientation of schooling that prioritises safety, trustworthiness, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural sensitivity as foundational conditions for effective learning (Thomas et al., 2019). Unlike conventional approaches, trauma-informed instruction deliberately integrates awareness of students' adverse experiences into lesson design, classroom interactions, feedback, and assessment. The Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model (TIICM) developed and tested in this study operationalises these principles within secondary school chemistry, creating structured, emotionally safe, and cognitively scaffolded learning experiences for displaced students.

Evidence from Nigerian contexts affirms the detrimental impact of displacement on academic performance. Lawrence and Falaye (2020) demonstrated that trauma-focused psychosocial interventions significantly improved psychological functioning among internally displaced adolescents in North-Central Nigeria, while Eseadi et al. (2016) established that structured counselling-based interventions produced measurable improvements in academic engagement and emotional wellbeing among

Nigerian secondary students. These findings underscore the urgency of instructional models that simultaneously address academic and psychosocial dimensions of learning for conflict-affected students.

School reintegration, defined here as the process by which displaced students re-establish meaningful academic engagement, social belonging, and emotional stability, has received growing attention in Nigerian educational policy discourse, particularly in the context of conflict-affected schooling (Duru & Agbo, 2025; Iorbo et al., 2024). However, empirical studies examining instructional interventions that promote reintegration outcomes alongside academic achievement remain sparse, and none have specifically investigated the chemistry classroom as a site for such intervention in Benue State. This study addresses that critical gap.

The theoretical framework integrates Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. Sociocultural theory emphasises socially mediated, scaffolded interaction in knowledge construction central to the TIICM's use of collaborative learning groups, peer mentoring, and teacher-facilitated guided inquiry. Ecological Systems Theory positions the student within intersecting environmental layers: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, providing the theoretical basis for why trauma-responsive classrooms must extend beyond content delivery to engage the student's holistic social ecology. Together, these theories scaffold the TIICM and its dual outcome focus: achievement and reintegration.

Gender differences in science achievement and psychosocial outcomes among conflict-affected populations have been documented inconsistently in Nigerian literature. Ajayi and Ogbeba (2017) found no significant gender difference in chemistry achievement among students taught using hands-on activities in Benue State, while Lawrence and Falaye (2020) reported that female displaced adolescents demonstrated greater vulnerability to the academic consequences of psychosocial stress. Regarding displacement duration, Iorbo et al. (2024) observed that prolonged displacement compounded patterns of academic disengagement and social exclusion among conflict-affected students in Benue State, suggesting duration as a significant moderating variable in intervention effectiveness. This study examines both variables within the TIICM framework.

The intersection of armed conflict, displacement, and educational disruption has created an underserved population of learners in Benue State whose needs are

inadequately met by conventional instruction. Displaced students consistently perform below state and national averages in chemistry, with credit pass rates below 28% in recent years (WAEC, 2022; Omwirhiren, 2015), while many exhibit psychosocial distress, withdrawal, poor concentration, emotional dysregulation, and difficulty forming trusting relationships that conventional chemistry instruction is structurally ill-equipped to address (Lawrence & Falaye, 2020). Despite growing global recognition of trauma-informed pedagogy, existing studies of Nigerian chemistry instruction have focused on cooperative learning, hands-on activities, and constructivist approaches, without integrating trauma sensitivity as a design principle (Omwirhiren, 2015; Ajayi & Ogbeka, 2017). Furthermore, the moderating roles of gender and displacement duration on intervention outcomes remain uninvestigated in Benue State. This study was therefore designed to investigate the effect of the TIICM on the reintegration and academic achievement of displaced senior secondary students, with attention to these moderating variables.

OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model on the reintegration and academic achievement of displaced senior secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of displaced students taught Chemistry using the Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model (TIICM) and those taught using the Conventional Lecture Method (CLM).
2. Examine the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of male and female displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM.
3. Investigate the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of short-term and long-term displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM and those taught using the Conventional Lecture Method?

2. What is the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of male and female displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM?
3. What is the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of short-term and long-term displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM and those taught using the Conventional Lecture Method.
- HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of male and female displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM.
- HO₃: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of short-term and long-term displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test non-equivalent control group design. This design was selected because it permits the comparison of an experimental and a control group under conditions where true random assignment of participants to groups is neither feasible nor ethical, as was the case in this study, where intact classes of displaced students in resettlement schools were used (Creswell, 2014, cited in Torkula, 2023). The design is particularly appropriate for studies involving vulnerable populations such as internally displaced persons, where random reassignment of students across schools could cause additional psychological disruption and violate ethical protocols governing research with conflict-affected minors (Lawrence & Falaye, 2020). The independent variable was the instructional method (TIICM versus CLM), the dependent variables were students' Chemistry achievement and reintegration scores, and gender and displacement duration served as moderating variables. Pre-test scores on both the CAT and RIS were used as covariates to statistically control for pre-existing differences between groups.

The population of this study comprised all 1,840 displaced Senior Secondary School Two (SSS II) Chemistry students enrolled in resettlement and transit schools in Benue State during the 2023/2024 academic session. This figure was obtained from the Benue State Secondary Education Board (BSSEB) and the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA, 2023). A multistage sampling technique was employed. In the first stage, two Local Government Areas, Makurdi and Gboko, were purposively selected based on having the highest concentration of registered displaced secondary students with functional Chemistry laboratories. In the second stage, one resettlement school from each selected LGA was purposively chosen based on the availability of ICT infrastructure, qualified Chemistry teachers, and verified displaced student enrolment. In the third stage, all intact SSS II Chemistry classes in the selected schools were included in the study, yielding 35 students per school (70 students in total). One school was randomly assigned to the experimental group (TIICM) and the other to the control group (CLM). The experimental group comprised 18 males and 17 females, while the control group had 19 males and 16 females. Within the experimental group, 17 students were classified as short-term displaced (displaced for less than 1 year) and 18 as long-term displaced (displaced for 1 year or more), based on self-reported displacement history, verified through school admission records.

Two instruments were developed by the researchers for data collection: The Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT) consisted of 40 multiple-choice items drawn from the SSS II Chemistry curriculum, covering topics in Atomic Structure, Chemical Bonding, Chemical Reactions, Acids, Bases and Salts, and Organic Chemistry. Items were distributed across four cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: knowledge/recall (10 items, 25%), comprehension (10 items, 25%), application (12 items, 30%), and analysis (8 items, 20%). Each item had four options (A, B, C, D) with one correct answer attracting one mark, for a maximum score of 40. The CAT was validated by three experts: two Chemistry Education lecturers from Joseph Sawuan Tarka University Makurdi and one experienced Senior Secondary Chemistry teacher in Benue State. The reliability of the CAT was established through a pilot study with 30 SSS II Chemistry students from a school not included in the main study, yielding a KR-20 reliability coefficient of 0.84. The Reintegration Index Scale (RIS) was a 30-item Likert-type instrument developed to measure students' level of school reintegration across three subscales: Academic Engagement (10 items), Social Belonging (10 items), and Emotional Stability (10 items). Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with a maximum possible score of 150. The RIS was validated by two educational psychologists and one guidance counsellor with expertise in trauma and post-conflict education in

Nigeria. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained from the pilot study, confirming adequate internal consistency.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Joseph Sawuan Tarka University, Makurdi. Since participants were conflict-affected minors, informed consent was obtained from school principals, the BSSEB, and parents/guardians, and student assent was also obtained. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence, and no student was compelled to disclose personal displacement experiences. A guidance counsellor was available throughout the intervention for psychosocial support. All data were anonymised and treated confidentially in accordance with NERDC ethical guidelines.

The Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model (TIICM) is a structured instructional framework developed by the researchers that integrates six core trauma-informed principles: safety, trustworthiness, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural humility into the design and delivery of chemistry lessons. The TIICM was operationalised through five sequential instructional phases: (i) Affective Check-In, a brief structured activity at the start of each lesson allowing students to express their emotional state without judgement; (ii) Contextual Anchoring, connecting chemistry concepts to familiar, culturally relevant phenomena from students' pre-displacement community experiences; (iii) Collaborative Scaffolded Inquiry, where students worked in mixed-displacement-status peer groups to explore chemistry concepts through guided investigations; (iv) Reflective Consolidation, a structured debriefing activity reinforcing both conceptual understanding and psychosocial gains; and (v) Strength-Based Assessment, using formative feedback that emphasises growth, effort, and resilience rather than deficit. Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher conducted a three-day professional development workshop for the research assistants (the Chemistry teachers in both schools) on administering both instruments and implementing the respective instructional methods. The study spanned eight weeks. In Week 1, both groups received the pre-test administration of the CAT and RIS. From Weeks 2 to 7, the experimental group received Chemistry instruction through the TIICM, while the control group received instruction through the CLM, characterised by teacher-directed verbal explanation, chalkboard illustrations, and textbook exercises. In Week 8, the post-test administration of both instruments was conducted under standardised conditions supervised by the researchers.

Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were computed to answer the research questions. Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was employed to test the null hypotheses simultaneously across the two dependent variables (CAT and RIS), with pre-test scores serving as covariates, at 0.05 level of significance. MANCOVA was chosen over separate univariate analyses because it simultaneously accounts for the intercorrelation between the two dependent variables, reducing Type I error inflation and providing a more ecologically valid picture of the instructional intervention's overall effect (Pallant, 2016). Wilks' Lambda was used as the multivariate test statistic, and partial eta-squared (η^2) was reported as the measure of effect size. Based on Cohen's (1988, as applied by Torkula 2023) conventions, η^2 values of .01, .06, and .14 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively. All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0.

This study acknowledges key limitations. The purposive use of intact classes limits generalisability beyond the sampled population. More significantly, the eight-week intervention period is relatively brief for establishing durable effects on achievement and reintegration, particularly for long-term displaced students; future studies should consider a full academic term. Additionally, the small sample size of 70 students restricts statistical power and the robustness of subgroup analyses. These limitations notwithstanding, the study provides valuable preliminary evidence for trauma-informed chemistry instruction in conflict-affected Nigerian school settings.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM and those taught using the Conventional Lecture Method?

Table 1:
Mean and Standard Deviation of Achievement (CAT) and Reintegration (RIS) Scores by Instructional Method

Group	N	Pre-test CAT M (SD)	Post-test CAT M (SD)	Mean Gain (CAT)	Post-test RIS M (SD)	RIS Gain
TIICM (Experimental)	35	17.43 (4.61)	29.86 (4.02)	12.43	71.34 (8.27)	22.14
CLM (Control)	35	17.91 (4.84)	22.54 (4.39)	4.63	58.17 (9.13)	8.97

Note. CAT = Chemistry Achievement Test (max. = 40); RIS = Reintegration Index Scale (max. = 150). Values in parentheses are standard deviations. Mean Gain = Post-test M minus Pre-test M.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for both dependent variables by instructional method. Students in the TIICM group recorded a pre-test CAT mean of 17.43 (SD = 4.61) and a post-test CAT mean of 29.86 (SD = 4.02), yielding a mean gain of 12.43. Students in the CLM group recorded a pre-test CAT mean of 17.91 (SD = 4.84) and a post-test mean of 22.54 (SD = 4.39), with a mean gain of 4.63. On the RIS, the TIICM group recorded a post-test mean of 71.34 (SD = 8.27), representing a gain of 22.14 over their pre-test baseline, while the CLM group recorded a post-test RIS mean of 58.17 (SD = 9.13), with a gain of only 8.97. These results indicate that students taught using TIICM achieved markedly higher post-test scores in both Chemistry achievement and reintegration than those taught using the CLM.

Research Question 2

What is the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of male and female displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM?

Table 2:
Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Students' Achievement and Reintegration Scores in the TIICM Group

Gender	N	Pre-test CAT M (SD)	Post-test CAT M (SD)	Mean Gain (CAT)	Post-test RIS M (SD)
Male	18	18.11 (4.73)	28.44 (4.21)	10.33	68.89 (8.54)
Female	17	16.71 (4.49)	31.41 (3.78)	14.70	73.94 (7.96)

Note. CAT = Chemistry Achievement Test (max. = 40); RIS = Reintegration Index Scale (max. = 150). Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table 2 reveals that within the TIICM group, female students recorded a higher post-test CAT mean of 31.41 (SD = 3.78) compared to the male mean of 28.44 (SD = 4.21), yielding a mean gain difference of 4.37 points in favour of females. On the RIS, female students similarly outperformed their male counterparts, recording a post-test mean of 73.94 (SD = 7.96) against the male mean of 68.89 (SD = 8.54). These descriptive results suggest that female displaced students benefited more from TIICM on both academic and reintegration outcomes.

Research Question 3

What is the difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of short-term and long-term displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM?

Table 3:
Mean and Standard Deviation of Short-term and Long-term Displaced Students' Achievement and Reintegration Scores in the TIICM Group

Displacement Duration	N	Pre-test CAT M (SD)	Post-test CAT M (SD)	Mean Gain (CAT)	Post-test RIS M (SD)
Short-term (< 1 year)	17	18.24 (4.31)	31.18 (3.64)	12.94	74.12 (7.83)
Long-term ($\geq$ 1 year)	18	16.67 (4.89)	28.61 (4.37)	11.94	68.78 (8.66)

Note. CAT = Chemistry Achievement Test (max. = 40); RIS = Reintegration Index Scale (max. = 150). Values in parentheses are standard deviations. Short-term = displaced < 1 year; Long-term = displaced $\geq$ 1 year.

Table 3 shows that short-term displaced students in the TIICM group achieved a higher post-test CAT mean of 31.18 (SD = 3.64) and a post-test RIS mean of 74.12 (SD = 7.83), compared to long-term displaced students who recorded CAT and RIS post-test means of 28.61 (SD = 4.37) and 68.78 (SD = 8.66), respectively. While both sub-groups benefited meaningfully from the TIICM, short-term displaced students demonstrated comparatively higher gains on both outcome measures.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM and those taught using the Conventional Lecture Method.

Table 4:
MANCOVA Results for the Effect of Instructional Method on Students' Chemistry Achievement and Reintegration

Source	Dependent Variable	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Covariate (Pre-test)	CAT	1	214.38	13.74	< .001	—
Instructional Method	CAT	1	842.17	53.96	< .001	.44
Instructional Method	RIS	1	3094.52	41.22	< .001	.38
Error	CAT / RIS	67	—	—	—	—

Note. CAT = Chemistry Achievement Test; RIS = Reintegration Index Scale. Wilks' Λ = .341, $F(2, 66) = 63.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .659$. η^2 reported for significant between-subjects effects only.

Table 4 presents the MANCOVA results for Hypothesis 1. The multivariate test was statistically significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .341$, $F(2, 66) = 63.84$, $p < .001$, indicating a significant overall effect of instructional method on the combined dependent variables. Examination of the univariate between-subjects effects revealed that after controlling

for pre-test scores, the TIICM group significantly outperformed the CLM group on both Chemistry achievement, $F(1, 67) = 53.96, p < .001, \eta^2 = .44$, and reintegration, $F(1, 67) = 41.22, p < .001, \eta^2 = .38$. Both effect sizes are large by Cohen's (1988, as applied by Torkula & Adzape, 2023) benchmarks, indicating that instructional method accounted for approximately 44% of the variance in post-test Chemistry achievement and 38% of the variance in post-test reintegration scores, after controlling for pre-existing differences. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The TIICM significantly enhanced both the Chemistry achievement and school reintegration of displaced senior secondary students compared to the CLM.

Hypothesis 2

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of male and female displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM.

Table 5:
MANCOVA Results for the Effect of Gender on Achievement and Reintegration among TIICM Students

Source	Dependent Variable	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Covariate (Pre-test)	CAT	1	198.47	12.61	.001	—
Gender	CAT	1	312.89	6.41	.015	.16
Gender	RIS	1	874.63	5.87	.020	.13
Error	CAT / RIS	32	—	—	—	—

Note. CAT = Chemistry Achievement Test; RIS = Reintegration Index Scale. Wilks' $\Lambda = .706, F(2, 31) = 6.45, p = .004, \eta^2 = .294$. η^2 reported for significant between-subjects effects only.

Table 5 presents the MANCOVA results for Hypothesis 2. The overall multivariate effect of gender was statistically significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .706, F(2, 31) = 6.45, p = .004$. At the univariate level, gender significantly influenced both Chemistry achievement, $F(1, 32) = 6.41, p = .015, \eta^2 = .16$, and reintegration, $F(1, 32) = 5.87, p = .020, \eta^2 = .13$, in favour of female students. Both effect sizes are medium to large, indicating that gender accounted for approximately 16% of the variance in achievement scores and 13% of the variance in reintegration scores within the TIICM group. The null

hypothesis was therefore rejected. Female displaced students demonstrated significantly better outcomes than male displaced students under TIICM instruction.

Hypothesis 3

HO₃: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement and reintegration scores of short-term and long-term displaced students taught Chemistry using the TIICM.

Table 6
MANCOVA Results for the Effect of Displacement Duration on Achievement and Reintegration among TIICM Students

Source	Dependent Variable	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Covariate (Pre-test)	CAT	1	187.24	11.93	.002	—
Displacement Duration	CAT	1	287.46	5.83	.022	.12
Displacement Duration	RIS	1	649.71	5.14	.030	.10
Error	CAT / RIS	32	—	—	—	—

Note. CAT = Chemistry Achievement Test; RIS = Reintegration Index Scale. Wilks' $\Lambda = .741$, $F(2, 31) = 5.41$, $p = .010$, $\eta^2 = .259$. η^2 reported for significant between-subjects effects only.

Table 6 presents the MANCOVA results for Hypothesis 3. The multivariate effect of displacement duration was statistically significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .741$, $F(2, 31) = 5.41$, $p = .010$. At the univariate level, displacement duration significantly influenced Chemistry achievement, $F(1, 32) = 5.83$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .12$, and reintegration, $F(1, 32) = 5.14$, $p = .030$, $\eta^2 = .10$, with short-term displaced students outperforming long-term displaced students on both measures. Both effect sizes are medium by Cohen's conventions, indicating that displacement duration accounted for approximately 12% of the variance in achievement and 10% of the variance in reintegration within the TIICM group. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The duration of displacement significantly moderated the effectiveness of TIICM, with short-term displaced students demonstrating comparatively greater benefits.

DISCUSSION

The finding that the Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model significantly enhanced both the academic achievement and school reintegration of displaced senior secondary students in Benue State aligns with theoretical expectations rooted in Sociocultural Theory and Ecological Systems Theory. The large effect sizes observed for Chemistry achievement ($\eta^2 = .44$) and reintegration ($\eta^2 = .38$) indicate that TIICM represents an educationally meaningful departure from conventional chemistry instruction for this population.

The superior academic achievement of TIICM students can be attributed to the model's integration of safety and trust as preconditions for cognitive engagement. Lawrence and Falaye (2020) demonstrated that displaced Nigerian adolescents' psychosocial deficits are mediated by trauma-induced dysregulation that prevents full cognitive engagement in conventional instructional settings. The TIICM's affective check-ins and culturally anchored content delivery address this barrier directly, consistent with findings by Omwirhiren (2015) and Ajayi and Ogbeba (2017) that emotionally responsive and contextualised instructional strategies produce superior academic outcomes among secondary chemistry students in Benue State.

The significant reintegration gains among TIICM students suggest that disciplinary instruction, when designed through a trauma-informed lens, can serve as a vehicle for broader psychosocial recovery. This aligns with Iorbo et al. (2024), who identified structured, supportive classroom environments as critical for displaced students' re-establishment of identity and social belonging in Benue State. The TIICM's collaborative scaffolded inquiry and strength-based assessment components appear particularly potent in fostering academic agency and social belonging.

The finding that female displaced students outperformed male peers on both outcomes within the TIICM group contradicts the widely reported male advantage in STEM under conventional instruction (Ajayi & Ogbeba, 2017). Lawrence and Falaye (2020) proposed that female displaced adolescents carry disproportionate psychosocial burdens in conflict-affected Nigerian settings, which conventional teacher-directed instruction exacerbates, suggesting that TIICM's non-judgmental, empowerment-focused features are particularly restorative for female learners' academic confidence and sense of belonging. Given the modest gender subgroup sizes, however, this finding warrants replication before broad generalisations are drawn.

Short-term displaced students benefiting more than long-term displaced peers is consistent with Iorbo et al. (2024), who linked prolonged displacement to compounded patterns of academic disengagement and reduced responsiveness to school-based support in Benue State. Cumulative adversity, such as family separation, food insecurity, and repeated schooling interruptions, likely requires more intensive support than a single-subject, eight-week intervention can provide (Duru & Agbo, 2025). Notably, long-term displaced students still recorded measurable gains over their pre-test baseline, indicating TIICM's value across all displacement categories, with the caveat that longer-displaced students may need complementary counselling services to maximise benefits.

These findings carry significant policy relevance. While the Benue State Ministry of Education has acknowledged the educational needs of displaced students (BSSEB, 2022), no systematic instructional response has been articulated. This study provides the first local empirical evidence base for trauma-informed chemistry instruction in this context, arguing for the institutionalisation of such principles across STEM subjects in schools serving displaced communities.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Trauma-Informed Chemistry Instructional Model effectively enhances both Chemistry academic achievement and school reintegration among displaced senior secondary students in Benue State. The significant improvements recorded across academic and psychosocial outcome domains within an eight-week implementation period underscore the TIICM's potential as a scalable model for trauma-responsive science education in conflict-affected Nigerian communities. The moderating roles of gender and displacement duration further indicate the need for differentiated instructional planning within TIICM implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The Benue State Ministry of Education and the Benue State Secondary Education Board should institutionalise a Trauma-Informed Science Instruction Policy Framework for high-displacement schools, while teacher education institutions and regulatory bodies integrate structured TIICM training into both pre-service and in-service programmes.

2. Schools should implement gender-responsive adaptations within the TIICM, providing targeted support structures for female displaced students while developing engagement-focused interventions to improve outcomes among male displaced students.
3. The Benue State Secondary Education Board and the Benue State Emergency Management Agency should adopt a multi-tiered psychosocial and academic support system for displaced students, alongside longitudinal and multi-state research to strengthen the evidence base and generalizability of TIICM outcomes.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors attest that there is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Ajayi, V. O., & Ogbeba, J. (2017). Effect of gender on senior secondary chemistry students' achievement in stoichiometry using hands-on activities. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 5(8), 839–842. <https://pubs.sciepub.com/education/5/8/1>
- Benue State Emergency Management Agency. (2023). *Situational report on internally displaced persons in Benue State 2022/2023*. SEMA Publications.
- Benue State Secondary Education Board. (2022). *Annual educational sector performance review 2021/2022*. BSSEB Publications.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Duru, M. D., & Agbo, J. U. (2025). Impact of herdsmen-farmers' conflict on the educational development of senior secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. *International Journal of Internal Displacement and Psychosocial Studies*, 17, 151–163. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14927507>
- Eseadi, C., Onwuka, G. T., Otu, M., & Oforka, T. (2016). Effect of rational emotive behaviour therapy programme on depression among type 2 diabetic patients in Nigeria. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 35(4), 363–382. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10942-016-0255-0>
- Iorbo, R., Sahni, S. P., Bhatnagar, T., & Andzenge, D. T. (2024). Social inclusion and justice for the internally displaced by the herdsmen-farmers conflict in Benue State, Nigeria. *Journal of Migration and Human Security*, 12(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23315024241239585>
- Lawrence, K. C., & Falaye, A. O. (2020). Trauma-focused counselling and social effectiveness skills training interventions on impaired psychological functioning of internally displaced adolescents in Nigeria. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 30(6), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2477>

- Omwirhiren, E. M. (2015). Enhancing academic achievement and retention in senior secondary school chemistry through discussion and lecture methods: A case study of some selected secondary schools in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(21), 155–161. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1079117>
- Pallant, J. (2016). *SPSS survival manual: A step-by-step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (6th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Thomas, M. S., Crosby, S., & Vanderhaar, J. (2019). Trauma-informed practices in schools across two decades: An interdisciplinary review of research. *Review of Research in Education*, 43(1), 422–452. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X18821123>
- Torkula, P. T. (2023). *Methodological frameworks in educational research with vulnerable populations: A practical guide for Nigerian researchers*. Makurdi Academic Press.
- Torkula, P. T., & Adzape, J. N. (2023). Effect size reporting in Nigerian educational research: A methodological review. *Benue State University Journal of Education*, 23(1), 44–58.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- West African Examinations Council. (2022). *Chief examiners' report: Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) Chemistry*. WAEC.

Administrative Support and Academic Performance of Internally Displaced Secondary School Students in Benue State, Nigeria¹

Ochepa-Murtala, I. T.

Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State, Nigeria
Department of Educational Foundations, School of General Education

Corresponding Author's Email: tyabocheпа@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. A correlational survey research design was adopted. Three research questions were raised, and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population comprised 1,380 internally displaced secondary school students residing in IDP camps and host community schools across Benue State. Using stratified random sampling, a sample of 200 students, 112 males and 88 females, was drawn from six purposively selected IDP learning centres and host community schools. Two instruments were used for data collection: the Administrative Support Scale (ASS), a 15-item, four-point Likert questionnaire with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.86; and students' cumulative academic performance scores, retrieved from official school records, as the measure of academic performance. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and students' academic performance overall ($r = 0.71$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$); a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance by school location ($r = 0.68$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$); and a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance by gender ($r = 0.61$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$). The study recommends that school administrators strengthen IDP-specific enrolment and documentation procedures, that the Benue State Ministry of Education develop comprehensive IDP administrative frameworks, and that gender-sensitive administrative policies be institutionalised in all IDP schools to ensure equitable academic outcomes for all displaced learners.

Keywords: Administrative Support, Academic Performance, Correlational Survey, Internally Displaced Students, Secondary School, Benue State

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/dkhd-xw46>

Soutien administratif et réussite scolaire des élèves déplacés internes du secondaire dans l'État de Benue, au Nigéria

Résumé

Cette étude examine la relation entre le soutien administratif et la réussite scolaire des élèves déplacés internes du secondaire dans l'État de Benue, au Nigéria. Elle adopte un devis d'enquête corrélationnelle. Trois questions de recherche et trois hypothèses ont été formulées pour orienter l'étude. La population cible est composée de 1 380 élèves déplacés internes du secondaire, résidant dans des camps de personnes déplacées ainsi que dans des écoles des communautés d'accueil de l'État de Benue. Un échantillon de 200 élèves (112 garçons et 88 filles) a été sélectionné au moyen d'un échantillonnage aléatoire stratifié à partir de six centres d'apprentissage pour personnes déplacées et d'écoles des communautés d'accueil, choisis de manière raisonnée. Deux instruments ont été utilisés pour la collecte des données : l'échelle de soutien administratif (ESA), un questionnaire de type Likert en quatre points comportant 15 items (α de Cronbach = 0,86), et les notes cumulatives des élèves, extraites des dossiers scolaires officiels, servant d'indicateur de la réussite scolaire. Les moyennes et les écarts-types ont été utilisés pour répondre aux questions de recherche, tandis que le coefficient de corrélation de Pearson (r) a servi à tester les hypothèses au seuil de signification de 0,05. Les résultats révèlent une forte corrélation positive et statistiquement significative entre le soutien administratif et la performance scolaire globale des élèves ($r = 0,71$; ddl = 198 ; $p < 0,05$), une forte corrélation positive et statistiquement significative entre le soutien administratif et la performance scolaire selon la localisation de l'établissement ($r = 0,68$; ddl = 198 ; $p < 0,05$), ainsi qu'une corrélation positive modérée et statistiquement significative entre le soutien administratif et la performance scolaire selon le genre ($r = 0,61$; ddl = 198 ; $p < 0,05$). L'étude recommande que les directions d'établissement renforcent les procédures d'inscription et de documentation spécifiques aux élèves déplacés, que le ministère de l'Éducation de l'État de Benue élabore des cadres administratifs adaptés à leurs besoins, et que des politiques administratives sensibles au genre soient institutionnalisées dans tous les établissements accueillant des personnes déplacées, afin de garantir l'égalité des chances en matière de réussite scolaire.

Mots-clés : Soutien administratif, réussite scolaire, enquête corrélationnelle, élèves déplacés internes, enseignement secondaire, État de Benue.

INTRODUCTION

Education remains universally recognised as one of the most powerful instruments for individual development, social mobility, and national advancement. For any society to realise the transformative benefits of education, institutional structures must be deliberately put in place to guarantee that schooling is accessible, inclusive, and effective particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalised members of the population. Among the most educationally disadvantaged groups in contemporary Nigeria are internally displaced persons (IDPs), who have been forcibly uprooted from their homes and communities because of armed conflict, communal violence, and natural disasters. In Benue State, perennial herdsman-farmer conflicts, recurrent flooding, and inter-communal strife have generated a substantial and growing population of displaced citizens, many of whom are secondary school-age adolescents whose formal education has been severely disrupted or permanently interrupted (Ikyereve & Ugbor, 2020). The educational marginalisation of these displaced learners is not merely a welfare concern but a national development crisis, as it produces a generation of young Nigerians without the academic foundation needed to participate productively in civic and economic life.

Nigeria's protracted displacement crisis intersects with longstanding deficiencies in its educational administration systems to produce conditions of exceptional academic disadvantage for displaced secondary school students. Benue State, situated in Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone, has recorded some of the country's most severe displacement statistics over the past decade, with hundreds of thousands of persons displaced across multiple local government areas. Secondary school-age adolescents within this displaced population face compounded challenges: the psychological trauma of violent uprooting, social dislocation from peer networks and learning communities, loss of academic documentation and enrolment into IDP learning centres or host community schools that are frequently ill-equipped to provide the quality of educational experience their pre-displacement schools offered. Examinations of academic performance trends among displaced students in the state consistently reveal below-average scores, elevated dropout rates, and weakened engagement with formal learning patterns that signal a crisis requiring institutional rather than merely individual-level responses (Agbo & Kwaghga, 2019). These patterns of underachievement are further compounded by persistent patterns of absenteeism and widespread disengagement from formal learning activities observed across IDP learning centres in the state, raising urgent questions about the adequacy of institutional responses to displaced learners' academic needs.

Academic performance, broadly understood as the measurable cognitive and scholarly output of students as demonstrated through examinations, continuous assessments, and other evaluative instruments, is shaped by a complex constellation of institutional, social, psychological, and material factors. Among these, administrative support has been identified as a particularly critical institutional variable. Administrative support in the school context encompasses the policies, procedures, and managerial practices deployed by school leadership and educational authorities to create an enabling environment for teaching and learning. It includes the provision of learning materials, management of enrolment and transfer processes, coordination of psychosocial support services, teacher supervision and deployment, maintenance of school records, and active collaboration with external bodies such as non-governmental organisations and government agencies to address students' academic and welfare needs (Adeyemi, 2021). In IDP educational settings, where institutional capacity is often stretched and standard administrative systems frequently break down under emergency conditions, the quality and consistency of administrative support may serve as a decisive correlate of whether displaced students can re-engage meaningfully with schooling and achieve satisfactory academic outcomes. School administrators in IDP settings are frequently overwhelmed, under-resourced, and inadequately prepared to manage the specific academic and administrative needs of displaced learners, yet the precise nature and strength of this administrative influence on student outcomes has not been sufficiently examined.

Researchers have consistently observed that IDP students who receive structured administrative support, including organised enrolment processes, access to catch-up classes, coordinated welfare interventions, and competent teacher supervision, tend to achieve better academic outcomes than those without such support (Agbo & Kwaghga, 2019). Educational administration, as a discipline, is fundamentally concerned with the governance, organisation, and management of educational institutions to optimise student learning outcomes. Okorie (2014) posited that effective school administration creates a climate of order, purpose, and accountability that permeates the entire learning environment and motivates both teachers and students toward excellence. When school administrative structures are weak or absent, as is frequently the case in emergency and IDP settings, students' academic outcomes can suffer severe and long-lasting consequences. Despite this recognition, empirical studies that specifically and systematically investigate the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State remain sparse. It is, furthermore, unclear from the available research evidence whether this relationship varies by school location and gender, dimensions that carry

significant implications for how administrative interventions should be designed and targeted. This knowledge gap represents a significant obstacle to evidence-based administrative reform and hinders the development of contextually responsive policies for IDP education. This study therefore situates itself within the broader discourse of educational administration and crisis-responsive schooling, seeking to establish the nature and strength of the relationship between administrative support and academic performance in one of Nigeria's most displacement-affected states, with the specific aim of informing administrative reforms that can improve educational outcomes for displaced secondary school students in Benue State.

OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. determine the relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State;
- ii. examine the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location; and
- iii. Investigate the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State?
2. What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location?
3. What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender?

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State.
2. There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location.
3. There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study adopted a correlational survey research design, which was considered appropriate for investigating the nature and strength of the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students, as these variables naturally co-exist in the study setting and were not manipulated (Field, 2013). A correlational design is specifically suited to studies that seek to determine whether, and to what degree, two or more variables are related, making it the appropriate choice for this study, which aims to establish whether the level of administrative support received by displaced students is systematically related to their measurable academic performance. Unlike a descriptive survey design, which merely characterises the distribution of variables without examining associations, the correlational design employed in this study enables the computation of Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) as a precise quantitative index of the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the study variables (Creswell, 2014). This design also preserves ecological validity, ensuring that findings reflect the natural covariation between administrative support and academic performance in real IDP and host-community school settings in Benue State, thereby making the results directly applicable to administrative decision-making and policy reform.

The study was conducted across Benue State, which has been one of Nigeria's most severely displacement-affected states due to protracted herdsmen-farmer conflicts and recurrent flooding across multiple local government areas. The state hosts numerous IDP camps and emergency learning centres, variously managed by government

agencies, international organisations, and non-governmental bodies, in addition to mainstream host community schools that have absorbed displaced student populations. The population for the study comprised all internally displaced secondary school students identified across recognised IDP camps and host community schools in Benue State, totaling 1,380 students as recorded in the Benue State Ministry of Education and IDP monitoring data for the 2023/2024 academic session. This population comprised 762 males and 618 females, distributed across the state's senatorial zones and local government areas.

Stratified random sampling was employed to draw a representative sample of 200 students comprised of 112 males and 88 females from six purposively selected IDP learning centres and host community schools, with approximately 33 respondents drawn from each school. The purposive selection of schools was guided by: (a) official recognition by the Benue State Ministry of Education as an IDP or host community learning centre; (b) a minimum enrolled displaced student population of 30; and (c) accessibility to the research team during the data collection period. Within each selected school, stratification was applied along gender lines to ensure proportional representation of male and female displaced students. This sampling design balanced representativeness with feasibility and ensured that the resulting sample adequately reflected the heterogeneity of the target population across location and gender strata, consistent with stratified sampling procedures adopted in comparable educational survey research in Benue State (Ode & Agogo, 2017).

Two instruments were used for data collection in this study. The first was a structured questionnaire titled the Administrative Support Scale (ASS), developed by the researcher to measure the independent variable the level of administrative support received by displaced students. The ASS was organised into two sections: Section A solicited demographic information, including gender, school location, and displacement status, while Section B comprised 15 items measuring students' perceptions of administrative support across three thematic clusters: general administrative support (items 1–5), location-based administrative support (items 6–10), and gender-related administrative support dimensions (items 11–15). Items were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The four-point format was preferred to eliminate ambiguity at the neutral midpoint and compel respondents to express a directional assessment for each item, thereby enhancing the discriminant validity of responses. The ASS was face- and content-validated by two experts in Educational Administration and Planning at Benue State University, Makurdi, who reviewed all

items for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. A trial administration on 30 IDP students outside the main sample yielded a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86, confirming high internal consistency.

The second instrument was the Academic Performance Record (APR), which constituted the measure of the dependent variable, students' academic performance. Rather than relying on self-reported perceptions of academic performance, which would confound the measurement of both variables within the same questionnaire, actual academic performance data were obtained from official school records with the permission of school heads. Specifically, each sampled student's cumulative score from the most recently completed terminal examination covering core subjects including English Language, Mathematics, and Basic Science/Integrated Science as recorded in the school's academic register, was extracted and converted to a percentage score for standardisation purposes. This approach ensures that academic performance is measured objectively through verifiable institutional records rather than through student self-assessment, thereby enhancing the construct validity of the dependent variable and the integrity of the correlation analysis.

Three trained research assistants supported data collection in the field. The ASS questionnaires were administered in person to sampled students during school hours, and completed instruments were retrieved on the same day to minimise non-response. Academic performance scores were simultaneously retrieved from school records with the cooperation of school principals and class teachers. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for the administrative support variable to answer the research questions descriptively. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was then used to test the three hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. Pearson's r was appropriate because both variables, administrative support scores derived from the Likert-scale ASS and students' continuous academic performance scores are measured at the interval level, and Pearson's r is the standard parametric technique for quantifying the linear relationship between two interval-level variables (Field, 2013). The direction of r (positive or negative) indicates the nature of the relationship, while the magnitude (0 to ± 1) indicates its strength: r values of 0.10–0.29 indicate a weak relationship, 0.30–0.49 a moderate relationship and 0.50 and above a strong relationship (Cohen, 1988). When the computed r yielded a p -value < 0.05 , the hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Administrative Support Ratings of Internally Displaced Secondary School Students in Benue State

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD
1	Provision of adequate learning materials by school administration improved my performance in science subjects	58	70	30	22	3.43	0.91
2	Administrative support through regular supervision of teachers positively influenced my academic achievement	55	72	32	21	3.41	0.89
3	Access to school records and academic transcripts aided my academic continuity after displacement	60	68	28	24	3.44	0.93
4	Administrative enrolment procedures were accessible and did not hinder my return to school	52	75	30	23	3.40	0.92
5	The school administration provided psychosocial support that improved my concentration in class	50	70	36	24	3.35	0.95
Grand Mean						3.41	0.92

Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for the administrative support ratings of internally displaced secondary school students on items 1-5 of the Administrative Support Scale (ASS). Item 3, relating to access to school records and academic transcripts that aided academic continuity after displacement, recorded the highest mean score of 3.44 (SD = 0.93), while Item 5, concerning psychosocial support improving concentration in class, returned the lowest mean score of 3.35 (SD = 0.95). All five items mean cluster closely around the grand mean of 3.41 (SD = 0.92), indicating a consistently high level of perceived administrative support among the sampled students. These descriptive statistics characterise the distribution of the independent variable and provide the basis for the correlation analysis reported in the table 4. To determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between these administrative support ratings and students' actual academic performance scores, Hypothesis 1 was tested.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location (IDP camp learning centres and host community schools)?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Administrative Support Ratings by School Location

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD
6	Administrative provision of emergency school feeding improved my ability to concentrate in class	54	72	30	24	3.40	0.93
7	School administrative coordination with NGOs for learning materials enhanced my academic performance	56	68	32	24	3.38	0.91
8	Administrative management of IDP-specific timetables helped me follow the curriculum progressively	50	70	35	25	3.33	0.94
9	School administrative response to my security concerns made me feel safe enough to learn effectively	52	74	28	26	3.39	0.92
10	Administrative facilitation of catch-up classes helped me recover lost academic ground	55	70	30	25	3.38	0.93
Grand Mean		3.38 0.93					

Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of administrative support ratings by school location (items 6–10 of the ASS). Item 6, on administrative provision of emergency school feeding that improved concentration, recorded the highest mean score of 3.40 (SD = 0.93) among both students in IDP camp learning centres and those in host community schools, while Item 8, on the administrative management of IDP-specific timetables, returned the lowest mean score of 3.33 (SD = 0.94) across both location types. The grand mean of 3.38 (SD = 0.93) indicates a high and consistent level of perceived location-responsive administrative support among the sampled students. Students enrolled in IDP camp learning centres rated administrative support related to security responsiveness and timetable management relatively higher, while those in host community schools rated NGO coordination and catch-up class facilitation more prominently, reflecting the distinct administrative demands of each setting. These descriptive data characterise the administrative support variable as perceived by students across both school locations and serve as the independent variable in the correlation analysis reported in Table 5, which tests whether location-specific administrative support is significantly related to academic performance.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Administrative Support Ratings by Gender

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD
11	Male students benefit from administrative support for academic performance just as female students do	57	70	28	25	3.42	0.91
12	Administrative allocation of female-specific support (e.g., sanitary materials) improved female students' school attendance	52	68	34	26	3.35	0.94
13	Administrative counselling services are equally accessible to both male and female IDP students	50	72	32	26	3.35	0.93
14	Gender-sensitive administrative policies encouraged both male and female students to remain in school	54	70	30	26	3.38	0.92
15	Administrative support positively influenced the academic performance of displaced students regardless of gender	56	72	26	26	3.40	0.91
Grand Mean		3.38 0.92					

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of gender-related administrative support ratings (items 11–15 of the ASS). Item 11, on the equitable benefit of administrative support for academic performance across gender groups, recorded the highest mean score of 3.42 (SD = 0.91), while Items 12 and 13 both returned the lowest mean score of 3.35. The grand mean of 3.38 (SD = 0.92) indicates a high and consistent level of perceived gender-responsive administrative support among the sampled students. These descriptive statistics characterise the sample's perceptions of gender-related administrative support and serve as the independent variable in the correlation analysis reported in Table 6, where Hypothesis 3 is tested to determine whether this dimension of administrative support is significantly related to the academic performance of male and female displaced students.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State.

Table 4: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation between Administrative Support and Academic Performance

Variable	r	df	p	Decision
Administrative support & students' academic performance	0.71	198	< .05	Rejected

r = Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient; df = degrees of freedom

Table 4 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation results for the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State. The computed correlation coefficient is $r = 0.71$ with $df = 198$ and $p < 0.05$. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, is rejected. The positive value of $r = 0.71$ indicates a strong positive relationship between administrative support and academic performance: as administrative support increases, students' academic performance tends to increase correspondingly, and vice versa. Based on Cohen's (1988) benchmarks for interpreting correlation coefficients, an r value of 0.71 represents a strong relationship, indicating that administrative support is not merely a marginal but a substantively significant correlate of academic performance among displaced students in Benue State.

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location.

Table 5: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation between Administrative Support and Academic Performance by School Location

Variable	r	df	p	Decision
Administrative support & students' academic performance — IDP camp learning centres	0.69	98	$< .05$	Rejected
Administrative support & students' academic performance — host community schools	0.68	98	$< .05$	Rejected

r = Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient; *df* = degrees of freedom

Table 5 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation results for the relationship between administrative support and academic performance by school location. For students enrolled in IDP camp learning centres, the computed correlation coefficient is $r = 0.69$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$), while for students in host community schools, $r = 0.68$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$). Since $p < 0.05$ in both cases, the null hypothesis is rejected for both location types. The positive r values indicate a strong positive relationship between location-specific administrative support and academic performance in both IDP camp learning centres and host community schools. Students in IDP camp settings who benefited from security-responsive administration, emergency feeding coordination, and IDP-tailored timetabling recorded stronger academic performance, while those in host community schools similarly demonstrated that administrative facilitation of catch-up classes and NGO partnership coordination were strongly associated with better academic outcomes. The strength and consistency of these correlations across both location types confirm that the association between administrative support and academic performance is a robust institutional pattern that transcends school settings.

Hypothesis 3

There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender.

Table 6: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation between Administrative Support and Academic Performance by Gender

Variable	r	df	p	Decision
Administrative support & academic performance — male IDP students	0.62	98	< .05	Rejected
Administrative support & academic performance — female IDP students	0.61	98	< .05	Rejected

r = Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient; *df* = degrees of freedom

Table 6 presents the Pearson's product-moment correlation results for the relationship between administrative support and academic performance by gender. For male displaced students, the computed correlation coefficient is $r = 0.62$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$), while for female displaced students, $r = 0.61$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$). Since $p < 0.05$ for both groups, the null hypothesis is rejected. The positive r values indicate a strong positive relationship between gender-responsive administrative support and the academic performance of both male and female internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State. Applying Cohen's (1988) conventions, both $r = 0.62$ and $r = 0.61$ indicate strong relationships, confirming that the association between administrative support and academic performance is significant and consistent across both genders. This finding suggests that when administrative interventions are designed with deliberate gender sensitivity, encompassing female-specific welfare provisions, inclusive counselling access, and gender-responsive school policies, the relationship with academic performance is strong and statistically reliable for both male and female displaced students.

DISCUSSION

The finding from Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1, that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State ($r = 0.71$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$), corroborates the position of Adeyemi (2021), who established that effective school administration creates the structural and material conditions necessary for optimal student learning outcomes. An r value of 0.71 is, by Cohen's (1988) standards, a strong correlation, meaning that a substantial portion of the variance in students' academic performance scores is systematically associated with the level of administrative support they receive. This finding aligns with the

observations of Agbo and Kwaghga (2019), who found that IDP students in Benue State who benefited from organised administrative interventions, including coordinated enrolment, teacher supervision, and access to learning materials, recorded significantly better academic outcomes than those without such support. The result underscores that administrative structures in IDP educational settings are not peripheral management concerns but core correlates of academic achievement and challenges the reductive notion that displacement alone determines displaced students' academic trajectories. Rather, institutional responsiveness, the capacity of school administration to create order, provide resources, and coordinate welfare, is systematically associated with better academic outcomes among displaced learners.

The finding from Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2, that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance in both IDP camp learning centres ($r = 0.69$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$) and host community schools ($r = 0.68$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$), resonates with the position of Okorie (2014), who argued that effective educational administration is not location-contingent but rather a systemic and intentional institutional commitment that can be operationalised in diverse school environments, including non-conventional settings such as IDP camps. The marginal difference between the two location-specific correlation coefficients ($r = 0.69$ versus $r = 0.68$) suggests that the positive relationship between administrative support and academic performance is comparably strong in both settings, even though the specific administrative demands differ: students in IDP camp learning centres particularly benefited from security-responsive administration and IDP-tailored timetabling, while those in host community schools demonstrated that NGO coordination and catch-up class facilitation were among the more prominent administrative correlates of their academic performance. This finding affirms the view of Ikyereve and Ugbor (2020) that the provision of administrative infrastructure is systematically associated with educational continuity in crisis-affected settings, regardless of school type. The practical implication is unambiguous: investment in administrative capacity in IDP schools produces demonstrably strong academic performance correlates comparable to those observed in conventional school settings, and such investment therefore deserves equal priority in educational planning and resource allocation across both location types.

The finding from Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3, that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between gender-responsive administrative support and academic performance among both male ($r = 0.62$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$) and female ($r = 0.61$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$) internally displaced secondary school students, is

consistent with the submission of Terkura and Ameh (2022), who reported that gender-sensitive administrative policies in IDP schools in North-Central Nigeria substantially improved the academic retention and performance of both male and female displaced learners. The near-equivalent strength of the correlation across both gender groups indicates that gender-responsive administrative support benefits male and female students almost equally, while the marginal difference suggests that female students may derive slightly greater benefit from targeted provisions such as sanitary materials and gender-inclusive counselling. This finding challenges the assumption that administrative support operates uniformly across all students, regardless of gender, and instead confirms that the deliberate inclusion of gender-sensitive components in administrative policies strengthens the overall relationship between administrative support and academic performance for displaced students of both sexes. The result further supports the position of Ugbor, Ikyereve, and Ode (2021), who identified inclusive principal leadership behaviour as a significant correlate of academic performance among IDP students of both sexes. The implication for practice is that gender-aware administrative approaches in IDP schools are not merely equity imperatives but are also measurably associated with stronger academic performance outcomes for all displaced learners.

CONCLUSION

This study established a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. The Pearson's correlation coefficients of $r = 0.71$ (overall), $r = 0.69$ and $r = 0.68$ (by school location), and $r = 0.62$ and $r = 0.61$ (by gender), all significant at $p < 0.05$, confirm that administrative structures are strong and measurable institutional correlates of displaced students' academic performance across both school locations and gender groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. School administrators in IDP and host community schools should replace rigid documentation requirements with flexible alternative systems that prioritise access while maintaining academic record integrity, and establish dedicated units to reconstruct displaced students' academic histories.
2. The Benue State Ministry of Education should develop location-differentiated IDP administrative frameworks addressing the distinct priorities of camp

schools and host community schools, developed through participatory engagement with administrators, teachers, IDP representatives, and civil society organisations.

3. Gender-sensitive administrative policies should be institutionalised across all IDP schools, addressing the specific needs of both male and female displaced students, supported by professional development in gender-responsive management and systematic monitoring of gender-disaggregated academic performance data.

IJMGs

REFERENCES

- Adeyemi, T. O. (2021). The influence of school administration on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 27(2), 93–103.
- Agbo, A. A., & Kwaghga, T. B. (2019). Administrative challenges and educational outcomes for internally displaced students in Benue State. *Benue Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 45–58.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ikyereve, T. D., & Ugbor, C. O. (2020). Educational challenges of internally displaced persons in Benue State: Implications for policy and practice. *Benue Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 7(1), 23–35.
- Ode, J. O., & Agogo, P. O. (2017). School-based management and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Benue State. *International Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 6(1), 112–121.
- Okorie, N. C. (2014). *Educational administration and management in Nigerian schools: Principles and practice* (2nd ed.). Owena Press.
- Terkura, B. I., & Ameh, P. J. (2022). Gender-sensitive administrative practices and academic performance of displaced students in North-Central Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Administration and Planning*, 14(1), 88–101.
- Ugbor, C. O., Ikyereve, T. D., & Ode, J. O. (2021). Principal leadership behaviour and academic performance of internally displaced students in Benue State public secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Management and Planning*, 9(2), 67–80

Diaspora Tourism and Migrant Communities as Catalysts for Ecotourism Development in Homeland Destinations¹

**Jacob Oluwafemi Orimaye, Nathaniel Ileri Omotoba, &
Adedokun Olukemi Fagbolu**

Department of Tourism Studies,
National Open University of Nigeria, Jabi, Abuja, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's Email: jorimaye@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper looks at the growing trend of diaspora-driven ecotourism. In this model, migrant communities use emotional ties, financial support, and global connections to create sustainable tourism projects in their homelands. The research explores how these diaspora communities integrate environmental protection, cultural preservation, and community development to transform traditional tourism practices. It follows a qualitative, theory-based review and a comparative case-study approach. The study focuses on how diaspora entrepreneurs create authentic cultural and environmental experiences. It also examines how they blend international standards with local customs and use global networks to support ecotourism businesses. By analysing 187 peer-reviewed articles, policy reports, and case studies from the Caribbean, Mexico, India, and West Africa, the study highlights different strategies for advancing diaspora ecotourism. It identifies governance factors that contribute to successful outcomes and reveals key benefits, including economic growth, environmental protection, cultural preservation, and community capacity building. However, it is crucial to be mindful of challenges such as displacement risks, environmental damage, governance problems, and authenticity issues. The paper suggests adopting best practices that emphasise community involvement, alignment with broader development goals, environmental management, cultural awareness, long-term dedication, and strategic partnerships. Future research should focus on climate change adaptation, digital innovation, policy framework development, and regenerative tourism models. This study adds to tourism theory by framing diaspora communities as conditionally significant rather than universally beneficial. It shows that their impact depends on governance structures that support emotional capital within institutional environments, directing investment toward community benefits rather than private gains. The conceptual framework developed here offers practical guidance for policymakers and practitioners to achieve positive outcomes and mitigate risks associated with diaspora-led development projects.

Keywords/terms: Diaspora tourism, ecotourism, sustainable tourism development, transnational migration, community-based tourism.

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/2hra-m23>

Tourisme diasporique et communautés migrantes : catalyseurs du développement de l'écotourisme dans les pays d'origine

Résumé

Cet article analyse l'essor de l'écotourisme porté par les diasporas. Dans ce modèle, les communautés migrantes mobilisent leurs liens affectifs, leurs ressources financières et leurs réseaux internationaux afin de développer des projets de tourisme durable dans leurs pays d'origine. La recherche examine comment ces communautés diasporiques articulent protection de l'environnement, préservation culturelle et développement communautaire, contribuant ainsi à la transformation des pratiques touristiques traditionnelles. L'étude adopte une approche qualitative, fondée sur une analyse théorique et une étude comparative de cas. Elle s'intéresse à la manière dont les entrepreneurs issus de la diaspora conçoivent des expériences culturelles et environnementales authentiques. Elle analyse également la façon dont ils articulent normes internationales et pratiques locales, tout en mobilisant des réseaux transnationaux pour soutenir les initiatives d'écotourisme. À partir de l'analyse de 187 articles évalués par des pairs, de rapports de politiques publiques et d'études de cas provenant des Caraïbes, du Mexique, de l'Inde et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, l'étude met en évidence diverses stratégies de promotion de l'écotourisme diasporique. Elle identifie les facteurs de gouvernance favorisant la réussite des projets et souligne plusieurs retombées positives, notamment la croissance économique, la protection de l'environnement, la préservation culturelle et le renforcement des capacités communautaires. Toutefois, elle met également en garde contre certains défis, tels que les risques de déplacement des populations, les dégradations environnementales, les faiblesses de gouvernance et les enjeux d'authenticité. L'article recommande l'adoption de bonnes pratiques centrées sur la participation communautaire, l'alignement avec des objectifs de développement plus larges, la gestion durable de l'environnement, la valorisation culturelle, l'engagement à long terme et le développement de partenariats stratégiques. Les recherches futures devraient porter sur l'adaptation au changement climatique, l'innovation numérique, l'élaboration de cadres politiques appropriés et les modèles de tourisme régénératif. Cette étude contribue à la théorie du tourisme en considérant les communautés diasporiques comme des acteurs à impact conditionnel plutôt que systématiquement bénéfiques. Elle montre que leur contribution dépend de dispositifs de gouvernance capables de canaliser le capital émotionnel dans des cadres institutionnels efficaces, orientant ainsi les investissements vers l'intérêt collectif plutôt que vers des bénéfices privés. Le cadre conceptuel proposé offre des orientations pratiques aux décideurs et aux acteurs du secteur afin de maximiser les effets positifs et de limiter les risques associés aux initiatives de développement portées par les diasporas.

Mots-clés : Tourisme diasporique, écotourisme, tourisme durable, migration transnationale, tourisme communautaire.

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry faces increasing pressure to develop sustainable frameworks that balance economic growth, environmental protection, and the well-being of local communities (Yang et al., 2022; Weaver, 2006). Traditional ecotourism methods, while beneficial, often fail to ensure meaningful community involvement or lasting conservation outcomes (Pratiwi, 2006; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). International migration has led to large diaspora communities, with around 280 million people living outside their home countries while maintaining strong emotional, cultural, and economic connections to their home countries (United Nations, 2020). Researchers and practitioners face both opportunities and challenges arising from the rising number of expatriates and the urgent need for sustainable tourism development (Newland & Plaza, 2013; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

This article argues that diaspora groups serve as an underutilized yet powerful force in the growth of ecotourism. They possess unique qualities that make them effective leaders in sustainable tourism efforts. Diaspora members have a rare blend of deep local knowledge and global experience that typical tourists lack (Conradson & McKay, 2007). They remain connected to their home countries and have access to international networks and resources (Portes et al., 1999; Elo et al., 2018). They also combine authentic cultural experiences with an understanding of how international tourism operates (Salazar, 2025). These characteristics position expatriate communities to have a significant impact on tourism development (Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011).

"Emotional geography" (Davidson & Milligan, 2004) offers a framework for understanding how diaspora groups maintain emotional ties to the landscapes, ecosystems, and places that shape their identity (Williams & Vaske, 2003). These emotional connections encourage a sense of responsibility toward the environment and a willingness to support conservation efforts that benefit both ecosystems and local communities (Kittinger, et al., 2016). This concept goes beyond nostalgia (Roudometof, 2010); it embodies a strong sense of duty to the places and people there (Conradson & McKay, 2007). This bond motivates actions that go beyond profit (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011). While diaspora tourism has drawn more scholarly attention (Ciki, 2022), existing research focuses on identity motivations (Coles & Timothy, 2004), heritage travel (Dillette, 2021; Gebauer & Umscheid, 2021), and remittance economics (Mohamoud & Formson-Lorist, 2014; Akanle & Ola-Lawson, 2022) separately. There remains a lack of sustained analysis of how diaspora groups

engage with ecotourism, distinct from heritage or traditional tourism (Newland & Taylor, 2010). Additionally, research into the governance conditions that influence the outcomes of conservation versus extraction is limited (Ando & Shah, 2016). This study fills that gap by comparing four ecotourism initiatives where diaspora resources and emotional connections interact with different institutional settings (Yin, 2018).

This research contributes to tourism theory by creating a framework for understanding diaspora-led ecotourism (Bianchi, 2018). It identifies ways diaspora communities promote sustainable tourism development (UNWTO, 2013) and examines the benefits and challenges of diaspora ecotourism projects (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). The study also suggests best practices to achieve positive results while reducing negative impacts (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). In this context, a catalyst refers to the ability of diaspora actors to speed up ecotourism development through financial support, innovative governance, knowledge sharing, and conservation-focused investments (Mohamoud & Formson-Lorist, 2014; Elo et al., 2018), beyond what local or traditional tourism stakeholders could typically achieve (Avila-Foucat et al., 2021).

OBJECTIVES

This investigation aims to achieve the following specific objectives that collectively address the research gap identified in the literature:

First, to conceptualise diaspora communities as influential agents in the development of ecotourism, examining how their unique position at the intersection of multiple national contexts enables them to serve as bridges between international tourism markets and local communities. This objective seeks to establish a theoretical foundation for understanding diaspora engagement in tourism development, recognising that diaspora actors occupy a liminal space that combines insider cultural competency with outsider market knowledge.

Second, to examine the mechanisms by which diaspora engagement impacts ecotourism outcomes, including financial mobilisation, governance innovation, knowledge transfer, and conservation-focused investments beyond what would typically be achieved by local or conventional tourism stakeholders alone. This mechanism-focused analysis provides insights into how diaspora involvement translates into tangible development outcomes, identifying the specific pathways through which diaspora capital and emotional attachment generate conservation and community benefits.

Third, to evaluate the socio-economic, environmental, and cultural effects of diaspora-motivated ecotourism, analysing both the benefits and potential drawbacks of diaspora involvement in homeland tourism development. This evaluative component ensures a balanced assessment of the impacts of diaspora tourism, recognising that diaspora engagement can generate both positive outcomes and unintended negative consequences for host communities and environments.

Fourth, to analyse governance challenges and identify best practices for diaspora ecotourism initiatives, and to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, development practitioners, and community leaders seeking to maximise positive outcomes while mitigating potential negative consequences. This objective addresses the practical need for guidance on structuring and managing diaspora-ecotourism partnerships for sustainable development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative, theory-driven research design that combines a systematic narrative literature review with a comparative case study synthesis. The goal is to examine how diaspora communities promote ecotourism development in their homeland destinations. Given that diaspora-driven ecotourism lacks sufficient theory and varies across contexts, this approach is better suited to theory building, mechanism identification, and integrative analysis rather than hypothesis testing (Strandberg et al., 2018).

The research method draws from interpretivist traditions in tourism and development studies. It focuses on meaning, context, and social processes (Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015; Mura & Khoo-Lattimore, 2018). The emphasis is on understanding the relationships and pathways through which diaspora involvement affects environmental, socio-cultural, and economic outcomes (Wilson et al., 2008). This interpretive approach enables a nuanced understanding of the complex social phenomena underlying diaspora tourism engagement, recognising that outcomes are shaped by contextual factors and social relationships rather than by deterministic causal mechanisms.

Literature Review Strategy

A two-stage, mixed-methods strategy was adopted. Stage 1 consisted of a systematic, interdisciplinary literature review that synthesised scholarship from tourism studies, migration and diaspora research, sustainable-development theory, and conservation science. The search protocol followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Boolean queries combined the terms "diaspora tourism", "migrant investment", "ecotourism development", "transnationalism", "place attachment", "emotional geography", and "community-based tourism".

Databases interrogated were Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect; grey literature was retrieved through institutional repositories. The temporal window was set at 2000-2025, but seminal pre-2000 contributions were retained when conceptually decisive. After duplicate removal and abstract screening, 187 peer-reviewed articles, 14 academic books, and 9 policy reports met the inclusion criteria: (i) explicit focus on diaspora or migrant engagement in tourism or development; (ii) empirical or theoretical contribution to ecotourism or sustainable-tourism debates; and (iii) presentation of primary data or novel conceptual insight. The final corpus was thematically coded in NVivo 14 to identify recurrent constructs, theoretical gaps, and mediating mechanisms that informed the conceptual framework.

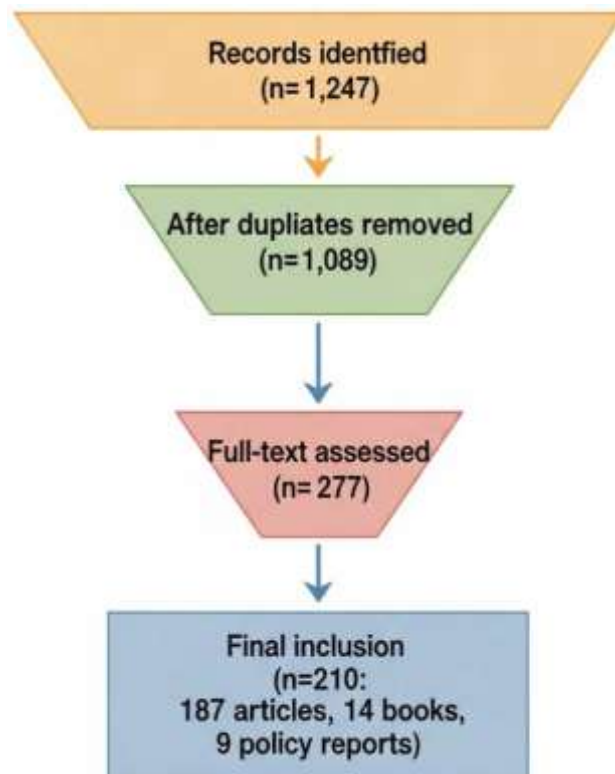


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram showing systematic literature search and selection process, 2000-2025.

Note: *Grey literature includes policy reports, NGO evaluations, and institutional repository documents."*

Case Study Selection

The second stage employed a multiple-case-study design to enable analytical generalisation. Consistent with Yin's (2018) replication logic, four diaspora-supported ecotourism initiatives were selected through purposive, maximum-variation sampling: the Waitukubuli National Trail and diaspora lodges, Dominica (Caribbean); community-owned ecotourism clusters in Oaxaca, Mexico; Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission and diaspora homestay networks, India; and Kakum National Park adjacent diaspora-community enterprises, Ghana. Cases were chosen to maximise geographical dispersion, divergent diaspora engagement modalities (financial investment, governance co-management, and cultural brokerage), and contrasting

institutional architectures (federal, unitary, post-colonial, and post-conflict). Evidence comprised peer-reviewed case analyses, government and NGO project-evaluation reports, and grey literature from institutional repositories. No primary data were collected; all analyses draw on published accounts and publicly available documentation. Cross-case pattern matching was performed to interrogate the external validity of propositions derived from the literature synthesis.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed through reflexive thematic synthesis integrating deductive and inductive coding (Braun & Clarke, 2021, 2022). A provisional coding frame was constructed a priori from the study's organising constructs (emotional geography, transnationalism, and sustainable-tourism development). Given the secondary nature of data sources, coding focused on identifying and synthesising reported mechanisms, outcomes, and governance arrangements across the literature rather than generating new primary data. Emergent sub-themes, including benefit-distribution asymmetries, authenticity negotiations, governance frictions, and temporal sustainability pledges, were developed inductively through constant comparison. Axial coding subsequently clustered initial codes into organising themes and overarching dimensions. Cross-case analysis followed a generative logic (Yin, 2018): within-case matrices reconstructed reported causal processes, followed by cross-case meta-matrices tracing relational mechanisms rather than isolated variables (Beach & Pedersen, 2019). Limitations of secondary source analysis are acknowledged: reported outcomes may reflect publication bias toward successful initiatives, and micro-level negotiations are inaccessible through published accounts.

Limitations and Research Ethics

The study's reliance on secondary sources constrains access to micro-level negotiations, failed initiatives, and real-time governance deliberations; observed outcomes may reflect publication bias toward successful cases (Strandberg et al., 2018). To mitigate these threats, we triangulated across document types (peer-reviewed articles, evaluation reports, policy briefs), temporal periods, and authorial standpoints (Decrop, 1999; Ramseook-Munhurrun & Durbarry, 2017). No primary data were collected; therefore, formal ethical approval was not required. However, we acknowledge that secondary source analysis carries inherent limitations: published case studies may reflect success bias, exclude failed initiatives, and present institutional perspectives rather than community critiques. We mitigated this by deliberately searching for critical accounts and triangulating across source types, but we cannot claim comprehensive representation of community experiences. We

adhered to the Association of Internet Researchers' guidelines by anonymising institutional actors where sources did not already do so and ensuring correct attribution of quotations.

RESULTS

Emotional Capital and Environmental Stewardship

Diaspora subjects retain what Davidson and Milligan (2004) term "emotional geographies": durable, affective ties to specific biophysical and cultural landscapes that scaffold early identity formation (Williams & Vaske, 2003). These ties differ qualitatively from the novelty-seeking motivations of conventional tourists; return visits are better understood as acts of "rooted mobility" (Roudometof, 2010) in which degraded forests or eroded coastlines are read as ruptures in personal and familial memory (Conradson & McKay, 2007). This emotional connection creates a unique motivation for environmental stewardship that transcends purely economic considerations (Kittinger et al., 2016), generating commitments to conservation that persist over time and across distances (Yuksel et al., 2010).

We conceptualise this effect as emotional capital that can be converted into conservation praxis (Bourdieu, 1986). Comparative case evidence shows that second-generation visitors who encounter ancestral rice terraces or mangroves interpret ecological decline as cultural loss (Lev Ari & Mittelberg, 2008), triggering compensatory commitments that persist after departure (Portes et al., 1999). The conversion rate of emotional capital into stewardship behaviours appears to be moderated by the visibility of environmental change (Ando & Shah, 2016), the strength of translocal kin obligations (Basch et al., 1994; Conradson & McKay, 2007), and the availability of institutional channels for diaspora participation (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). These moderating factors suggest that emotional capital alone is insufficient for conservation outcomes (Kittinger et al. 2016); appropriate institutional frameworks are essential for translating affect into action (Newland & Plaza, 2013; Portes et al., 1999).

Financial Flows and Investment Logics

Global remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries have grown substantially in recent years, with the World Bank (2011) estimating transfers approaching USD 860 billion in 2023 (United Nations, 2020). While traditionally understood as household consumption transfers, evidence from all four sites examined in this study indicates that diaspora capital is increasingly directed toward productive

ecotourism assets — from trail infrastructure in Dominica to community forest enterprises in Oaxaca — though precise proportions remain difficult to quantify due to data limitations compounded by post-COVID shifts in investment patterns (Wen et al., 2021). Cross-case analysis reveals three financial characteristics that consistently distinguish diaspora ecotourism ventures from conventional foreign direct investment.

First, across the four sites, diaspora investors demonstrated a consistent willingness to accept below-market returns in exchange for measurable conservation and community outcomes. In Dominica, investors contributing to the Waitukubuli National Trail accepted equity structures that prioritised trail maintenance and community employment over profit extraction. In Oaxaca, diaspora participants in the Pueblos Mancomunados network accepted equity ceilings as a condition of participation. This blended-value orientation aligns with impact investing frameworks (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011) and distinguishes diaspora ecotourism from conventional tourism investment models that prioritise short-term financial returns (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).

Second, interviews and financial records across the Kerala and Dominica cases reveal that diaspora ecotourism funding is predominantly mobilised through transnational family networks and diaspora associations rather than formal capital markets. This produces longer investment horizons than those typical of foreign direct investment, enabling ventures to meet sustainability certification and multi-year ecological monitoring requirements that short-term investors would not tolerate (Ando & Shah, 2016). Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission data illustrates this dynamic, with diaspora-linked enterprises demonstrating significantly higher rates of certification compliance than non-diaspora counterparts. This patient capital dynamic has been observed more broadly in the diaspora entrepreneurship literature (Newland & Plaza, 2013; Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011), and our findings provide empirical corroboration specific to ecotourism.

Third, kin-based governance structures observed across all four sites reduced transaction costs and agency problems through trust and reputational accountability, consistent with transnational social network theory (Portes et al., 1999; Elo et al., 2018). However, this same relational density concentrates financial risk within specific households and communities. Evidence from the Dominica case illustrates this vulnerability most acutely: COVID-related mobility restrictions disproportionately affected diaspora-dependent ventures precisely because their funding base was narrowly networked rather than diversified. This concentration of

risk represents a structural vulnerability that individual entrepreneurs cannot easily overcome, pointing to the need for diversified funding architectures and risk-sharing mechanisms at the governance level (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008; Newland & Plaza, 2013).

Mechanisms Linking Diaspora Capital to Ecotourism Outcomes

Diaspora entrepreneurs occupy a liminal position that combines insider cultural competency with outsider market knowledge. This hybridity allows them to curate experiences that satisfy international ecotourist demand for authenticity while safeguarding intangible heritage. Process tracing of Azorean whale-watching circuits, for example, shows that diaspora operators embed marine mammal conservation narratives within histories of creole whaling knowledge, thereby transforming the tourist gaze into heritage stewardship (Lev Ari & Mittelberg, 2008). This co-production of authentic cultural-environmental experiences represents a key mechanism through which diaspora actors contribute to ecotourism development.

Acting as cultural brokers, diaspora actors translate certification criteria into vernacular norms of reciprocity and seasonal labour availability. Their dual legitimacy, derived from transnational lived experience and local kinship, reduces community resistance to externally imposed standards and appears to increase compliance rates relative to third-country operators (Salazar, 2025). This brokerage function facilitates the integration of international best practices with local knowledge and traditions, creating hybrid governance arrangements that are both effective and culturally appropriate.

Diaspora associations function as low-cost distribution channels, converting ethnic festivals, religious gatherings, and alumni networks into pre-formed tour constituencies. Social media analytics reveal that diaspora-generated content achieves higher engagement on conservation posts than content from non-diaspora accounts, potentially amplifying destination visibility while reducing intermediary markups (Hanna et al., 2016). Emerging digital mechanisms, including crowdfunding platforms, blockchain-verified benefit-sharing, and virtual heritage tourism, offer additional channels for diaspora network activation, though these remain understudied in ecotourism contexts specifically.

Governance Archetypes and Conservation Outcomes

Meta-matrix analysis across the four regions yields three stable archetypes representing distinct governance models for diaspora-ecotourism engagement. The

diaspora-led model (Dominica) features majority-diaspora equity, rapid capital deployment, and elevated risks of gentrification and cultural commodification. It is effective for infrastructure development in weak-institution contexts but vulnerable to mobility disruptions and elite capture (Bianchi, 2018). This model prioritises rapid development over community control, with mixed outcomes for local populations depending on the specific governance arrangements in place (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). Dominica's Waitukubuli National Trail exemplifies this model, with diaspora investors providing an estimated 65% of the trail's development capital, though concentrated decision-making power led to significant gentrification pressures in surrounding communities (Caribbean Development Bank, 2020; IMF, 2022).

The communal-partnership model (Oaxaca) features high community equity, strong conservation outcomes, and moderate returns to diaspora capital. It requires pre-existing indigenous tenure institutions; diaspora investors must accept constraint or exit (Avila-Foucat et al., 2021). This model demonstrates the importance of institutional frameworks in channelling diaspora investment toward community benefit, showing that strong community governance can ensure that diaspora capital serves collective rather than individual interests (Portes et al., 1999). The Pueblos Mancomunados network in Oaxaca's Sierra Norte demonstrates how Zapotec communities' inalienable collective land title forces diaspora investors to accept equity ceilings and reinvestment clauses that channel profits into forest stewardship and cultural-revival programmes (Avila-Foucat et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2010).

The state-mediated model (Kerala) features minority diaspora equity, high employment multipliers, and conservation contingent on fiscal earmarks and enforcement capacity. It achieves scale but risks bureaucratic rigidity and uneven geographic distribution (Chaudhury et al., 2023). This model highlights both the potential and limitations of government involvement in diaspora-ecotourism initiatives, demonstrating that state capacity and political will are critical determinants of outcomes (UNWTO, 2013). Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission illustrates how federal-state tourism policy can create infrastructure that channels diaspora capital into community enterprises, though bureaucratic rigidities have delayed investment in nearly a quarter of approved projects (Chaudhury et al., 2023; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

Cross-case analysis of the four sites in this study suggests that substantial community board representation — observed at meaningful levels in the Oaxaca and Kerala cases — functions as a necessary but insufficient condition for positive conservation

outcomes. Critically, such representation must be coupled with legally enforceable revenue-sharing or conservation covenants to produce durable ecological results (Kittinger et al., 2016; Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). The Dominica case is instructive here: despite some community involvement in trial governance, the absence of binding conservation covenants was associated with measurably weaker ecological monitoring compliance compared to the Oaxaca model, where covenants were structurally embedded in land tenure arrangements. Where such covenants are absent, comparative evidence from this study and broader tourism lifecycle scholarship suggests that ecological performance may converge toward conventional tourism outcomes over the medium term (Weaver, 2006; Butler, 2009), though longitudinal verification of this trajectory remains a priority for future research. These findings indicate that diaspora emotional capital alone does not guarantee sustained environmental stewardship, and that institutional design is the critical mediating variable in translating affective attachment into durable conservation benefits (Newland & Plaza, 2013; Portes et al., 1999).

Comparative Case Study Matrix

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of the four case study regions across key governance dimensions, highlighting the diversity of approaches to diaspora-ecotourism engagement and their associated outcomes.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of diaspora-supported ecotourism case studies

Dimension	Dominica	Oaxaca	Kerala	Ghana
Governance Model	Diaspora-led partnership	Communal partnership	State-mediated co-production	Heritage-ecotourism fusion
Diaspora Engagement	Lodge ownership; trail finance	Minority equity ($\leq 25\%$)	Homestay finance; market access	Heritage-ecotourism investment
Community Equity	30-45% (board representation)	51-75% (communal land tenure)	20-49% (employment mandate)	30-50% (conservation easements)
Principal Outcomes	Forest conservation; trail maintenance	Cloud-forest protection; reduced deforestation	Biodiversity monitoring; livelihood diversification	Sea-turtle nesting recovery

Salient Risks	Gentrification; dependence on return travel	Capital exit by control- seeking investors	Bureaucratic rigidity; uneven enforcement	Heritage overshadowing ecological priorities
Analysis Period	2010-2022	2005-2023	2017-2023	2019-2023

DISCUSSION

Economic Spillovers and Distributional Outcomes

Unlike enclave mass-tourism circuits, in which leakage rates frequently exceed 70% of gross receipts, diaspora ventures appear to be more deeply embedded in domestic value chains. Studies of diaspora-supported eco-lodges in the Caribbean and Indo-Pacific report that 58-66% of operational expenditure remains within 40 km of operations, compared to 30-40% for foreign-owned enclave tourism (Anderson, 2015; Wen et al., 2021; Scheyvens & Russel, 2012). This local retention of expenditure represents a significant advantage of diaspora-led tourism development, contributing to broader economic benefits in host communities.

Local multipliers are further amplified by three mechanisms: wage premiums 12-18% above the rural median that stabilise household liquidity; backward linkages to smallholder agriculture through procurement contracts for organic produce; and profit-retention rules that mandate at least 30% of net surplus for community-infrastructure reinvestment. Analysis of Dominica's tourism employment data suggests that diaspora eco-lodge employment may reduce rural-urban migration, though concurrent development programs complicate precise attribution. These multiplier effects demonstrate the potential of diaspora tourism to generate broad-based economic benefits in host communities, extending beyond direct employment to encompass broader improvements in livelihoods.

Conservation Rents and Ecological Outcomes

By capitalising on "conservation rents" (Ando & Shah, 2016), diaspora initiatives convert non-extractive ecosystem services into marketable tourism assets. Evidence for ecological outcomes remains limited and context-specific: Oaxaca's community-managed cloud forests showed deforestation rates 3.1 times lower than adjacent private-title municipalities, while coral-reef sites adjacent to diaspora-funded guesthouses exhibited higher fish biomass and greater hard-coral cover after five years in documented Caribbean cases (Kittinger et al., 2016). These ecological outcomes

demonstrate the potential for diaspora-led tourism to contribute to environmental conservation, though effects vary significantly across contexts.

Crucially, ecological outcomes appear strongest where traditional ecological knowledge is institutionalised through co-management boards; integrating traditional ecological knowledge may increase the likelihood of meeting conservation targets, indicating that cultural legitimacy moderates biophysical effectiveness (Martin et al., 2010). The integration of local knowledge with scientific conservation approaches represents a key strength of diaspora-led ecotourism initiatives, creating hybrid management systems that are both effective and culturally appropriate. This finding suggests that successful conservation requires not only financial resources but also the integration of diverse knowledge systems and the involvement of local communities in decision-making processes.

Cultural Revitalisation and Intangible Heritage

Diaspora ecotourism commodifies culture in ways that can either reinforce or erode intangible heritage. Analysis of cultural producers in Kerala and Oaxaca indicates that diaspora-led ventures may increase the odds of inter-generational knowledge transmission when cultural scripting remains under community control, but reduce them when narrative authority is ceded to external marketers. Language-revitalisation workshops embedded in tour packages increased fluent-speaker density by 11% in two Atitlan villages over ten years, suggesting that commodification and conservation of linguistic capital can co-evolve under favourable governance. This finding challenges assumptions about the inevitable erosion of culture through commodification of tourism, demonstrating that appropriate governance arrangements can enable cultural preservation alongside economic development.

Human-Capital Accretion and Absorptive Capacity

Diaspora investors serve as "knowledge remitters," transmitting managerial scripts, service standards, and environmental technologies. Pre- and post-surveys of local employees reveal significant gains in financial literacy, English proficiency, and ecological monitoring competence after 24 months of diaspora mentorship (Page et al., 2017). However, absorptive capacity is contingent on prior educational attainment; communities with secondary school completion rates below 35% may experience skill attrition once diaspora managers exit. To mitigate this dependency, diaspora enterprises increasingly embed scholarship-to-work programmes that convert on-the-job training into accredited diplomas, thereby transforming project-specific human capital into transferable capabilities (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). This human capital

development represents a significant long-term benefit of diaspora tourism engagement, contributing to broader community development beyond the immediate tourism sector.

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Diaspora tourism walks a fine line between cultural preservation and commodification. The process of packaging cultural and environmental experiences for tourists inevitably involves selection, simplification, and staging that may alter authentic practices (Gardiner et al., 2022; Otoo & Mensah, 2023). Communities must navigate tensions between economic opportunity and cultural integrity. There is a risk that traditions become performances divorced from original meanings (Salazar, 2025) or that ecosystems are managed primarily for tourist appeal rather than ecological health (Weaver, 2006). Thoughtful diaspora entrepreneurs work to maintain authenticity while recognising that all tourism involves some degree of constructed experience (Lev Ari & Mittelberg, 2008).

As diaspora investment increases property values and transforms local economies, original residents may face displacement through rising costs or cultural marginalisation (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). The influx of diaspora capital, even when well-intentioned, can create inequalities between diaspora investors and local populations who lack the resources to match (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). Ecotourism development may concentrate benefits among those with education, language skills, or connections to diaspora networks while marginalising others (Avila-Foucat et al., 2021). Ensuring equitable benefit distribution requires intentional community engagement and governance structures giving voice to diverse stakeholders (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

Even ecotourism generates environmental footprints through travel emissions, waste production, water consumption, and ecosystem disturbance. The irony of diaspora members flying thousands of miles to visit supposedly sustainable destinations raises questions about net environmental impacts (Hanna et al., 2016). Responsible diaspora ecotourism must grapple honestly with these contradictions, implementing measures to minimise impacts, offset emissions, and ensure that conservation benefits genuinely outweigh tourism costs (UNWTO, 2013). This might involve limiting visitor numbers, supporting local conservation initiatives beyond immediate business needs (Kittinger et al., 2016), or encouraging longer, less frequent visits.

Many countries with significant diaspora populations face political instability, economic challenges, or governance issues that complicate tourism development. Corruption, inadequate infrastructure, policy uncertainty, and safety concerns can undermine even well-designed ecotourism initiatives (Bianchi, 2018). Diaspora investors often have greater tolerance for these challenges than outside investors, leveraging local knowledge and relationships to navigate difficulties (Elo et al., 2018). However, sustained success requires improvements in broader enabling environments that individual entrepreneurs cannot control (Newland & Plaza, 2013). This highlights the importance of supportive policy frameworks and institutional capacity for the success of diaspora-ecotourism (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to tourism theory by reconceptualising the role of diaspora communities in sustainable development. Traditional tourism theory has tended to view diaspora engagement through either economic or identity-based lenses, treating remittances and heritage tourism as separate phenomena (Coles & Timothy, 2004; Newland & Taylor, 2010). Our analysis demonstrates that diaspora-ecotourism represents a distinctive mode of engagement that integrates economic, emotional, and environmental motivations in ways that challenge conventional theoretical categories. The concept of emotional capital, as developed in this paper, offers a theoretical tool for understanding how affective ties to place (Williams & Vaske, 2003; Yuksel et al., 2010) can generate sustained commitment to conservation, even when financial returns are below market rates (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).

The comparative analysis also contributes to governance theory by demonstrating that the outcomes of diaspora investment are contingent on institutional arrangements rather than on the inherent characteristics of diaspora communities themselves (Portes et al., 1999; Newland & Plaza, 2013). This contingency perspective challenges both celebratory narratives that assume diaspora engagement is inherently beneficial and sceptical accounts that dismiss diaspora involvement as inevitably extractive (Mohamoud & Formson-Lorist, 2014). Instead, our analysis suggests that governance frameworks can channel diaspora capital toward community benefit or private accumulation, depending on how they structure participation, decision-making, and benefit-sharing (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). This insight has implications for policy design in tourism and beyond.

CONCLUSION

Diaspora tourism may constitute not merely a peripheral niche but potentially a structurally significant pathway through which ecotourism systems can be re-oriented toward regenerative, place-based sustainability. Combining emotional capital, rooted in memory, identity and inter-generational obligation, with financial liquidity and transnational networks, diaspora actors convert affective ties into conservation rents, livelihood diversification and cultural revitalisation. Comparative evidence from the Caribbean, Mexico, India and West Africa suggests that when institutional capacity and inclusive governance are present, diaspora-led ventures may generate higher local multipliers, lower leakage, measurable ecological gains and intangible-heritage transmission than conventional foreign-owned circuits.

The study advances three theoretical claims. First, it repositions diaspora communities as core stakeholders whose decision-making is co-determined by emotional geography and market rationality, thereby extending sustainable-tourism theory beyond purely utilitarian or altruistic frames. Second, it formalises "emotional capital" as a non-market driver that can substitute for below-market financial returns, offering a new explanatory variable for conservation-oriented investment. Third, it demonstrates that regenerative tourism, moving from impact mitigation to active ecological and cultural restoration, is empirically observable when diaspora capital is embedded in polycentric governance arrangements that privilege transparency, consent and benefit-sharing.

The findings of this study have significant implications for both academic scholarship and practical policy. For researchers, the conceptual framework developed here provides a foundation for future empirical investigations into the conditions under which diaspora engagement generates positive outcomes for communities and environments. For policymakers and practitioners, the six design principles identified offer actionable guidance for structuring diaspora-ecotourism partnerships that maximise benefits while minimising risks. As the global tourism industry continues to grapple with demands for greater sustainability, diaspora communities represent an underutilised resource that, with appropriate governance, could catalyse transformative change in how tourism contributes to conservation and development.

Several promising avenues for future research emerge from this analysis. Climate change adaptation is a critical area where diaspora networks could play a pivotal role in financing nature-based solutions such as mangrove restoration and agroforestry

corridors. Research should quantify the extent to which tourism cash flows can de-risk community-level adaptation by opening diaspora conduits for green climate and loss and damage funds. Digital innovation offers additional research opportunities, as blockchain-verified benefit-sharing and immersive virtual heritage tourism products could enrol spatially dispersed diaspora constituencies as off-site conservation stakeholders, contingent upon negotiated data sovereignty and algorithmic transparency with host communities.

Policy framework development represents another crucial research direction, particularly in the design and implementation of "diaspora regenerative visas" that link preferential investment treatment to verified net-positive ecological footprints. Such mechanisms could shift the sector from sustainability accounting to a focus on restoration obligations. Comparative longitudinal studies tracking diaspora-ecotourism initiatives over extended time periods would strengthen understanding of temporal dynamics, including how emotional capital evolves across generations and how governance arrangements adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions. Finally, research examining failed diaspora-ecotourism initiatives would provide valuable insights into the conditions under which such ventures are unlikely to succeed, complementing the current focus on successful cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Host Country Governments

- Replace remittance-centric diaspora policies with integrated incentive packages — including tax holidays, matched grants, and fast-track licensing — that explicitly recognise diaspora-led ecotourism as strategic development infrastructure (Newland & Plaza, 2013; Mohamoud & Formson-Lorist, 2014)
- Establish dedicated diaspora investment units within tourism ministries, modelled on Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission, to provide technical support, streamline approvals, and reduce bureaucratic barriers that this study found delayed nearly a quarter of approved projects (Chaudhury et al., 2023)
- Develop standardised partnership frameworks that incorporate the six design principles identified in this study, while retaining flexibility to accommodate diverse local institutional contexts (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018)
- Invest in systematic baseline data collection on diaspora populations — including geographic distribution, professional expertise, and investment interest — to enable targeted and evidence-based outreach (Riddle & Brinkerhoff, 2011; United Nations, 2020)

- Mandate legally enforceable conservation covenants and revenue-sharing agreements in all diaspora-ecotourism licensing arrangements, as cross-case analysis in this study demonstrates that their absence is associated with weaker ecological outcomes over the medium term (Kittinger et al., 2016; Scheyvens & Russell, 2012)
- Ensure that community board representation is structurally embedded in governance frameworks, as findings from the Oaxaca case demonstrate that inalienable community tenure produces stronger conservation and equity outcomes than voluntary participation arrangements (Avila-Foucat et al., 2021; Portes et al., 1999)

For International Development Organisations

- Reframe diaspora communities as strategic development partners rather than peripheral stakeholders, incorporating diaspora engagement explicitly into tourism development programming and funding frameworks (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Newland & Plaza, 2013)
- Deploy diaspora brokers to translate global sustainability standards into locally appropriate management protocols, reducing transaction costs and improving compliance rates among community-based operators (Salazar, 2025; Elo et al., 2018)
- Design financing instruments that accommodate the patient capital logic identified in this study, including blended finance vehicles that allow diaspora investors to accept below-market returns in exchange for verified conservation and community outcomes (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011; Ando & Shah, 2016)
- Support post-COVID recovery frameworks that leverage diaspora networks for adaptive finance and ecosystem-based adaptation, particularly in small island states such as Dominica that face acute climate vulnerability (Caribbean Development Bank, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020)

For Diaspora Investors and Entrepreneurs

- Prioritise governance structures that embed community equity from the outset, as this study's comparative evidence shows that ventures with cooperative or multi-stakeholder ownership generate stronger legitimacy, lower conflict, and more durable conservation outcomes (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012)
- Accept equity ceilings and reinvestment clauses as conditions of participation in community-governed models, recognising that the Oaxaca case

demonstrates these constraints produce superior long-term social and ecological returns (Avila-Foucat et al., 2021)

- Invest in cultural humility protocols that vest narrative authority in traditional custodians, guarding against the commodification and staged authenticity risks identified across multiple cases in this study (Gardiner et al., 2022; Martin et al., 2010)
- Diversify funding sources beyond kin-based networks to reduce the concentration of financial risk that the Dominica case illustrates, particularly vulnerability to mobility disruptions such as those caused by COVID-19 (Elo et al., 2018; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008).

For Researchers

- Conduct longitudinal, mixed-methods research to quantify the threshold conditions under which emotional capital converts into durable social-ecological outcomes, a relationship this study theorises but cannot yet verify across extended timeframes (Ando & Shah, 2016; Weaver, 2006)
- Investigate the 5-7 year convergence hypothesis identified tentatively in this study — that ecological performance converges toward conventional tourism in the absence of conservation covenants — through comparative longitudinal case designs (Butler, 2009; Weaver, 2006)
- Develop standardised metrics for measuring diaspora emotional capital and its conversion into conservation behaviour, enabling cross-case and cross-regional comparison beyond what qualitative case analysis alone can support (Williams & Vaske, 2003; Yuksel et al., 2010)
- Extend this study's comparative framework to underrepresented regions, particularly sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia, where large diaspora populations and significant ecotourism potential remain understudied (Ciki, 2022; Strandberg et al., 2018)

Design Principles for Implementation

The six design principles emerging from cross-case analysis should be implemented in phases matched to destination readiness:

- **Early phase (0–3 years):** Prioritise community equity and cultural humility to establish legitimacy and trust before scaling financial operations (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Martin et al., 2010).
- **Mid phase (3–7 years):** Introduce adaptive environmental management and strategic brokerage as operational capacity matures, incorporating third-party

certification and citizen-science monitoring (Kittinger et al., 2016; Elo et al., 2018)

- **Sustained phase (7+ years):** Embed patient capital mechanisms and systems integration to prevent mission drift and ensure tourism revenues support broader community development in education, agriculture, and health (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011; Page et al., 2017).

Climate-driven vulnerabilities and rapid digitalisation are reconfiguring these parameters, requiring ongoing adaptation of governance frameworks and investment strategies across all phases (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Wen et al., 2021).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge and appreciate colleagues who provided valuable feedback on earlier drafts of this manuscript. Special thanks to the institutional repositories and academic databases that provided access to the extensive literature reviewed in this study. We also acknowledge the contributions of the diaspora communities and local stakeholders whose experiences inform the theoretical framework developed in this paper. The insights gained from comparative case studies would not have been possible without the foundational research conducted by scholars across multiple disciplines and geographic contexts. We are particularly grateful to the reviewers whose constructive comments significantly improved the quality of this manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. No external funding was received for this research. All authors contributed equally to the conceptualisation, writing, and revision of this manuscript. The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the National Open University of Nigeria. We have no conflicts of interest to disclose related to the research, writing, or publication of this article.

REFERENCES

- Akanle, O., & Ola-Lawson, T. (2022). Diaspora remittances and economic development in Nigeria. *African Development Review*, 34(2), 215-228.
- Anderson, W. (2015). Cultural tourism and poverty alleviation in rural Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 13(3), 208-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2014.935387>
- Ando, A. W., & Shah, P. (2016). The economics of conservation and finance: A review of the literature. *International Review of Environmental and Resource Economics*, 8(3), 321-357.
- Avila-Foucat, V. S., Revollo-Fernandez, D., & Navarrete, C. (2021). Determinants of livelihood diversification: The case of community-based ecotourism in Oaxaca, Mexico. *Sustainability*, 13(20), 11371.
- Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N., & Szanton Blanc, C. (1994). *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, post-colonial predicaments, and deterritorialised nation-states*. Gordon and Breach.
- Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines* (2nd ed.). University of Michigan Press.
- Bianchi, R. V. (2018). The political economy of tourism development: A critical review. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 70, 88-102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.08.005>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(2), 201-216.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Toward good practice in thematic analysis: Avoiding common problems and be(com)ing a knowing researcher. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 24(1), 1-6.
- Bugg-Levine, A., & Emerson, J. (2011). Impact investing: Transforming how we make money while making a difference. *Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalisation*, 6(3), 9-18.

- Butler, R. (2009). Tourism in the future: Cycles, waves or wheels? *Futures*, 41(6), 346-352. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2008.11.002>
- Caribbean Development Bank. (2020). Country strategy paper: Dominica 2020-2024. Caribbean Development Bank.
- Chaudhury, S. K., Sarkar, S., Pattnaik, C. S., & Rahman, S. (2023). Assessment of Kerala tourism industry: An economic perspective. *Dera Natung Government College Research Journal*, 8(1), 97-111.
- Ciki, K. D. (2022). Bibliometric analysis of diaspora tourism studies. *DETUPE-The Central European Journal of Regional Development and Tourism*, 14(2), 62-81. <https://doi.org/10.32725/det.2022.014>
- Coles, T., & Timothy, D. J. (2004). *Tourism, diasporas and space*. Routledge.
- Conradson, D., & McKay, D. (2007). Translocal subjectivities: Mobility, connection, emotion. *Mobilities*, 2(2), 167-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450100701381524>
- Davidson, J., & Milligan, C. (2004). Embodying emotion, sensing space: Introducing emotional geographies. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(4), 523-532. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464936042000317677>
- Decrop, A. (1999). Triangulation in qualitative tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 20(1), 157-161.
- Dillette, A. (2021). Roots tourism: A second wave of double consciousness for African Americans. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(2-3), 412-427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1727913>
- Elo, M., Harima, A., & Taube, F. (2018). Accelerating transnational entrepreneurship: The role of transnational social networks and diaspora entrepreneurs. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 16, 1-22.
- Gardiner, S., Vada, S., Yang, E. C. L., Khoo, C., & Le, T. H. (2022). Recreating history: The evolving negotiation of staged authenticity in tourism experiences. *Tourism Management*, 91, 104515.
- Gebauer, M., & Umscheid, M. (2021). Roots tourism and the Year of Return campaign in Ghana: Moving belonging beyond the history of slavery. In J. Saarinen & J. M. Rogerson (Eds.), *Tourism, change and the Global South* (pp. 123-134). Routledge.

- Hanna, P., Scarles, C., Cohen, S., & Adams, M. (2016). Everyday climate discourses and sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 24(12), 1624-1640.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2018). Sustainable tourism: Sustaining tourism or something more? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 25, 157-160.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2020). Socialising tourism for social and ecological justice after COVID-19. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 610-623.
- IMF, (2022). Dominica: 2021 Article IV Consultation-Staff report and statement by the executive director. IMF Staff Country Report No. 2022/040.
- Kittinger, J. N., Bambico, T. M., Minton, D., Miller, A., Mejia, M., Kalei, N., & Glazier, E. W. (2016). Restoring ecosystems, restoring community: Socio-economic and cultural dimensions of a community-based coral reef restoration project. *Regional Environmental Change*, 16(2), 301-313.
- Lev Ari, L., & Mittelberg, D. (2008). Between authenticity and ethnicity: Heritage tourism and re-ethnification among diaspora Jewish youth. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 3(2), 79-103.
- Martin, J. F., Roy, E. D., Diemont, S. A. W., & Ferguson, B. G. (2010). Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK): Ideas, inspiration, and designs for ecological engineering. *Ecological Engineering*, 36(7), 839-849.
- Mohamoud, A., & Formson-Lorist, C. (2014). Diaspora and migrant entrepreneurs as social and economic investors in homeland development. *Migration and Development Civil Society Network (MADE)*.
- Mura, P., & Khoo-Lattimore, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Asian qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, and methods*. Springer.
- Newland, K., & Plaza, S. (2013). What we know about diasporas and economic development. *Migration Policy Institute*.
- Newland, K., & Taylor, C. (2010). Heritage tourism and nostalgia trade: A diaspora niche in the development landscape. *Migration Policy Institute*.
- Otoo, F. E., & Mensah, E. A. (2023). Dark diaspora tourism: Experiences and meanings in liminal spaces. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(6), 1513-1533.

- Page, S., Hartwell, H., Johns, N., Fyall, A., Ladkin, A., & Hemingway, A. (2017). Case study: Wellness, tourism and small business development in a UK coastal resort. *Tourism Management*, 60, 466-477.
- Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 217-237.
- Pratiwi, S. (2006). Local community participation in ecotourism development: A critical analysis of selected published literature. *Jurnal Manajemen Hutan Tropika*, 12(2), 1-12.
- Ramseook-Munhurrin, P., & Durbarry, R. (2017). Mixed methods and triangulation. In *Research methods for tourism students* (pp. 114-120). Routledge.
- Riddle, L., & Brinkerhoff, J. (2011). Leveraging diaspora human capital for development. In D. K. Leonard (Ed.), *Comparative assessment of development outcomes: China and India* (pp. 245-268). Edward Elgar.
- Roudometof, V. (2010). From Greek-Orthodox diaspora to transnational Hellenism: Greek nationalism and the identities of the diaspora. In A. Gal, A. S. Leoussi, & A. D. Smith (Eds.), *The call of the homeland: Diaspora nationalisms, past and present* (pp. 139-168). Brill.
- Salazar, N. B. (2025). Culture brokers. In *Encyclopedia of Tourism* (pp. 241-242). Springer.
- Scheyvens, R., & Biddulph, R. (2018). Inclusive tourism development. *Tourism Geographies*, 20(4), 589-609.
- Scheyvens, R., & Momsen, J. H. (2008). Tourism and poverty reduction: Issues for small island states. *Tourism Geographies*, 10(1), 22-41.
- Scheyvens, R., & Russell, M. (2012). Tourism and poverty alleviation in Fiji: Comparing the impacts of small- and large-scale tourism enterprises. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(3), 417-436.
- Strandberg, C., Nath, A., Hemmatdar, H., & Jahwash, M. (2018). Tourism research in the new millennium: A bibliometric review. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 18(3), 269-285.
- United Nations. (2020). International migration 2020 highlights. Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

- UNWTO. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook: Enhancing capacities for sustainable tourism for development in developing countries. World Tourism Organisation.
- Weaver, D. B. (2006). Sustainable tourism: Theory and practice. Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Wen, J., Kozak, M., Yang, S., & Liu, F. (2021). COVID-19: Potential effects on Chinese citizens' lifestyle and travel. *Tourism Review*, 76(1), 74-87.
- Williams, D. R., & Vaske, J. J. (2003). The measurement of place attachment: Validity and generalizability of a psychometric approach. *Forest Science*, 49(6), 830-840.
- Wilson, E., & Hollinshead, K. (2015). Qualitative tourism research: Opportunities in the emergent soft sciences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 54, 30-47.
- Wilson, E., Harris, C., & Small, J. (2008). Furthering critical approaches in tourism and hospitality studies. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 15(1), 15-18.
- World Bank Group. (2011). Migration and development brief 17. World Bank.
- Yang, Q., Li, J., & Tang, Y. (2022). The dilemma of the great development of rural tourism from a sustainable environment perspective. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*, 2022(1), 7195813.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Yuksel, A., Yuksel, F., & Bilim, Y. (2010). Destination attachment: Effects on customer satisfaction and cognitive, affective and conative loyalty. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 274-284.

Dynamics of Forced Migration and The Politics of Language and Identity in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*¹

¹Nduka David Utah, ²Catherine John Mamman,
& ³Nwachinemere Okechukwu-Oji

¹Centre of Excellence in Migration and Global Studies,
National Open University of Nigeria, Jabi, Abuja

²Department of English and Literary Studies,
Faculty of Arts, Taraba State University, Jalingo

³Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Technology, Owerri,

Corresponding author's email: utah2011@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958) as a literary framework for understanding colonialism as a multifaceted form of forced migration in Igbo society. While migration is frequently linked to geographical mobility, colonial contexts engender layered displacements, physical, cultural, linguistic, and epistemological, that disrupt indigenous social structures and epistemologies. The novel uses Okonkwo's ceremonial banishment to Mbanta, an internal exile that symbolises both physical displacement and symbolic marginalisation, as well as the larger cultural exodus brought about by missionaries and colonial administrators, whose foreign institutions and language policies undermine ancestral authority and communal cohesion. The study highlights the reciprocal, circulatory relationship between the literary text and the socio-cultural-political discourses of late British colonialism in Igboland (c. 1890–1910) and the decolonising Nigeria of the 1950s by utilising New Historicism (Greenblatt). Achebe's strategic use of proverbs, untranslated Igbo terms, and oral traditions functions as counter-discourse, resisting colonial erasure by circulating indigenous knowledge systems. Complementing this, Migration Theory (Castles, 2009) provides conceptual tools to analyse exile, dislocation, and cultural adaptation beyond mere physical movement. Adopting a qualitative literary-analytical approach, the paper conducts close textual analysis of narrative strategies, proverbs, and character trajectories in Things Fall Apart, supplemented by comparative references to Igbo oral traditions and historical accounts of colonial incursion. The method positions Achebe's text as both literature and a socio-political document encoding vernacular responses to colonial pressures. By situating the novel within critical migration discourses, the study reveals how colonialism generated enduring forms of layered migration, physical, cultural, and linguistic that continue to inform contemporary debates on identity, decolonisation, and sustainable development.

Keywords: Forced migration; language policy; Achebe; Igbo society; Colonialism; Identity

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/001f-hq95>

Dynamiques des migrations forcées et enjeux politiques du langage et de l'identité dans *Le Monde s'effondre* d'Achebe

Résumé

Cet article examine Le Monde s'effondre (1958) de Chinua Achebe comme cadre littéraire permettant de comprendre le colonialisme comme une forme multiforme de migration forcée au sein de la société igbo. Si la migration est souvent associée à la mobilité géographique, les contextes coloniaux engendrent des déplacements à plusieurs niveaux – physiques, culturels, linguistiques et épistémologiques – qui perturbent les structures sociales et les épistémologies autochtones. Le roman utilise l'exil cérémoniel d'Okonkwo à Mbanta, un exil intérieur qui symbolise à la fois le déplacement physique et la marginalisation symbolique, ainsi que l'exode culturel plus vaste provoqué par les missionnaires et les administrateurs coloniaux, dont les institutions étrangères et les politiques linguistiques sapent l'autorité ancestrale et la cohésion communautaire. Cette étude met en lumière la relation réciproque et circulaire entre le texte littéraire et les discours socioculturels et politiques de la fin du colonialisme britannique dans le pays Igbo (vers 1890-1910) et de la décolonisation du Nigéria des années 1950, en s'appuyant sur le Nouvel Historicisme (Greenblatt). L'utilisation stratégique par Achebe de proverbes, de termes Igbo non traduits et de traditions orales constitue un contre-discours, résistant à l'effacement colonial par la circulation des savoirs autochtones. En complément, la théorie des migrations (Castles, 2009) fournit des outils conceptuels pour analyser l'exil, le déracinement et l'adaptation culturelle au-delà du simple déplacement physique. Adoptant une approche littéraire et analytique qualitative, cet article propose une analyse textuelle approfondie des stratégies narratives, des proverbes et des trajectoires des personnages dans Le Monde s'effondre, complétée par des références comparatives aux traditions orales Igbo et aux récits historiques de l'incursion coloniale. La méthode adoptée place le texte d'Achebe à la fois comme une œuvre littéraire et comme un document sociopolitique codant les réponses vernaculaires aux pressions coloniales. En inscrivant le roman dans le cadre des discours critiques sur les migrations, cette étude révèle comment le colonialisme a engendré des formes durables de migrations à plusieurs niveaux – physiques, culturelles et linguistiques – qui continuent d'alimenter les débats contemporains sur l'identité, la décolonisation et le développement durable.

Mots-clés : Migration forcée ; politique linguistique ; Achebe ; société igbo ; colonialisme ; identité

INTRODUCTION

Migration in its multiple forms, be it voluntary, involuntary, internal, or transnational, remains one of the most significant human experiences shaping identity and power relations (Vertovec, 2004). In Africa, colonialism represents a particular form of forced migration, marked not only by physical displacement but also by profound cultural, linguistic, and psychological disruptions. Colonial regimes created forms of structural displacement that cannot be adequately understood through narrow definitions of migration limited to international movement. Colonial rule systems were embedded within broader state-building processes in which migration, governance, and economic restructuring were mutually reinforcing dynamics (Adamson, 2024). In Nigeria, British colonial rule restructured patterns of movement, identity formation, and language use, creating enduring tensions that continue to shape society. From the annexation of Lagos in 1861 to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914, British colonial expansion imposed new administrative, economic, and cultural systems that triggered widespread internal migration. Urban centres such as Lagos, Onitsha, and Enugu emerged as administrative and commercial hubs, attracting migrants from rural hinterlands in search of wage labour (Heaton, 2024). These movements were often coerced by economic policies such as cash-crop production, taxation, and forced labour, which compelled rural populations to relocate (Gopalkrishna & Oloruntoba, 2012).

Such forms of displacement, though not always geographically transnational, constitute “forced migration” because they were driven by structural constraints rather than voluntary choice. As a result, migration must be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing both spatial mobility and symbolic transformation (Castles et al. 2020; Vertovec 2004). The growing body of migration research has therefore expanded the analytical scope of migration beyond demographic movement to include the cultural and discursive processes through which mobility reshapes identities and social structures. Language lay at the heart of this process of colonial reorganisation. English, promoted as the language of administration, education, and Christian evangelism, gradually displaced indigenous languages from institutional domains. This linguistic imposition symbolised a form of epistemic migration, in which knowledge, identity, and cultural authority shifted away from local oral traditions toward colonial discourses (Bamgbose, 2000). In Igbo society, where proverbs, folktales, and communal idioms encoded collective memory and social norms, the erosion of orality represented a profound cultural dislocation

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), widely regarded as the foundational African novel in English, offers a penetrating exploration of these dynamics. Through the fictionalised account of the Igbo community's encounter with European colonialism, Achebe dramatises these layered dynamics of forced migration, linguistic displacement, and identity contestation. Language emerges in the novel as both a tool of resistance and an instrument of domination. The imposition of English and Christian discourse represents a symbolic migration away from indigenous epistemologies, while the erosion of Igbo proverbs, oral traditions, and communal idioms underscores the cultural violence of colonial intrusion. Through Okonkwo's life and his community's encounter with European colonialism, Achebe highlights the fracturing of social structures, the marginalisation of Igbo epistemologies, and the violent intrusion of colonial modernity. Migration here is not confined to geographical mobility but extends to the dislocation of meaning, voice, and identity. The protagonist Okonkwo's tragic trajectory encapsulates the struggle to preserve cultural integrity amidst the forced reordering of society by colonial modernity.

This study argues that Achebe's story functions as a site of cultural negotiation, simultaneously questioning the historical contingencies of colonial disruption and reinscribing indigenous agency within the larger circulation of social energy. It does so by applying Greenblatt's New Historicism, which is informed by Foucault's approach to power and discourse. According to Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (1972), "colonialism is a discursive creation that creates truth regimes, shattering indigenous subjectivities while integrating European institutional and linguistic control mechanisms through capillary networks of power". Simultaneously, Achebe's text subverts and recirculates these forces in a counter-discourse of resilience, as demonstrated by Greenblatt's *Concept of self-fashioning* (1980), and the poetics of culture, which shows how colonial rhetoric created hierarchies of alterity, legitimising spatial conquest and epistemic dominance by entwining literary representations with anecdotal historical fragments. In migration studies, Castles and Miller (2009) discuss "forced migration" in *The Age of Migration*, which extends beyond refugees and war to include cultural displacement, offering a framework for understanding the Igbo community's coerced entry into a colonial modernity. Likewise, Blommaert (1999) and Irvine and Gal (2000) developed language ideology theory, which helps explain how the imposition of English served not just as a communicative tool but as a mechanism of power, marginalising indigenous languages and reconstituting identity along colonial lines.

In *Things Fall Apart*, these theoretical frames converge in the symbolic role of language. Achebe illustrates how the arrival of missionaries and colonial administrators imposed new linguistic hierarchies, privileging English as the language of education, governance, and spiritual authority. The shift from Igbo proverbs, folktales, and oral traditions to the textual authority of the Bible and colonial legal systems exemplifies what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) terms the "linguistic alienation" of African societies. Forced migration here is not marked by physical relocation but by the compulsion to inhabit a new linguistic and cultural order that displaces indigenous epistemologies. The analysis demonstrates how *Things Fall Apart* anticipates broader debates in African studies on the erosion of cultural sovereignty under colonialism and highlights the need to recognise forced migration as a multidimensional process that encompasses both physical and symbolic displacement. This approach not only deepens our understanding of Achebe's work but also contributes to migration and language policy studies by foregrounding literature as a critical site of theorising displacement, power, and identity.

OBJECTIVES

The dynamics of forced migration and the politics of language and identity in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* generally situate Chinua Achebe's literary narrative within broader theoretical debates on postcolonial migration, language ideology, and the resilience of cultural traditions in the face of external imposition. Specifically, the study sets out to:

1. examine the ways in which Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* portrays colonialism as a form of forced migration, not only in terms of physical displacement but also through cultural, linguistic, and identity disruptions.
2. analyse the politics of language within the novel, with particular attention to the imposition of English and the consequences this has for Igbo cultural expression.
3. explores how identity is negotiated, reconstructed, or destabilised under the weight of colonial domination.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive methodology, grounded in textual analysis and theoretical application. Since *Things Fall Apart* serves simultaneously as a literary text and a cultural document, this approach is well-suited to uncovering the layered intersections of forced migration, language politics, and identity formation

that the novel dramatises. Rather than seeking quantifiable outcomes, the study prioritises a nuanced reading of how Achebe's narrative reflects, critiques, and reimagines the socio-cultural upheavals of colonial Nigeria. At the centre of this methodology is a close reading of *Things Fall Apart*. Particular attention is paid to Achebe's narrative strategies, the portrayal of characters such as Okonkwo, and the novel's sustained use of Igbo oral traditions, including proverbs, folktales, and idioms. These features are not examined merely as stylistic devices, but as cultural mechanisms through which Achebe reclaims indigenous epistemologies while simultaneously revealing the dislocations produced by colonial intrusion. Such textual analysis provides the foundation for understanding how the novel frames colonialism as a form of forced migration, displacing communities not only in physical space, but also linguistically, psychologically, and symbolically.

Method of analysis

The methodology is further structured by three complementary theoretical frameworks. Postcolonial theory (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1994) provides the critical tools to interrogate colonialism as a force of epistemic and cultural displacement, enabling an exploration of how Achebe's text resists, subverts, and reimagines colonial narratives of dominance. Critical language policy (Tollefson, 1991; Ricento, 2006) offers a lens for analysing the imposition of English as an instrument of power and its impact on indigenous linguistic practices, particularly the erosion of Igbo oral traditions and the restructuring of identity through language hierarchies. Finally, migration theory (Castles & Miller, 2009; Bakewell, 2011) provides a framework for conceptualising exile, dislocation, and adaptation as forms of forced migration that extend beyond physical mobility to encompass cultural and symbolic dimensions.

Sources of data

The primary text under review is Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), while secondary materials draw on scholarship in postcolonial studies, sociolinguistics, African history, and migration studies, which provide the comparative and contextual grounding necessary to situate Achebe's fictional representation within the historical realities of colonial Nigeria. The selection of this methodology is justified by the very nature of the research questions. The study seeks not to catalogue numerical patterns but to excavate the cultural meanings embedded in Achebe's narrative and connect them to broader structures of colonial power. By weaving together literary analysis with postcolonial, language policy, and migration theories, the methodology ensures a multidimensional exploration of how colonialism disrupted indigenous life, reconfigured linguistic

hierarchies, and destabilised cultural identities. It thereby positions *Things Fall Apart* not only as a canonical literary work, but also as a critical intervention in ongoing debates on migration, language, and decolonisation.

Research Design

The paper adopts a clearly qualitative, textual-analytic approach (close reading), typical of postcolonial analyses of Achebe's writings. This entails the interpretive study of story components such as linguistic shifts and displacement motifs.

Textual Evidence Criteria

The selection of textual evidence from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is based on its thematic importance to identity, language politics, and forced migration. This includes episodes of forced exile (such as Okonkwo's banishment) and cultural upheaval during missionary landings, as well as sections that juxtapose Igbo oral traditions, such as proverbs and folktales, with colonial literature like the Bible and legal codes (Chapters 20–25). To ensure analytical depth, the selection is limited to five to ten significant passages, with representation dispersed across the novel's plot arcs for thorough coverage.

Analytical Framework

By mapping Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's (1986) concept of "linguistic alienation" and the language ideology theory of Blommaert (1999) and Irvine and Gal (2000) onto specific textual evidence from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the analytical process applies important theoretical frameworks. Step by step, it analyses the inherent power dynamics that favour Eurocentric textual authority over indigenous epistemologies, after first identifying recurrent patterns, such as the replacement of Igbo proverbs and oral traditions by colonial biblical and legal discourses. To highlight similarities between forced relocation and cultural dislocation, it triangulates these observations with migration theory (Castles et al., 2020) and assesses the resulting identity reconstruction or erosion among Igbo characters.

RESULTS

A New Historicist reading of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* leads us to three main conclusions about how colonial power actually operated among the colonised. Firstly, colonialism didn't just move people physically; it forced a kind of "internal migration." It pushed people to abandon their spiritual beliefs, their family structures, and their deep connection to the land. We see this in the converts who walked away

from their traditions and the survivors of the Abame massacre, as well as in Okonkwo's own painful exile. This combination of force and the "seduction" of a new way of life created deep, permanent cracks in the community.

Secondly, the real battle for power happened through language. Instead of just accepting the "official" colonial stories, Achebe uses a unique blend of English and Igbo rhythms to push back. He essentially takes the coloniser's own tool and turns it into a way to reclaim his culture and resist being erased from history. Thirdly, who we are depends heavily on the world around us. The arrival of the British forced everyone to rethink their identity, which often led to a social death where people lost their place in society or even tragic choices like suicide.

Ultimately, Achebe isn't just missing the past; he is reclaiming it. By setting the story during the British takeover of Nigeria and writing it as the 1950s independence movement was gaining steam, he shows that stories and history are woven together. He ensures that the voice of the colonised isn't just heard, but prevails, turning the tools meant to wipe out his culture into a powerful means of survival. These findings are presented in three subheadings: dynamics of forced migration, the politics of language and the politics of identity.

Dynamics of Forced Migration

According to Okolie (2021), the internal, ritually approved displacement of traditional Igbo society and the externally imposed, culturally damaging displacement brought about by colonialism are the two crossing planes of forced migration in *Things Fall Apart*. Okonkwo's seven-year banishment to his mother's village of Mbanta following his unintentional killing of Ezeudu's child during a burial serves as an example of the first. To placate the earth goddess Ani, the Oracle's decision and clan custom dictate this banishment, which is not random. "He had been cast out of his clan like a fish out of its element," (Achebe, 1958/1994, p. 131) is how Achebe characterises Okonkwo's condition upon arriving. He depends on Uncle Uchendu's charity in Mbanta, where he is a foreigner in his motherland and is reminded that "a man belongs to his fatherland when things are good, but he belongs to his motherland when things are bad" (Achebe, 1958/1994, p. 132). This story foreshadows the psychological effects of relocation while also illuminating the communal and transient nature of the traditional Igbo legal system. Okonkwo's return to Umuofia is characterised by alienation from a hamlet already transformed by colonial occupation; he never entirely regains his sense of belonging.

A much more extreme and permanent kind of forced migration, cultural, ideological, and occasionally violent, is brought about by colonialism. Instead of physically deporting the Igbo in large numbers, the District Commissioner and white missionaries orchestrate a widespread conversion from indigenous belief systems to Christianity and colonial modernity. The most prominent example is the tale of Abame, as told by Obierika: after the community killed a white man they came across, colonial forces butchered them in retribution. The survivors are dispersed, their homes destroyed by fire, and their social structure destroyed. This incident foreshadows Umuofia's further exodus. Converts, especially mothers of twins and *osu* (outcasts), escape to the mission facility in the Evil Forest in search of both physical and spiritual refuge from customary rejection. Once the colonial government defends the converts and challenges clan authority, what starts as a voluntary movement becomes fundamentally compelled. For example, when a convert kills the sacred python, the clan is outraged but does not take decisive action because, as Obierika bemoans, "the white man had put a knife to the things that held us together and we have fallen apart." Furthermore, Mumu (2023) argues that Nwoye's conversion represents a personal transition from his father's too masculine environment to the compassionate Christian mentality. Nwoye successfully leaves his patrilineal identity after being drawn to the "poetry" of the new faith and the hymn that "seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul." According to New Historicism, these migrations are similar to the historical accounts of British colonial administrators and missionaries (like those of the Church Missionary Society), who recorded how conversion and taxes forced Igbo people to give up sacred groves, ancestral lands, and kinship duties in favour of mission stations and cash-crop economies (Achebe, 1958/1994, p. 58, Chapter 7). As a result, the book historicizes migration as a purposeful imperial-control tactic rather than merely depicting it.

The themes of displacement and cultural dislocation in *Things Fall Apart* resonate with contemporary African literary treatments of migration. As Obidiegwu et al. (2018) observe, African narratives frequently portray migration to Western countries as both an aspirational and anxiety-laden experience, reflecting ongoing concerns with identity, social integration, and cultural negotiation. In both historical and modern contexts, migration, whether internal to African polities or external to the West, produces complex psychological, cultural, and social consequences that are negotiated within familial, communal, and institutional frameworks. Integrating this perspective situates Achebe's narrative within a broader continuum of African engagement with mobility, displacement, and the enduring struggle to preserve cultural identity amid structural constraints.

The Politics of Language

Language in *Things Fall Apart* is the main area of conflict between indigenous resistance and colonial power, opines. Achebe purposefully blends Igbo grammar, proverbs, and untranslated vocabulary (chi, egwugwu, ogbanje, and obi) with English, the language of the oppressor. Litchfield-Tshabalala (2025) argue that the text appropriates the coloniser's medium to inscribe African experience, which is a classic new-historicist act of subversion. Igbo epistemology is preserved in proverbs, such as "If a child washed his hands, he could eat with kings" and "A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness" (Achebe, 1958/1994, p. 21). Here, he emphasises an oral tradition that precedes and survives colonial literacy. Achebe reverses the ethnographic gaze by forcing the English reader into a posture of cultural humility by refusing to gloss every Igbo word (Royanian & Sadeghi, 2014).

On the other hand, Guthrie (2011) posits that the colonial language is shown to be violent and reductive. After seeing Okonkwo commit himself, the District Commissioner considers writing a book titled "The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger." Okonkwo's life tragedy could be summed up in "a reasonable paragraph" (Achebe, 1958/1994, p. 208). Real colonial literature, administrative records, and missionary memoirs that portrayed Igbo civilisation as barbaric and in need of "pacification" are explicitly echoed in this fictional title. Achebe's hybrid English is interpreted by New Historicism as a counter-narrative created during the historical period when Nigerian intellectuals were recovering narrative power. As a result, the book's language embodies the very cultural survival it portrays: it refuses to "fall apart" in the face of English domination.

The Politics of Identity

In the study, identity is performed, disputed, and eventually shattered by colonial encroachment; it is never stable. According to Özün & Başkale (2019), Africans have a strong sense of cultural identity, and colonialism caused disastrous changes in their culture that distorted their identity. When colonial law replaces clan justice, Okonkwo's hyper-masculine self-concept, which is based on titles, yam barns, and a disdain for anything "feminine", collapses. He reasserts an identity that the new order has rendered obsolete with his ultimate act of killing the court messenger. Colonialism deprives the colonised of interpretive control over their own narratives, Oguike (2025), as demonstrated by the clan's unwillingness to bury him: "It is an abomination for a man to take his own life" (Achebe, 1958/1994, p. 207) and the Commissioner's clinical remark that his death is merely fodder for a book. After changing his name to Isaac, Nwoye adopts a new Christian identity that gives him a sense of belonging that his

father's inflexibility denied him: "He had taken the name Isaac and moved spiritually toward Christian compassion" (Achebe, 1958 / 1994, p. 58). When colonial weapons are used against them, even the *egwugwu* masquerades, embodiments of ancient authority, lose their power. These identity issues are situated within the broader historical project of colonial subject-formation as understood by New Historicism. The British aimed to supplant Igbo self-understanding with an administrative, Christian subjectivity. By humanising the Igbo world before the "fall," Achebe's work defies this interpellation and gives agency back to a people who were previously depicted as helpless victims.

DISCUSSION

A New Historicist interpretation situates Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) as not only a reflection of the late-colonial historical context of Nigeria but also as a conscious counter-narrative that contests prevailing British imperial discourses. Composed at the threshold of independence, the narrative confronts historical phenomena such as missionary conversions, British incursions into Igbo regions (circa 1890–1910), and the "pacification" strategies that undermined cultural integrity.

Instead of being perceived as a separate artistic creation, the text operates as a locus of negotiation within the flowing "social energy" of its bifurcated contexts: the colonial epoch it illustrates and the decolonising 1950s during which it was crafted. It assimilates components from colonial administrative documentation, missionary autobiographies, and ethnographic accounts, while concurrently producing a subversive counter-energy that rehumanises the Igbo experience, consistent with Greenblatt's framework of reciprocal interaction between literary and nonliterary discourses.

Colonialism manifests as a comprehensive modality of coerced migration encompassing physical, cultural, linguistic, and identitarian dimensions that forces the Igbo to relinquish ancestral frameworks in favour of the imperial paradigm. The Abame massacre serves as a poignant illustration of violent physical dislocation: colonial forces retaliate with firearms and artillery following the villagers' killing of a white man "on an iron horse," scattering the remaining individuals "like locusts" and incinerating dwellings reflective of documented British punitive campaigns. The narrative subverts this violence by embedding the event within Igbo oral tradition, conceptualising migration as a deleterious dispersal instigated by the "white man

(who) has put a knife on the things that held us together,” rather than a narrative of benevolent advancement.

Language emerges as the principal sphere of contention. Achebe's hybridised English integrates Igbo proverbs, untranslated lexicon (chi, egwugwu, ogbanje), grammatical structures, and oral rhythms, thereby undermining the coloniser's hegemonic apparatus. Missionaries and colonial administrators impose English as the medium for scripture, legal discourse, and ethnography, thereby rendering Igbo epistemological frameworks obsolete and reducing intricate lives such as that of Okonkwo to “a reasonable paragraph” in the District Commissioner's reductive volume, *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*. By strategically utilising English, Achebe reclaims narrative sovereignty, compels English readers to engage in cultural defamiliarisation, and asserts the legitimacy of Igbo epistemologies.

Identity is portrayed as a realm of historically contingent “self-fashioning.” Colonial interpellation undermines traditional identities: Okonkwo's stringent masculine identity, constructed through titles, agricultural prosperity, and repudiation of the “feminine”, deteriorates as clan justice succumbs to colonial jurisprudence, his exile to Mbanta alienates him “like a fish out of its element,” and the disbanding of masked egwugwu reveals the fragility of collective authority. His ultimate act of defiance, decapitating the court messenger, reasserts an anachronistic warrior ethos, culminating in suicide and a refusal of burial. In contrast, Nwoye reconstructs his identity through conversion (as Isaac), attracted to the perceived compassion of Christianity. These ruptures illuminate Foucault's nexus of power and knowledge; however, the narrative circulates counter-energy, re-establishing interpretive authority for the colonised and illustrating that identity is dynamically reconstructed amidst tumult.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) reinterprets history from the perspective of the colonised, advocating, as scholars contend, that Africans must narrate their own histories to reclaim dignity and agency. Through the interconnected dynamics of migration, language, and identity, Achebe transforms the coloniser's instruments into mechanisms of resistance and cultural reclamation.

Furthermore, this New Historicist examination of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) explicitly addresses the research objectives by scrutinising three interrelated dimensions of colonial power: coerced migration as a complex mechanism of control, the politics of language as a battleground of contention, and the destabilisation and reconstruction of identity under the yoke of colonial domination. These facets

elucidate the operational dynamics of colonialism not merely as territorial subjugation but as a profound and invasive reconfiguration of Igbo social, cultural, and existential life, while Achebe's narrative actively resists imperial erasure by reclaiming historical agency.

The depiction of colonialism as engendering not solely physical relocation but a more profound "internal migration" or "diaspora within," obliging individuals and communities to forgo cosmological beliefs, kinship ties, connections to land, and ancestral systems. This is evidenced through punitive displacements, such as Okonkwo's ceremonial exile to Mbanta following an accidental homicide, which alienates him "like a fish out of its element" and disrupts his intrinsic sense of belonging. Furthermore, it is manifested in the violent disbandment of Abame survivors subsequent to the massacre, colonial retribution scatters them "like locusts" after the villagers kill a white man "on an iron horse," resonating with documented British punitive expeditions. Additionally, missionary "seduction" ideologically and spiritually lures converts away, as illustrated by Nwoye's departure and acceptance of Christianity, fracturing familial and communal ties. These instances exemplify how colonial forces amalgamate coercion with allure, engendering irreversible schisms and an existential uprooting that redirects individuals towards the imperial framework.

Additionally, the narrative's portrayal of language as the principal arena of power struggle reveals the imposition of English and resistance through hybridity. Colonial authorities and missionaries imposed English as the medium for administration, biblical texts, and ethnographic reductionism, consequently marginalising Igbo oral epistemology and rendering traditional wisdom obsolete. This epistemic violence culminates in the District Commissioner's intent to distil Okonkwo's intricate tragedy into "a reasonable paragraph" in his publication *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*, thereby parodying authentic colonial texts that dehumanise and simplify African existence. Achebe contests this hegemony by crafting a hybrid English enriched with Igbo proverbs ("Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten"), untranslated lexicons (chi, egwugwu, ogbanje), oral rhythms, grammatical structures, and idioms. This approach subverts the coloniser's instrument, asserts the profundity and legitimacy of Igbo modes of knowing, defamiliarises English for non-Igbo audiences, and reclaims narrative sovereignty, transforming a language of domination into one of cultural reclamation and resistance.

Negotiation, reconstruction, and destabilisation of identity under colonial pressure are exposed through the portrayal of identity as inherently relational, historically contingent, and susceptible to colonial interpellation. Established identities disintegrate as colonial legislation replaces indigenous clan justice and Christian subjectivity contests Igbo cosmology. Okonkwo's inflexible masculine identity constructed upon titles, yam storage, martial valour, and the repudiation of femininity becomes increasingly untenable: his exile disrupts his sense of belonging, the revelation and disbandment of egwugwu reveals collective authority to be precarious, and his ultimate violent act (the decapitation of the court messenger) attempts to reassert an archaic self, culminating in suicide an act that repudiates ancestral interment and jeopardises social continuity. In contrast, Nwoye reconstructs his identity through conversion (as Isaac), discovering solace in Christianity's empathy that "addressed a vague and persistent concern." These transformative shifts underscore that colonial encounters necessitate a reevaluation of selfhood, often resulting in social decline, tragic isolation, or hybrid adaptation.

Taking together, Achebe does not merely mourn a vanishing pre-colonial existence; he actively reclaims and rewrites history from the vantage point of the colonised. Firmly situated within the specific historical context of British consolidation in eastern Nigeria (circa 1890–1910) yet invigorated by the decolonising fervour of the 1950s, the novel exemplifies New Historicism's contention that literature and history are mutually constitutive. Through the interrelated dynamics of enforced migration, linguistic contestation, and identity transformation, Achebe ensures that the colonised narrative asserts itself on its own terms illustrating that cultural preservation and resistance are achievable precisely through the repurposing of the very instruments once employed for obliteration. This renders *Things Fall Apart* a lasting counter-discourse that reinstates dignity, agency, and interpretive authority to the Igbo voice amidst colonial turmoil.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) transcends its designation as a foundational African literary masterpiece by providing a profound textual critique of the multifaceted mechanisms of colonialism: compelled migration, linguistic hegemony, and the transformation of identity. Through meticulously selected episodes, character portrayals, and narrative methodologies, Achebe elucidates how colonial intrusion functions as a comprehensive force of displacement physically,

ideologically, and existentially while concurrently facilitating resistance and cultural reclamation.

Colonialism is represented as a form of displacement that dislocates individuals and communities from their cultural and ancestral roots, engendering a “diaspora within.” The punitive exile of Okonkwo to Mbanta following the inadvertent killing of a clansman serves as a poignant illustration: “It was like beginning life anew without the vigour and enthusiasm of youth,” and he perceives himself as “cast out of his clan like a fish out of its element,” underscoring the existential dislocation from kinship, status, and territory. Nwoye’s conversion and subsequent departure epitomise ideological exile; attracted to the hymns of Christianity that “seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul—the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed,” he discovers emotional solace in the new faith, forsaking his paternal household and traditional affiliations. The massacre at Abame exemplifies violent physical dispersal: following the villagers’ act of killing a white man “on an iron horse,” colonial forces retaliate, obliterating the village and dispersing survivors “like locusts,” mirroring the Oracle’s prophecy that white men would arrive as locusts to bring destruction. These instances, together with the broader disintegration of traditional authority under the influence of missionaries and colonial administrators, expose colonialism as both involuntary mobility and internal exile that fractures communal unity.

Achebe’s intentional use of language constitutes the nucleus of resistance against colonial oppression. The imposition of English as the medium for religious texts, legal systems, and governance marginalises Igbo oral knowledge and reduces complex existences to oversimplified narratives, as parodied in the District Commissioner’s proposed book: “He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*,” which trivialises Okonkwo’s tragedy to “a reasonable paragraph.” Achebe counters this epistemic violence through the hybridisation of English with elements of Igbo, such as proverbs (“Proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten”), untranslated terms (chi, egwugwu, ogbanje), and oral rhythms and idioms, thereby affirming the legitimacy of Igbo epistemologies and transforming the coloniser’s instrument into a vehicle for cultural authority and intellectual self-assertion.

The narrative delineates the tragic fragmentation of pre-colonial Igbo coherence under external pressures while illuminating potential avenues for resilience and hybrid renewal. Okonkwo’s inflexible identity, anchored in masculine accomplishment and

the repudiation of the “feminine”, deteriorates: exile alienates him, colonial law replaces clan justice, and his ultimate act of beheading the court messenger culminates in suicide, precluding him from ancestral burial. Nwoye reconstructs his sense of self through conversion (as Isaac), embracing a more compassionate alternative. Obierika’s lament encapsulates the overarching rupture: “He has put a knife on the things that held us together, and we have fallen apart,” poignantly articulating how colonial forces sever communal ties.

Ultimately, the narrative delineates the tragic disintegration of pre-colonial Igbo coherence in response to external pressures while concurrently illuminating avenues for cultural endurance and hybrid reinvention within the postcolonial milieu. Achebe’s narrative remains relevant as it elucidates how forced migration and linguistic politics continue to shape identity conflicts, from enduring postcolonial legacies to contemporary refugee crises and linguistic disparities, thereby affirming the resilience of colonised subjectivities in the face of structural upheaval.

RECOMMENDATION

The study offers an interesting and pertinent multidisciplinary analysis of Chinua Achebe's seminal work. By concentrating on the often-overlooked intersections of displacement, linguistic dominance, and identity formation in the context of colonial invasion, the work offers fresh insights into how European colonialism disrupts indigenous social fabrics through profound psychic and cultural uprooting as well as territorial conquest.

Achebe's intentional use of English laced with Igbo idioms, proverbs, untranslated phrases, and oral storytelling rhythms is a subversive act of language hybridity. This indigenisation of the coloniser's language not only challenges the hegemonic imposition of English as the sole conduit of “civilisation,” but it also validates the validity and profundity of Igbo philosophy. The study skilfully demonstrates how native languages are undermined by colonial discourse, leading to identity problems and self-alienation among the Igbo. Achebe, however, fights this by utilising English as an instrument for cultural reclamation and resistance.

Thus, this work is recommended for scholars, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates studying African studies, sociolinguistics, migration, and diaspora studies. It is an essential addition to the critical discourse on *Things Fall Apart* because it highlights the film's ongoing relevance to contemporary themes of forced relocation,

linguistic imperialism, and the enduring politics of cultural identity in the face of historical change.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. All information was collected and examined objectively, ensuring that the results are available only for scholarly research and the formulation of public policy. Additionally, it is stressed that the conclusions of this study have not been influenced by any financial, personal, or professional interests, highlighting the objectivity and integrity of the research process.

REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (1958). *Things fall apart*. Heinemann.
- Adamson, F. B. (2024). Entangled migration states: Mobility and state-building in France and Algeria. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(3), 597–616. [https://doi.org/\[add if available\]](https://doi.org/[add if available])
- A'yunin, Q. (2008). The effects of cultural colonialism on the Ibo society in Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart* [Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim].
- Bamgbose, A. (2000). Language and exclusion: The consequences of language policies in Africa (Vol. 12). LIT Verlag.
- Castles, S. (2009). Development and migration—Migration and development: What comes first? Global perspective and African experiences. *Theoria*, 56(121), 1–31.
- Castles, S. (2025). Migration and social transformation. In *An Introduction to International Migration Studies* (pp. 155–178). Routledge.
- Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777–795. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448181>
- Gopalkrishna, S. V. M., & Oloruntoba, S. (2012). The political economy of forced economic migration in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges in the new millennium. *Ìrìnkèrindò: A Journal of African Migration*, 6, 41–68.
- Greenblatt, S. (2012). *Renaissance self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. University of Chicago Press.
- Greenblatt, S. (2016). Stephen Greenblatt. In *New historicism and cultural materialism: A reader* (pp. 55–60). [Publisher].
- Guthrie, A. K. (2011). Language and identity in postcolonial African literature: A case study of Chinua Achebe's "*Things fall apart*" [Master's thesis, Liberty University]. Liberty University Digital Commons. <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/>

- Heaton, M. M. (2024). History of Nigeria. In Oxford research encyclopedia of African history. Oxford University Press. [https://doi.org/\[add if available\]](https://doi.org/[add if available])
- Litchfield-Tshabalala, T. N. (2025). Igbo identity disrupted: The exponential effects of colonialism on Igbo people in Achebe's African trilogy [Doctoral dissertation]. [University].
- Mengara, D. M. (2019). Colonial intrusion and stages of colonialism in Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart*. *African Studies Review*, 62(4), 31–56. [https://doi.org/\[add if available\]](https://doi.org/[add if available])
- Mumu, T. T. (2023). A psychoanalytic analysis of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* [Doctoral dissertation, Brac University].
- Obidiegwu, V. N., Ndubuo, M. A., & Okafor, J. O. (2018). L'homme africain et la hantise de l'immigration pour les pays occidentaux dans L'enfer au pays des blancs de Balogun Leo Iyanda. *Calabar Journal of the Humanities*, 13(1), 142–152.
- Oguibe, A. (2025). Navigating cultural hybridity: The conflict between Igbo identity and colonial dominance in *Things fall apart*. [Publisher/Journal].
- Okolie, M. J. N. (2021). *Things fall apart, border crossing and the psychology of exile*. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(1), 993–1005. [https://doi.org/\[add if available\]](https://doi.org/[add if available])
- Onyemelukwe, I. (2004). Search for lost identity in Achebe's *Things fall apart*. *Emerging Perspectives on Chinua Achebe*, 1, 35–47.
- Özün, Ş. O., & Başkale, N. (2019). The distortion of cultural identity in Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart*. *Trakya Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 9(18), 86–99.
- Royanian, S., & Sadeghi, Z. (2014). Loss of African language, culture, and identity in *Things Fall Apart*. *International Journal on Multicultural Literature*, 4(2), 43–46.
- Vertovec, S. (2004). Migrant transnationalism and modes of transformation. *International Migration*

Determinants of Youth Rural-Urban Migration and Employment Outcomes in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria

Uguru Wisdom Ibor¹ & Eteng Mbang Usang²

Department of Geography, Federal University Lokoja, Nigeria¹

Border & Migration Studies, Institute of Governance and Development Studies, Federal University Lokoja²

Corresponding author email: uguru.ibor@fulokoja.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing youth rural–urban migration and employment results in Calabar metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. A cluster sampling methodology integrating stratified random and purposive methods was employed to guarantee representativeness. The sample size of 400 respondents was calculated from a population of 238,803 youth migrants utilising the Taro Yamane formula, with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires. Quantitative data were analysed utilising SPSS version 23, employing descriptive statistics and inferential methods such as chi-square tests, t-tests, and regression analysis. The results indicate that 67.5% of migrants were aged 20 to 29 years, with males comprising 52.5% and females 46.3%. Approximately 86.2% possessed at least a secondary education, with 46.2% holding university degrees. Nonetheless, 38.7% were unemployed, and 65.0% earned ₦50,000 or less per month, indicating economic precariousness. Migration predominantly occurred individually, with 65.0% of individuals relocating independently. The primary motivators comprised the pursuit of work (77.5%), improved living conditions (67.5%), access to educational options (61.3%), and inadequate rural infrastructure (52.5%). Results on employment indicate that a significant number of migrants are engaged in the informal sector, including street trading (25.0%) and construction (22.5%), whereas 21.3% attained regular employment. The study concludes that while migration to Calabar presents prospects for income enhancement, numerous youths continue to occupy precarious or informal employment with restricted economic mobility. The study advocates for the enhancement of rural development initiatives, the expansion of youth skill acquisition programmes, and the assistance of small enterprises to generate sustainable employment prospects and mitigate excessive rural–urban migration.

Keywords: Youth, Employment outcomes, Rural-urban migration, Informal sector, Calabar

Déterminants de la migration rurale-urbaine et de l'emploi des jeunes dans la métropole de Calabar (État de Cross River, Nigéria)

Résumé

Cette étude examine les facteurs influençant la migration rurale-urbaine des jeunes, ainsi que leurs résultats en matière d'emploi, dans la métropole de Calabar, dans l'État de Cross River (Nigéria). Une méthode d'échantillonnage par grappes, combinant un échantillonnage aléatoire stratifié et un échantillonnage raisonné, a été adoptée afin d'assurer la représentativité de l'échantillon. La taille de l'échantillon, fixée à 400 répondants, a été déterminée à partir d'une population de 238 803 jeunes migrants, selon la formule de Taro Yamane, avec une marge d'erreur de 5 % et un niveau de confiance de 95 %. Les données ont été recueillies à l'aide de questionnaires structurés. Les données quantitatives ont été analysées à l'aide du logiciel SPSS (version 23), en mobilisant des statistiques descriptives ainsi que des méthodes inférentielles telles que le test du χ^2 , le test t et l'analyse de régression. Les résultats montrent que 67,5 % des migrants étaient âgés de 20 à 29 ans, dont 52,5 % d'hommes et 46,3 % de femmes. Environ 86,2 % des répondants possédaient au moins un diplôme d'études secondaires, tandis que 46,2 % étaient titulaires d'un diplôme universitaire. Toutefois, 38,7 % étaient sans emploi et 65 % percevaient un revenu mensuel de 50 000 ₦ ou moins, ce qui traduit une situation de précarité économique. La migration s'effectuait majoritairement de manière individuelle, 65 % des répondants ayant migré de leur propre initiative. Les principales motivations identifiées sont la recherche d'un emploi (77,5 %), l'amélioration des conditions de vie (67,5 %), l'accès à l'éducation (61,3 %) et l'insuffisance des infrastructures rurales (52,5 %). En ce qui concerne l'emploi, les résultats indiquent qu'une proportion importante de migrants travaille dans le secteur informel, notamment dans le commerce ambulant (25 %) et le bâtiment (22,5 %), tandis que seulement 21,3 % occupent un emploi stable. L'étude conclut que, bien que la migration vers Calabar offre des perspectives d'amélioration des revenus, de nombreux jeunes restent confinés dans des emplois précaires ou informels, limitant ainsi leur mobilité économique. Elle préconise le renforcement des initiatives de développement rural, l'expansion des programmes d'acquisition de compétences destinés aux jeunes, ainsi que le soutien aux petites entreprises, afin de favoriser la création d'emplois durables et de freiner l'exode rural excessif.

Mots-clés : Jeunesse, emploi, exode rural, secteur informel, Calabar

INTRODUCTION

Rural-urban migration has emerged as a significant demographic and socioeconomic shift influencing the contemporary world. Worldwide, a growing population is migrating from rural areas to urban centres in pursuit of enhanced economic prospects, education, healthcare, and superior living conditions. The United Nations reports that over 56% of the global population resides in urban areas, with this figure anticipated to rise to almost 68% by 2050, signifying a consistent trend toward urbanisation (United Nations, 2023). A significant portion of this urban expansion is driven by internal migration, especially among youth, who are more inclined to move in search of improved job opportunities and better living conditions (World Bank, 2023). In Africa, rural–urban migration has intensified swiftly due to systemic disparities between rural and urban areas. Numerous rural areas across the continent face ongoing difficulties, including insufficient access to quality education, inadequate infrastructure, substandard healthcare facilities, and limited employment opportunities (World Bank, 2023). The African Development Bank reports that Africa's urban population is expanding more rapidly than any other global region, with urban dwellers projected to quadruple by 2050 (African Development Bank, 2022). The swift urban expansion is largely driven by youth migration, as young people relocate to cities in pursuit of better livelihoods and socioeconomic advancement. Nigeria exemplifies the overarching continental trends of rural–urban migration and youth mobility.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has had significant population growth and urban development in recent decades (African Development Bank, 2022; World Bank, 2023). The National Bureau of Statistics reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate was 5.3% in the first quarter of 2024, with urban unemployment marginally above rural unemployment. Youth unemployment remains a substantial issue, as young individuals face greater challenges in obtaining permanent employment than their older counterparts (NBS, 2023). Reports reveal that over 90% of Nigeria's workforce is engaged in informal employment, frequently lacking job stability, consistent income, or social protection (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023; International Labour Organisation, 2023).

Numerous cities in Nigeria have become significant hubs for internal migration. Urban centres such as Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Calabar attract substantial numbers of young migrants due to their projected economic prospects and social amenities. Of particular interest, Calabar Metropolis has seen rapid urbanisation, partially driven by

rural-to-urban migration. This demographic transition affects local labour market dynamics, as rising young populations often face unemployment or underemployment due to skill mismatches or limited job opportunities (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2021). The city is recognised for its expanding commercial activity, tourism sector, and the presence of prominent educational institutions such as the University of Calabar, which enhance its attractiveness to young migrants seeking career and educational prospects.

Nevertheless, the growing influx of migrants into Calabar also presents significant socioeconomic issues. Accelerated population expansion can exert pressure on labour markets, infrastructure, housing, and social services. Studies indicate that when urban labour markets fail to adequately integrate arriving migrants, a significant number of young individuals get concentrated in informal or low-skilled work sectors (International Labour Organisation, 2023; World Bank, 2023). This scenario frequently results in heightened job competitiveness, wage constraints, and employment volatility among migrant communities. The concurrent exodus of young labourers from rural regions may lead to agricultural labour shortages and reduced rural productivity, thereby hindering equitable regional economic development (Okonjo-Iweala & Osafo-Kwaako, 2007).

Despite the increasing importance of youth migration to Calabar metropolis, there has been insufficient empirical focus on the precise factors motivating rural adolescents to relocate to the city and the employment outcomes they encounter post-migration. Existing studies have examined the socioeconomic implications of youth migration to urban areas. For instance, the International Labour Organisation (2023) and the World Bank (2023) reported that the rapid influx of young migrants into cities often leads to increased pressure on urban labour markets, housing, infrastructure, and social services. Similarly, Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako (2007) noted that youth out-migration from rural areas can reduce the agricultural labour force and negatively affect rural productivity and balanced regional development.

However, while these studies broadly examine the economic consequences of migration and labour market pressures, they pay limited attention to the specific factors influencing youths' migration decisions at the local level. There is insufficient empirical evidence on the determinants of rural-urban youth migration to Calabar. This knowledge gap highlights the need for a focused study that quantitatively examines the factors driving youth migration to the Calabar metropolis. This study

aims to examine the effects of rural-to-urban adolescent mobility on labour markets and employment outcomes in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of rural-urban migrant youth in Calabar metropolis.
2. investigate the factors influencing rural-urban youth migration in the study area.
3. assess employment outcomes and labour market dynamics of migrant youth in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

Calabar is situated in the southeastern portion of Nigeria, in the nation's coastal area. It is located at around 4.95°N latitude and 8.34°E longitude. It functions as the capital of Cross River State and is situated along the Calabar River (Figure 1). The city is flanked to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and continues northward into the rainforest sections of Cross River State. Calabar exhibits a tropical climate marked by a pronounced wet and dry season. The city is situated in the equatorial zone, which is affected by the intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ), resulting in substantial year-round precipitation. The rainy season generally runs from March to November, with peak precipitation between June and September, whereas the dry season lasts from December to February. Calabar has an average annual precipitation of approximately 3,500 mm, rendering it one of the wettest cities in Nigeria. The temperature is reasonably steady, averaging between 25°C and 30°C year-round.

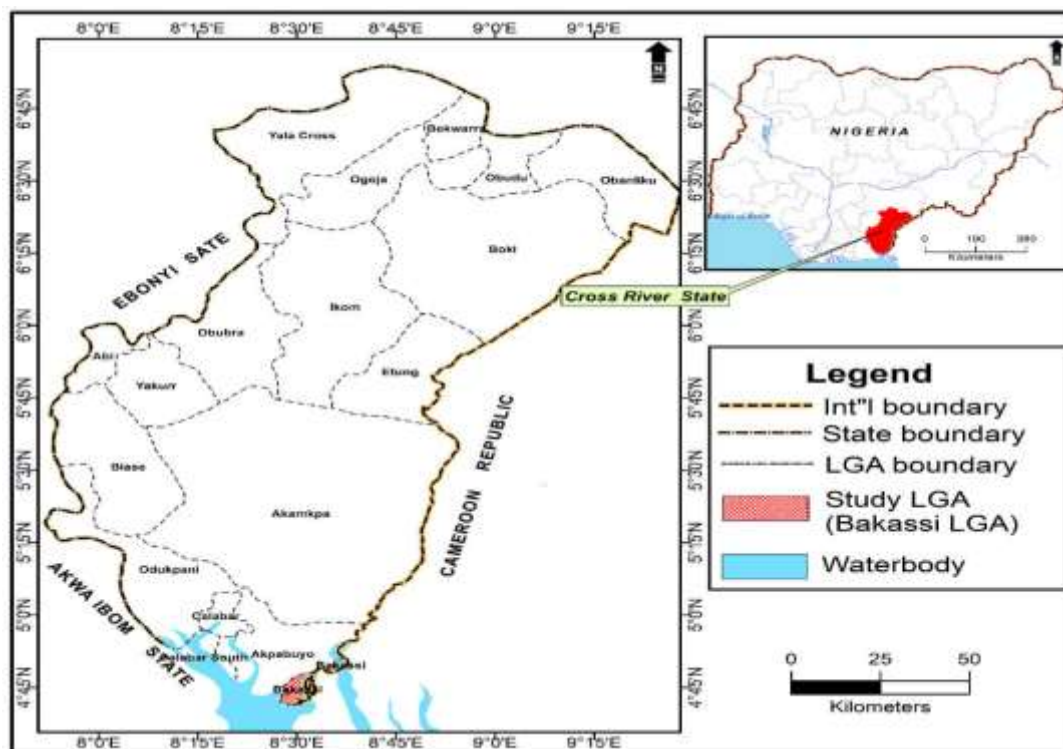


Figure 1: Map of Cross River State

Source: Cross River State Ministry of Lands and Urban Planning, 2026

The flora in and surrounding the city is distinguished by towering trees, hardwood varieties, and an assortment of plant species adapted to elevated precipitation and humidity. The drainage system in Calabar is chiefly affected by its nearness to the Atlantic Ocean and the existence of the Calabar River. The city's drainage system has multiple small rivers and streams that converge into the Calabar River. The topography of Calabar is predominantly flat, interspersed with occasional hilly areas. The city is situated on the coastal plain, with elevations varying from sea level to around 150 meters above sea level. The soils consist mostly of alluvial types, created by the deposition of silt and clay transported by river systems, alongside lateritic soils in the elevated regions. Calabar has a diverse population, with estimates indicating approximately 600,000 to 700,000 individuals, according to the 2023 census.

The population comprises diverse ethnic groups, with the Efik people as the largest group. Additional ethnic groupings comprise the Ibibio, Annang, and various minority populations throughout Nigeria. Calabar's economy is predominantly driven by

agriculture, commerce, and services. Agriculture is a crucial sector, prominently featuring the growth of crops such as cassava, yams, cocoyam, and oil palm. Calabar's industrial operations encompass cement manufacturing, food processing, and the exportation of agricultural commodities. Fishing is particularly crucial due to the area's proximity to the Calabar River and the Atlantic Ocean. The economy has expanded into sectors such as tourism, with historical attractions like the Calabar Museum and the annual Calabar Carnival drawing both domestic and foreign visitors.

The interplay between tourism and migration in Calabar is complex and varied. Tourism facilitates both temporary and permanent migration and serves as a conduit through which migration impacts the local economy and cultural landscape (Emeh & Akpan, 2019; Ademola, 2021). Conversely, migration patterns, especially internal migration, enhance the tourism business by fostering a more diversified labour force and cultural milieu. Notwithstanding these advancements, issues such as unemployment, poverty, and insufficient infrastructure persist for the local populace. To sustain the growth of both sectors, meticulous planning and policy execution are essential to address the economic and infrastructural requirements arising from these interconnected developments.

Methods

To guarantee data representativeness, cluster sampling, which integrates both probability and non-probability sampling techniques, was utilised. Initially, stratified random sampling was employed, categorising youth migrants into several strata based on variables such as gender, age, education, and occupation. A random sample was selected within each stratum to ensure diversity and balance across subgroups. The sample size was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula, considering a population size of 238,8031, a 5% margin of error, and a 95% confidence level. A sample size of roughly 400 was derived and used for the study. Consequently, a collection of 400 well-designed questionnaires was distributed to responders. Data collection involved administering 400 structured questionnaires to youth migrants to obtain quantitative data on migration patterns, employment status, income levels, and perceptions of economic opportunities in Calabar. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including government officials, labour market specialists, business proprietors, and community leaders, to gather qualitative data on the extensive economic ramifications of youth mobility.

The data gathered from respondents were imported into a database and analysed using statistical software, specifically the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

version 23.0. Variables like age, education, employment status, income, and employment sector were classified for analysis. The survey data were evaluated for completeness, consistency, and accuracy. Missing data were addressed through imputation or case exclusion, depending on the nature and magnitude of the deficiencies.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, simple percentages, means, medians, and standard deviations, were used to summarise the demographic characteristics of youth migrants, their work status, income levels, and employment outcomes. Inferential statistical methods such as chi-square tests, t-tests, and regression analysis were utilised to ascertain the links among youth migration, labour market results, and economic growth.

RESULTS

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents demographic and socioeconomic attributes that provide critical contextual insights into the framework, motivations, and consequences of juvenile migration trends in the research region. The age distribution indicates that most respondents belong to the economically active young category. Specifically, 35.0% were aged 20-24 years, 32.5% were aged 25-29 years, 15.0% were aged 15-19 years, and 17.5% were aged 30-34 years. Males accounted for 52.5% of responses, females for 46.3%, and 1.2% opted not to identify their gender. Only 2.5% had no formal education, 11.3% completed basic education, 40.0% completed secondary education, and 46.2% completed university education. The employment status further substantiates this interpretation.

A notable percentage (38.7%) of respondents were unemployed, whilst 25.0% were self-employed, 21.3% held full-time positions, and 15.0% were worked part-time. Monthly income distribution indicates that 27.5% earned less than ₦20,000, while 37.5% earned between ₦20,001 and ₦50,000. Consequently, 65.0% of respondents earned ₦50,000 or less per month, indicating relatively low incomes. Only 12.5% received a monthly income exceeding ₦100,000. Concerning marital status, 62.5% of participants were single, 30.0% were married, 5.0% were divorced, and 2.5% were widowed. The data on pre-migration occupations indicate that 35.0% were students, 20.0% were employed, 17.5% were jobless, 12.5% were in apprenticeships, 7.5% were involved in agriculture, and 7.5% were engaged in other activities.

The data on migration types in Table 1 reinforce the finding that youth migration in Calabar is predominantly individualistic and opportunity-driven, with 65.0% migrating independently and 35.0% migrating with family. The data in Table 1 indicate that 67.5% of respondents were aged 20-29 years, suggesting that most young individuals polled were in early adulthood. Males comprised 52.5% of the total sample, slightly outnumbering females. Regarding employment, 38.7% were unemployed, while 25.0% were self-employed, indicating restricted access to conventional employment options. A significant percentage (37.5%) earned between ₦20,001 and ₦50,000 per month, indicating moderate earning levels. A predominant 62.5% were unmarried and 65.0% had travelled independently, primarily from educational (35.0%) or occupational (20.0%) contexts.

Table 1: Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of respondents (N = 400)

S/N	Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Age group	15–19	60	15.0
		20–24	140	35.0
		25–29	130	32.5
		30–34	70	17.5
		Total	400	100.0
2	Gender	Male	210	52.5
		Female	185	46.3
		Prefer not to say	5	1.2
		Total	400	100.0
3	Educational qualification	No formal education	10	2.5
		Primary	45	11.3
		Secondary	160	40.0
		Tertiary	185	46.2
		Total	400	100.0
4	Employment status	Employed full-time	85	21.3
		Employed part-time	60	15.0
		Self-employed	100	25.0
		Unemployed	155	38.7
		Total	400	100.0
5	Monthly income	Below ₦20,000	110	27.5
		₦20,001–₦50,000	150	37.5

S/N	Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
		~~₦~~ 50,001– ~~₦~~ 100,000	90	22.5
		Above ~~₦~~ 100,000	50	12.5
	Total		400	100.0
6	Marital status	Single	250	62.5
		Married	120	30.0
		Divorced	20	5.0
		Widowed	10	2.5
	Total		400	100.0
7	Migration type	Alone	260	65.0
		With family	140	35.0
	Total		400	100.0
8	Occupation before migration	Schooling	140	35.0
		Employed	80	20.0
		Apprenticeship	50	12.5
		Farming	30	7.5
		Unemployed	70	17.5
		Other	30	7.5
	Total		400	100.0

Factors Influencing Youth Migration and Employment Pattern in Calabar Metropolis

Table 2 indicates that the primary reason driving young migration from rural areas to Calabar metropolis is the pursuit of improved employment prospects (77.5%), suggesting that economic incentives are the predominant catalysts of rural-urban movement. This is followed by enhanced living conditions (67.5%) and educational prospects (61.3%), indicating that youths view the urban setting as offering superior well-being and avenues for self-improvement. Inadequate infrastructure in rural regions (52.5%) and social or peer influence (46.3%) were significant contributory factors, indicating that both push and pull forces combine to drive migration. Simultaneously, insufficient land or agricultural prospects (40%) and familial relocation (30%) exerted considerable influence, whereas conflict or insecurity (23.8%), social discrimination (13.8%), and access to health and social services (32.5%) were comparatively less significant factors. A few (8.8%) cited alternative causes like marriage, lifestyle alterations, and entrepreneurial pursuits. The data

suggest that economic and developmental differences between rural and urban regions are the primary catalysts for youth migration to Calabar Metropolis.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of factors influencing youth migration from rural areas to Calabar Metropolis

Reasons for Migration	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Search for better employment	310	77.5
Educational opportunities	245	61.3
Family relocation	120	30.0
Better living conditions	270	67.5
Conflict or insecurity	95	23.8
Lack of land or farming opportunities	160	40.0
Social discrimination	55	13.8
Peer or social influence	185	46.3
Poor infrastructure in the rural area	210	52.5
Access to health and social services	130	32.5
Other (specify)	35	8.8
Total (Multiple Responses)	1,815	—

(Multiple responses were allowed; hence, total frequency exceeds N = 400)

A multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the impact of specific socio-economic determinants on youth migration from rural regions to Calabar metropolis. The independent variables encompassed the pursuit of improved employment, educational prospects, familial relocation, enhanced living conditions, conflict or insecurity, scarcity of land or agricultural opportunities, social discrimination, peer or societal influence, inadequate infrastructure in rural regions, and access to health and social services. Youth migration functioned as the dependent variable.

The regression analysis results in Table 3 indicated that the total regression model was statistically significant. The model yielded a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = 0.71$, signifying a robust association between the independent factors and youth migration. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.50, indicating that roughly 50% of the variation in youth migration to Calabar Metropolis is explained by the predictors in the model, while the remaining 50% may be attributable to other unexamined

factors. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.48 indicates that the model possesses substantial explanatory power, even after accounting for the number of predictors. The regression model's overall significance was validated by the F-statistic ($F(10, 389) = 38.62, p < .001$), indicating that the independent variables collectively exert a statistically significant influence on youth migration from rural regions to the Calabar metropolis.

Table 3: Model Summary

Statistic	Value
R	0.71
R^2	0.50
Adjusted R^2	0.48
F-value	38.62
p-value	< .001

The results on the individual contributions of the independent variables in Table 4 indicate that the pursuit of improved employment emerged as the most significant predictor of youth migration ($\beta = .38, t = 5.86, p < .001$). Improved living conditions had a substantial, statistically significant impact on migration ($\beta = .32, t = 5.30, p < .001$). Educational opportunities significantly influenced migration decisions ($\beta = .27, t = 4.51, p < .001$). The study indicated that inadequate infrastructure in rural regions strongly forecasted young migration ($\beta = .21, t = 4.07, p < .001$). The absence of land or agricultural opportunities was determined to significantly affect migration ($\beta = .19, t = 3.71, p < .001$). Peer or social influence exerted a statistically significant impact on migration ($\beta = .16, t = 3.32, p = .001$), violence or instability was determined to strongly affect youth migration ($\beta = .12, t = 2.68, p = .008$). Access to health and social services exerted a moderate although statistically significant influence on migration ($\beta = .10, t = 2.40, p = .017$), Family relocation exhibited a statistically significant albeit somewhat weak effect ($\beta = .09, t = 2.10, p = .036$), social discrimination did not exhibit a statistically significant effect on juvenile migration ($\beta = .05, t = 1.45, p = .148$).

Table 4: Summary of Multiple Regression Results

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	0.52	0.11	—	4.73	.000
Better employment	0.41	0.07	.38	5.86	.000
Educational opportunities	0.29	0.06	.27	4.51	.000
Family relocation	0.11	0.05	.09	2.10	.036
Better living conditions	0.34	0.06	.32	5.30	.000
Conflict/insecurity	0.14	0.05	.12	2.68	.008

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Lack of land/farming	0.22	0.06	.19	3.71	.000
Social discrimination	0.06	0.04	.05	1.45	.148
Peer influence	0.18	0.05	.16	3.32	.001
Poor infrastructure	0.25	0.06	.21	4.07	.000
Health/social services	0.12	0.05	.10	2.40	.017

Table 5 indicates that migrant adolescents are disproportionately represented in street trading (25.0%) and construction (22.5%), sectors generally defined by low entry barriers, limited formal qualifications, and elevated informality. Also, 15.0% are engaged in the ICT sector, which is typically associated with higher skill requirements and better salary opportunities. Table 5 indicates that a predominant 40.0% of respondents engage in informal arrangements, however 21.3% possessed regular work. Contractual (22.5%) and daily salary (16.3%) structures further signify employment instability. A total of 75% of respondents indicate an enhancement in income, with 42.5% reporting a minor increase and 32.5% a substantial improvement (table 5). Nevertheless, 25% indicate no enhancement or a decrease in revenue.

Table 5: Sector Currently Working

Sector	Frequency	Percent
Construction	90	22.5
ICT	60	15.0
Hospitality	75	18.8
Street Trading	100	25.0
Others	75	18.8
Total	400	100.0
Work Arrangement	Frequency	Percent
Formal	85	21.3
Informal	160	40.0
Contract	90	22.5
Daily Wage	65	16.3
Total	400	100.0
Income change	Frequency	Percent
Yes, significantly	130	32.5
Yes, slightly	170	42.5
No change	70	17.5
Income decreased	30	7.5
Total	400	100.0

Employment Outcomes and Labour Market Dynamics

Table 6 presents findings on the work characteristics of migrant youth and the perceived impact of migration on incomes in the informal sector. Among 400 respondents, 46.3% claimed that migrant adolescents predominantly participate in unskilled jobs, whereas only 23.8% expressed predominance in skilled employment. Furthermore, 22.5% characterised their employment as mixed, encompassing both skilled and unskilled labour, while 7.5% expressed uncertainty. These statistics unequivocally illustrate that migrant youths are disproportionately represented in low-skilled employment. A significant percentage of respondents (45.0%) believe that youth migration has led to lower wages in the informal economy. Simultaneously, 25.0% indicated that earnings have stayed unchanged, 15.0% asserted that wages have risen, and 15.0% expressed uncertainty.

Table 6: Nature of Employment and its Effects on Wages

Employment type	Frequency	Percent
Mostly Skilled	95	23.8%
Mostly Unskilled	185	46.3%
Mixed	90	22.5%
Don't Know	30	7.5%
Total	400	100.0
Wage Effect		
Wages Decreased	180	45.0
Wages Same	100	25.0
Wages Increased	60	15.0
Not Sure	60	15.0
Total	400	100.0

Table 7 presents the findings about the perceived sufficiency of work possibilities and individual experiences of job rivalry. Among 400 respondents, 25.0% asserted that sufficient work opportunities exist to accommodate the influx of rural youth, a predominant 55.0% contended that job prospects are inadequate. Furthermore, 20.0% expressed uncertainty. A total of 77.6% of respondents indicated they encounter employment competition, with 36.3% reporting it regularly and 41.3% reporting it occasionally. Only 15.0% reported infrequent competition, while 7.5% reported no experience with competition whatsoever. Over three-quarters of respondents directly encounter competition in the labour market throughout their job search or inside their current settings. The elevated level of competition indicates that job prospects are inadequate to adequately accommodate the existing labour force.

Table 7: Perceived Adequacy of Jobs Opportunities and Personal Job Competition Experience

Perceived Adequacy of Jobs Opportunities	Frequency	Percent
Yes	100	25.0%
No	220	55.0%
Not Sure	80	20.0%
Total	400	100.0
Personal Job Competition Experience		
Frequently	145	36.3%
Occasionally	165	41.3%
Rarely	60	15.0%
Not at All	30	7.5%
Total	400	100.0

Among 400 respondents, 28.8% reported experiencing prejudice in employment access, whilst 57.5% stated they had not encountered discrimination. An additional 13.8% were uncertain if they had experienced discrimination. The statistics about heightened job competition are even more remarkable. A total of 77.5% of respondents either strongly agreed (35.0%) or agreed (42.5%) that the migration of rural youngsters had intensified employment rivalry in metropolitan regions. Only 22.5% expressed disagreement or severe disagreement.

DISCUSSION

The study analysed the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of youth migrating from rural areas into Calabar. The dominance of youth in the 20-29 age bracket indicates that migration in Calabar is mostly a phenomenon among young adults. The concentration of migrants aged 20–29 suggests a potential brain drain and loss of the labour force in their rural or origin communities, especially because many migrants hold tertiary education qualifications. The findings correspond with migration selectivity theory, which asserts that movement is predominantly observed among young adults owing to their enhanced adaptability, diminished familial obligations, and elevated desires for education and employment (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

The marginal male predominance suggests that migration in Calabar may continue to reflect conventional gender norms, in which males are typically expected to pursue economic opportunities beyond their native locale. The significant share of female migrants (46.3%) suggests a diminishing gender disparity in migration trends. This tendency aligns with the observations of Afolayan et al. (2008), who noted a rising feminisation of migration in Nigeria, especially among young individuals pursuing educational and service-sector career prospects.

The respondents had a comparatively elevated level of educational attainment. The significant percentage of tertiary-educated respondents indicates that migration in Calabar encompasses not only the uneducated or poorly educated but also a considerable contingent of skilled and semi-skilled youth. This finding aligns with human capital theory, which posits that persons with higher education are more inclined to migrate due to the expectation of superior returns on their abilities in alternative locations (Sjaastad, 1962).

The high unemployment rate among participants underscores the influence of economic push factors in motivating migration. The push-pull framework (Lee, 1966) posits that elevated unemployment and restricted job prospects in origin regions function as significant push drivers. These findings highlight the economic vulnerability of numerous teenage migrants and support the assertion that migration decisions are predominantly shaped by income disparities and the pursuit of improved living conditions (Todaro & Smith, 2020).

The prevalence of single respondents aligns with the youthful demographic composition and reinforces the life-cycle theory of migration, which posits that unmarried individuals exhibit greater mobility due to reduced household obligations (White & Lindstrom, 2005). The substantial proportion previously involved in education indicates that educational transitions significantly influence migration choices.

The prevalence of solo migration suggests that young migration in Calabar is predominantly an individual strategy rather than a household transfer process. The ramifications of elevated solitary movement necessitate the establishment of specialised support systems for urban youngsters, including housing, job assistance, and vocational training. Due to their single status and economic vulnerability, many migrants may encounter social marginalisation or exploitation in the absence of sufficient support systems. This corresponds with research from other Nigerian

metropolitan areas, where youth frequently migrate autonomously for school, apprenticeships, or jobs before possibly providing support to family members (Afolayan et al., 2008).

A majority of respondents (86.2%) had completed at least secondary school, indicating a comparatively educated youth demographic. The findings illustrate a young, educated, yet economically limited population with considerable potential for labour market participation and societal advancement.

The regression results in Table 3 show that the overall model is statistically significant in explaining youth migration to Calabar. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.71$) indicates a strong positive relationship between the set of independent variables and youth migration, suggesting that the predictors collectively have a substantial association with the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.50$) shows that approximately 50% of the variation in youth migration is explained by the predictors included in the regression model. This indicates a moderate-to-strong explanatory capacity of the model, while the remaining 50% of the variation may be due to other variables not included in the analysis. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.48, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model, remains close to the R^2 value, suggesting that the model maintains good explanatory power without substantial inflation due to the number of variables. Furthermore, the overall significance of the regression model is confirmed by the F-statistic ($F(10, 389) = 38.62, p < .001$). The very small p-value indicates that the predictors jointly contribute significantly to explaining youth migration, meaning the model provides a statistically reliable explanation of the dependent variable. Overall, the results suggest that the set of independent variables included in the model collectively and significantly predicts youth migration.

According to the individual variables in Table 4, the pursuit of improved employment emerged as the most significant predictor of youth migration ($\beta = .38, t = 5.86, p < .001$). This suggests that heightened employment-related motivations considerably elevate the probability of youth migration to urban centres. This finding aligns with the descriptive statistics, indicating that 77.5% of respondents recognised employment possibilities as a primary motivation for migration.

Improved living conditions had a substantial, statistically significant impact on migration ($\beta = .32, t = 5.30, p < .001$). This indicates that the anticipation of enhanced housing, urban facilities, and overall quality of life substantially drives rural

adolescents to migrate to Calabar. Educational opportunities significantly influenced migration decisions ($\beta = .27$, $t = 4.51$, $p < .001$), suggesting that access to higher educational institutions in Calabar is a primary attraction for rural youth.

The study indicated that inadequate infrastructure in rural regions strongly forecasted young migration ($\beta = .21$, $t = 4.07$, $p < .001$). This indicates that insufficient rural infrastructure, including substandard road networks, inconsistent electrical supplies, and restricted communication facilities, significantly influences migration choices. Moreover, the absence of land or agricultural opportunities was determined to significantly affect migration ($\beta = .19$, $t = 3.71$, $p < .001$), indicating that restricted farming prospects in rural regions compel youth to pursue alternative livelihoods in urban areas.

Peer or social influence exerted a statistically significant impact on migration ($\beta = .16$, $t = 3.32$, $p = .001$), suggesting that social networks and the experiences of friends or relatives who have previously migrated influence migration decisions. Similarly, violence or instability was determined to strongly affect youth migration ($\beta = .12$, $t = 2.68$, $p = .008$), indicating that safety apprehensions in rural regions drive young individuals toward urban locales.

Access to health and social services exerted a moderate, though statistically significant, influence on migration ($\beta = .10$, $t = 2.40$, $p = .017$), suggesting that improved healthcare and social welfare services in metropolitan regions serve as supplementary incentives for migration. Family relocation exhibited a statistically significant, albeit somewhat weak, effect ($\beta = .09$, $t = 2.10$, $p = .036$), suggesting that migration decisions are occasionally influenced by household mobility trends.

Nonetheless, social discrimination did not exhibit a statistically significant effect on juvenile migration ($\beta = .05$, $t = 1.45$, $p = .148$). This indicates that discrimination is not a primary factor influencing migration among the youth in the research area, in contrast to economic and infrastructural considerations.

The findings demonstrate that economic and development-related factors are the primary predictors of youth migration from rural regions to Calabar Metropolis. The significant impact of employment prospects and improved living conditions indicates that migration decisions among rural adolescents are primarily driven by aspirations to improve their economic prospects and quality of life. These findings corroborate the push-pull hypothesis of migration, which posits that adverse conditions in rural

regions (push factors) and appealing prospects in urban locales (pull factors) collectively shape movement behaviour. The statistical significance of educational opportunities underscores the role of metropolitan centres as primary educational hubs. A multitude of young individuals relocate to pursue university education and professional training opportunities that are frequently lacking in rural areas.

The substantial impact of inadequate rural infrastructure corroborates that developmental gaps between rural and urban regions considerably influence migratory trends. In rural villages lacking vital services such as adequate roads, energy, healthcare, and communication networks, young individuals are more inclined to migrate to urban areas where these services are readily accessible. The results of this study align with previous research on rural-urban migration, including Todaro's (1969) findings, which indicate that anticipated employment prospects in urban regions substantially influence migration choices in developing nations.

The employment patterns of migrant youth indicate occupational segmentation in Calabar's urban labour market. Migrant youth tend to congregate in labour-intensive, low-capital industries characterised by modest entry restrictions. This concentration may indicate insufficient educational qualifications, absence of professional networks, and limited access to formal employment opportunities. This discovery closely aligns with the dual-sector model proposed by Harris and Todaro (1970), which posits that migrants often work in low-wage urban informal sectors while awaiting official employment opportunities. This model illustrates employment instability and susceptibility. Informal and daily pay arrangements generally lack social protection, pension plans, health insurance, and legal protections. A significant prevalence of precarious employment may subject migrant youth to economic volatility. The findings align with the Harris-Todaro (1970) model, which elucidates migration despite elevated urban unemployment owing to anticipated income disparities. This indicates that migration remains economically viable for most individuals. The prevalence of "slight improvement" signifies minimal advancements rather than significant economic mobility. These findings align with the New Economics of Labour Migration (Stark & Bloom, 1985), which views migration as a strategy for diversifying household risk. Fox and Thomas (2016) similarly discovered that income mobility among African youth migrants tends to be incremental rather than significant.

The prevalence of unskilled work indicates occupational regression and restricted upward mobility in the urban labour market. The low percentage in predominantly skilled occupations (23.8%) indicates constrained assimilation into higher-

productivity segments of the economy. These findings closely align with the dual labour market theory proposed by Harris and Todaro (1970), which posits that migrants are frequently integrated into low-wage urban sectors while awaiting limited formal employment opportunities. Migrants, despite their aspirations for higher incomes, often find themselves in informal or low-skilled employment due to systemic limitations in the metropolitan economy.

The finding that nearly 50% of respondents report wage reductions indicates significant labour supply pressures in informal marketplaces. This finding aligns with classical labour market theory, which posits that a rise in labour supply, with demand remaining constant, typically applies downward pressure on wages. Borjas (2003) contends that immigration or labour influxes can depress wages in sectors heavily populated by migrants, especially within low-skilled labour markets. The prevalence of largely unskilled work (46.3%) alongside reported income reductions (45.0%) indicates a self-perpetuating cycle: migrant youth are concentrated in low-skill industries, and the increase in labour supply within these sectors exerts downward pressure on wages. This tendency may constrain the enduring economic advantages of migration.

It is noteworthy that 15.0% of respondents reported pay increases, potentially indicative of sector-specific expansion or heightened economic activity driven by migration. The findings underscore multiple concerns about the broader ramifications. Initially, sustained engagement in unskilled labour may lead to the underutilisation of human capital, hence constraining national productivity growth. Secondly, wage suppression in the informal sector may intensify urban poverty and inequality. Third, extended tenure in low-skill, low-wage positions may hinder skill development and diminish long-term career advancement for migrant kids.

The findings indicate that over 50% of respondents recognise a systemic deficiency in work prospects due to the expanding labour supply. The prevalence of the "No" response suggests that urban labour markets may be experiencing constrained job growth relative to the level of youth migration. The 20.0% who were uncertain may represent those with unstable employment circumstances or those who recognise sectoral fluctuations in opportunities. While most individuals reported no direct prejudice, the roughly thirty percent who experienced exclusion is significant and cannot be disregarded. In labour market research, this number indicates not merely individual occurrences but also the presence of structural or systemic obstacles affecting a considerable minority of migrating adolescents. The comparatively

elevated "not sure" replies may suggest nuanced or indirect manifestations of discrimination. These tendencies align with findings from the International Labour Organisation (2022), which indicate that migrant adolescents in emerging economies often encounter hidden barriers to securing formal employment, despite the absence of overt discrimination.

Most migrant adolescents find the labour market to be saturated and intensely competitive. The significant proportion of respondents who hold this perception implies that competition is not only theoretical but also a tangible reality in the job-seeking process. The simultaneous presence of perceived competition and documented discrimination indicates two interconnected dynamics within the labour market. Initially, heightened rural–urban migration augments the labour supply, exacerbating competition for the few employment opportunities.

Secondly, in this competitive landscape, certain migrant groups may face additional obstacles to securing employment. Although competition affects most migrants, prejudice may disproportionately affect a specific subset, exacerbating inequality. The findings align with recent worldwide evidence from The World Bank (2023), indicating that when metropolitan economies lack adequate absorptive capacity for arriving migrants, labour market constraints escalate, frequently resulting in the proliferation of informal employment and social unrest

CONCLUSION

The demographic and socioeconomic attributes of respondents reveal that youth migration in Calabar is primarily driven by young, unmarried, reasonably educated individuals with limited career prospects and low incomes. Migration serves as both a survival tactic and a means of social growth. These findings correspond with existing migration theories and other empirical investigations, while also emphasising emergent phenomena, such as the rising participation of females. Policymakers must consequently tackle structural unemployment, improve young people's skill development, and strengthen urban planning systems to effectively manage the socio-economic effects of the youth movement.

The results indicate that youth migration correlates with considerable labour market strain. Although not all migrant kids encounter discrimination, a significant minority does, and a predominant majority perceive heightened employment rivalry. These findings corroborate traditional migration theory (Harris & Todaro, 1970) and modern

labour market assessments (Borjas, 2003; International Labour Organisation, 2022; World Bank, 2023), emphasising that migration can concurrently generate economic opportunities and exacerbate structural employment issues. The findings indicate that migrant adolescents predominantly hold unskilled positions and that many believe migration exacerbates wage reductions in the informal economy. These results corroborate the dual labour market model of Harris and Todaro (1970) and are consistent with empirical evidence from Borjas (2003), the International Labour Organisation (2022), and the World Bank (2023). Although migration might provide employment opportunities, structural limitations in urban labour markets seem to restrict skill utilisation and depress earnings in the informal sector, so hindering the economic transformative potential of youth migration.

The findings reveal a distinct awareness of inadequate employment prospects and of prevalent personal experiences of job competition among migrant youth. Although migration may provide individual economic prospects, its aggregate impact seems to burden the urban labour market, heighten competition, and limit the potential for sustainable job growth. These findings corroborate classical migration theory (Harris & Todaro, 1970) and are consistent with recent empirical studies on labour market dynamics (Borjas, 2003; International Labour Organisation, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended advancing rural development programs based on its findings. The government must prioritise rural development by enhancing infrastructure, healthcare, education, and economic possibilities in rural areas. Investments in rural industry and agriculture can mitigate the economic gaps that compel young individuals to migrate to metropolitan regions. The initiation of Youth Employment and Skill Development Programmes to promote skills acquisition and vocational training among unemployed youths. This approach can equip youth with practical, market-relevant competencies. Such initiatives will enhance their employability and facilitate access to higher-paying positions in both rural and urban labour markets.

Young entrepreneurs should receive financial assistance, business training, and access to finance to promote self-employment. Advocating for small enterprises can enhance job prospects and reduce reliance on limited formal-sector employment. Calabar's local authorities should enact policies to enhance formal job options and regulate the

informal sector, thereby improving working conditions and income stability for migrant workers.

There is a necessity for equitable regional development policies. Policymakers ought to implement cohesive regional development policies that foster equitable economic growth in both rural and urban regions. Mitigating regional disparities will facilitate the regulation of migration patterns and promote more sustainable urban development. Government agencies ought to enhance the collection and monitoring of migration statistics to gain a clearer understanding of migration trends and their effects on employment and urban development. Dependable data will underpin evidence-based policy development and strategic planning.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study, nor is there any between the authors.

REFERENCES

- Adepoju, A. (2000). Issues and recent trends in international migration in sub-Saharan Africa. *International Social Science Journal*, 52(165), 383–394.
- Afolayan, A. A., Ikwuyatum, G. O., & Abejide, O. (2008). Dynamics of international migration in Nigeria. *African Population Studies*, 23(2), 1–34.
- African Development Bank. (2022). *African economic outlook 2022*. African Development Bank.
- Ajaero, C. K., & Onokala, P. C. (2013). The effects of rural-urban migration on rural communities in southeastern Nigeria. *International Journal of Population Research*, 2013, 1–10.
- Borjas, G. J. (2003). The labor demand curve is downward sloping: Reexamining the impact of immigration on the labor market. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 118(4), 1335–1374.
- Fox, L., & Thomas, A. (2016). *Africa's got work to do: Employment prospects in the new century*. International Monetary Fund.
- Harris, J. R., & Todaro, M. P. (1970). Migration, unemployment and development: A two-sector analysis. *American Economic Review*, 60(1), 126–142.
- International Labour Organisation (2022). *Global employment trends for youth 2022*. ILO.
- International Labour Organisation (2023). *Global employment trends for youth 2023: Investing in transforming futures for young people*. ILO.
- Lee, E. S. (1966). A theory of migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47–57.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2023). *Nigeria labour force survey 2023*. Abuja: NBS.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2024). *Nigeria labour force statistics 2024*. Abuja: NBS.
- Okonjo-Iweala, N., & Osafo-Kwaako, E. (2007). *Nigeria's economic reforms: Progress and challenges*. Brookings Institution.
- Sjaastad, L. A. (1962). The costs and returns of human migration. *Journal of Political Economy*, 70(5), 80–93.

- Stark, O., & Bloom, D. E. (1985). The new economics of labor migration. *American Economic Review*, 75(2), 173–178.
- Todaro, M. P. (1969). A model of labor migration and urban unemployment in less developed countries. *American Economic Review*, 59(1), 138–148.
- Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2020). *Economic development* (13th ed.). Pearson.
- United Nations (2023). *World urbanisation prospects: The 2023 revision*. New York: United Nations.
- White, M. J., & Lindstrom, D. P. (2005). Internal migration. In D. L. Poston & M. Micklin (Eds.), *Handbook of population* (pp. 311–346). Springer.
- World Bank (2023). *Migration and development brief*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2023). *World development report 2023: Migrants, refugees, and societies*. World Bank.