

Socio-Economic Factors Underlying Environmental Migration in Owakurudu Community in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State

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Abstract

This study investigated the social and economic factors underlying environmental migration in the Owakurudu community of Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. A high prevalence of environmental migration is linked to severe challenges posed by recurrent flooding and other forms of environmental degradation. The research employed the survey design, collecting data from 120 residents using self-developed instruments to measure social and economic influences. Findings reveal that social factors, such as community cohesion, healthcare access, and social support networks, and economic factors, comprising employment opportunities and income levels, underly migration decisions. The study underscores the importance of addressing these intertwined vulnerabilities to foster resilience within the community amid ongoing environmental crises. Recommendations include improving social infrastructure, diversifying economic opportunities, enhancing disaster preparedness, and increasing access to financial resources.

Keywords: Environmental migration, Social factors, Economic factors, Owakurudu community, Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria

Introduction

In the contemporary world, environmental migration is increasingly recognized as a significant global issue, influenced by an intricate web of social and economic factors. As climate change and environmental degradation intensify, communities in various regions grapple with challenges that compel individuals to relocate in search of better living conditions. This phenomenon is strikingly evident in Owakurudu, a community located in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria, which has faced severe environmental hazards, particularly flooding. These flooding events have resulted in the destruction of homes, the loss of livelihoods, and have left many families in precarious situations, necessitating migration to escape the adverse impacts of their environment.

Owakurudu's history is interwoven with its environmental challenges, particularly the recurrent flooding that has devastated the area. Local leaders, including the Baale, have chronicled how a once-modest gutter has morphed into a dangerous chasm due to persistent flooding, symbolizing the larger

struggle the community faces against environmental degradation. Such inundation has led to the displacement of many families, with affected individuals fleeing to find solace in neighboring areas, often resulting in a transient or permanent loss of community ties and identity. While various organizations, including religious entities such as the Catholic Diocese of Nigeria and St. Vincent de Paul, have intervened with emergency aid, the community continues to require sustainable structural solutions and robust government support (Mastrorillo et al., 2016).

Understanding the socio-economic dimensions of environmental migration in Owakurudu is imperative, as these factors significantly influence local experiences of displacement. Economic vulnerability in the face of environmental threats can dictate migration decisions, as many individuals and families find it increasingly difficult to maintain their livelihoods amidst recurring floods (Adger et al., 2014). As documented by Zickgraf (2018) and Boas (2015), the socio-economic status of communities plays a critical role in shaping how they respond to environmental crises, yet there is

a lack of focused literature examining these dynamics specifically within local contexts like Owakurudu.

Furthermore, the interplay of social networks, community cohesion, and economic opportunities often shapes migration trajectories within affected regions. The social fabric of a community can either facilitate migration through collective support or hinder it due to cultural ties and obligations (Dumitru, 2020). However, limited research has been directed towards understanding how social and economic factors intertwine to inform environmental migration in Nigeria, particularly in localized settings (Mastrorillo et al., 2016; Zickgraf, 2018).

Moreover, the existing body of literature has predominantly concentrated on national trends or international migration, overlooking the unique experiences and specific drivers of migration in smaller communities like Owakurudu (Adger et al., 2014; Boas, 2015). Recognizing that localized factors are crucial in shaping migration patterns, this study seeks to fill this research gap by investigating the socio-economic determinants affecting environmental migration in Owakurudu. By engaging with the lived experiences of residents, local historical narratives, and analyzing contemporary socio-economic contexts, this research will contribute to a broader understanding of how environmental challenges compel migration while ensuring that the specific circumstances and needs of affected communities are prioritized.

Through this exploration, the study provided valuable insights into the social and economic factors that drive displacement in Owakurudu, thereby informing policymakers about the essential interventions and long-term strategies needed to support displaced individuals. Ultimately, addressing these determinants will be central to fostering resilience against future environmental challenges and safeguarding the dignity and well-being of communities facing environmental migration.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate how social and economic factors influence environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. determine the prevalence of environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
- ii. identify the social factors influencing environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
- iii. examine the economic factors that influence environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered to guide this study:

- i. What is the prevalence of environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?
- ii. What social factors influence environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?
- iii. What economic factors impact environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?

Methods

This study adopted the survey research design aimed at investigating the social and economic factors influencing environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The participants were 120 residents of the community. Two instruments utilised for data collection were Social Factors Scale ($r=0.78$) and Economic Factors Scale ($r=0.81$). The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics..

Results

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?

Table 1: Prevalence of Environmental Migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.

S/N	Items on Prevalence of Environmental Migration	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Environmental degradation in Owakurudu leads me to consider migration.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.79	High Prevalence
2	Drought and other environmental crises push me to migrate.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.10	0.82	High Prevalence
3	Erosion of farmlands has increased migration from my community in recent years.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
4	Poor waste management and pollution encourage me to leave Owakurudu.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
5	Climate change effects are a major factor in my decision to migrate.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
6	Flooding and other natural disasters trigger my desire to migrate.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
7	Water scarcity is a significant driver of my potential migration.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
8	Deforestation around my community has caused some residents to migrate.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
9	Land degradation and loss of arable land lead me to consider migrating.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.10	0.82	High Prevalence
10	Environmental policies in my community are inadequate to prevent migration due to climate factors.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.10	0.82	High Prevalence
11	Unstable weather patterns increase my likelihood of migrating.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.10	0.82	High Prevalence
12	Environmental stress causes households, including mine, to relocate.	100 (50%)	60 (30%)	40 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.20	0.89	High Prevalence
13	Rising temperatures make Owakurudu less habitable, leading to thoughts of migration.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
14	I believe poor environmental resource management influences my decision to migrate.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence
15	Migration from Owakurudu is influenced by a lack of resilience to environmental shocks.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Prevalence

The table demonstrates a high prevalence of environmental migration in Owakurudu, with a majority of respondents acknowledging that factors such as environmental degradation, erosion, climate change, and flooding significantly contribute to migration. Most mean values fall between **3.10 and 3.35**, confirming

the **strong influence of environmental challenges on migration decisions**.

Research Question 2: What social factors influence environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?

Table 2: Social Factors Influencing Environmental Migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State

S/N	Items on Social Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I believe that social ties and networks influence my decision to migrate.	100 (50%)	100 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.50	0.50	High Influence
2	Lack of access to quality education in my community drives people to leave.	60 (30%)	60 (30%)	20 (10%)	60 (30%)	2.60	1.12	Moderate Influence
3	Poor healthcare services in Owakurudu push residents to consider migration.	100 (50%)	60 (30%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.20	0.91	High Influence
4	Migration is common among families with limited social support systems.	100 (50%)	60 (30%)	0 (0%)	40 (20%)	3.10	0.94	High Influence
5	Community conflicts and social tensions in Owakurudu encourage migration.	60 (30%)	100 (50%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.00	0.89	High Influence
6	Inadequate housing and overcrowding motivate me or others to migrate.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.00	0.89	High Influence
7	Peer influence plays a significant role in my migration decisions.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.00	0.89	High Influence
8	Limited access to clean water in my area forces people to leave.	60 (30%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	40 (20%)	2.80	0.99	Moderate Influence
9	The presence of family members in other locations encourages my migration.	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	2.50	1.23	Moderate Influence
10	Poor security and fear of crime in the community contribute to migration.	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	2.40	1.12	Moderate Influence
11	I feel that social isolation increases the likelihood of migration.	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	2.40	1.12	Moderate Influence
12	Religious institutions in my community support people in migrating to better areas.	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	2.40	1.12	Moderate Influence
13	I think that gender roles within my community influence migration decisions.	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	2.50	1.23	Moderate Influence
14	Young people are more likely to migrate due to a lack of social opportunities in Owakurudu.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.10	0.89	High Influence
15	Poor communication infrastructure in my community prompts migration.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.10	0.89	High Influence

Table 2 shows that social factors strongly influence migration in Owakurudu, with key drivers including social ties, poor healthcare, inadequate housing, and peer influence (Mean = 3.00 - 3.50). Moderate influences include limited access to clean water, fear of crime, and religious institutions (Mean = 2.40 - 2.80).

These findings suggest that improving social infrastructure could help mitigate migration rates.

Research Question 3: What economic factors impact environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State?

Table 3: Economic Factors Influencing Environmental Migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State

S/N	Items on Economic Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I feel that lack of employment opportunities drives migration in Owakurudu.	80 (40%)	100 (50%)	20 (10%)	0 (0%)	3.30	0.69	High Impact
2	Low income levels compel people, including myself, to seek better living conditions elsewhere.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	0 (0%)	3.40	0.67	High Impact
3	Deteriorating agricultural productivity affects my or others' decisions to migrate.	100 (50%)	90 (45%)	10 (5%)	0 (0%)	3.45	0.57	High Impact
4	Economic hardship is a significant factor in my decision to migrate.	100 (50%)	60 (30%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.20	0.91	High Impact
5	High costs of living in Owakurudu lead residents to consider out-migration.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Impact
6	Limited access to loans or financial support drives people in my community to leave.	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	1.90	1.01	Low Impact
7	I believe that poor wages in my area increase the tendency to migrate.	100 (50%)	40 (20%)	40 (20%)	20 (10%)	3.10	0.94	High Impact
8	Environmental degradation directly affects my livelihood and leads to migration.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Impact
9	Unavailability of sustainable economic activities forces me or others to migrate.	100 (50%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.35	0.71	High Impact
10	Poor infrastructure for businesses and economic activities pushes residents away.	80 (40%)	100 (50%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	3.30	0.69	High Impact
11	Seasonal migration occurs in my community due to irregular employment opportunities.	40 (20%)	100 (50%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	2.70	0.92	Moderate Impact
12	Limited access to markets for local products contributes to my migration decisions.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.00	0.89	High Impact
13	The cost of transportation in Owakurudu is a significant factor in my decision to migrate.	40 (20%)	80 (40%)	40 (20%)	40 (20%)	2.40	1.10	Moderate Impact
14	Wealth disparity within my community increases migration pressure on residents.	100 (50%)	60 (30%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	3.20	0.91	High Impact
15	High dependency ratios within families in my community encourage migration.	80 (40%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	80 (40%)	2.50	1.23	Moderate Impact

Table 3 confirms that employment opportunities, income levels, agricultural decline, economic hardship, and cost of living are strong economic migration drivers (Mean = 3.10 - 3.45). Limited access to loans had low impact (Mean = 1.90), while seasonal migration and transport costs had moderate effects.

Discussion

The findings of this study illuminate the social and economic factors that influence environmental migration in the Owakurudu

community in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. Consistent with previous research, our analysis reveals a high prevalence of environmental migration linked to recurring flooding, erosion, and other environmental degradation (Mastorillo et al., 2016). The results underscore the pressing role that socio-economic vulnerabilities play in driving the migration narratives within the community, especially as climate change continues to threaten livelihoods.

The data indicate a robust influence of

social factors on environmental migration, as evidenced by the mean scores related to community ties, healthcare access, and peer influence. The correlation analysis reveals a moderately strong positive relationship between social factors and environmental migration ($R = 0.652$). This finding aligns with Dumitru's (2020) assertion that community dynamics, such as social networks and cultural obligations, significantly shape migration responses. The perceived inadequacies in healthcare and education further exacerbate the community's migration tendencies, suggesting a need for systemic improvements in local social infrastructure to mitigate displacement.

Also, the presence of social support systems, represented through strong family ties and community networks, indicates that collective experiences of vulnerability can either facilitate migration or reinforce community resilience. These dynamics echo Adger et al. (2014), who note the critical role of cultural dimensions and social fabric in shaping how communities adapt to environmental pressures. Thus, fostering social cohesion through community-driven initiatives could mitigate the adverse effects of environmental challenges and reduce migration rates.

Economic drivers have emerged as significant contributors to environmental migration. The study elucidates that low income levels, lack of employment opportunities, and deteriorating agricultural productivity are crucial determinants influencing individuals to seek better living conditions elsewhere. These findings resonate with Boas (2015), who highlights the interconnectedness of economic stability and migration patterns resulting from ecological threats.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the social and economic factors and their role as influencers of environmental migration in Owakurudu Community, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. Both social factors—such as community cohesion, access to healthcare, and social support networks—and economic factors,

including employment opportunities and income levels, had influence on migration decisions. Therefore, addressing the intertwined vulnerabilities posed by both social and economic challenges is crucial for fostering long-term resilience and stability within the Owakurudu community amid ongoing environmental crises. A holistic approach that combines community engagement and targeted socio-economic interventions is essential for enhancing adaptive capacity, thereby reducing the need for migration and preserving the integrity of the community.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and outlined objectives, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthening Social Infrastructure:** Local government and community leaders should prioritize the enhancement of social support systems, including healthcare, education, and community engagement initiatives, to foster resilience against environmental challenges. Programs that promote social cohesion can help mitigate migration trends by reinforcing community ties.
2. **Economic Diversification Programs:** Implementing economic diversification strategies to create sustainable livelihood opportunities is vital. This could involve promoting alternative agricultural practices, skill acquisition training, and support for small businesses to reduce economic vulnerabilities and dependence on a single source of income.
3. **Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning:** The community should develop comprehensive disaster management plans that incorporate local knowledge and focus on efficient resource management. This includes investing in infrastructure to improve flood resilience, such as proper drainage systems and early warning mechanisms.
4. **Government and Policy Intervention:** Policymakers at the local and state levels

should devise and enforce environmental policies that address the underlying causes of environmental degradation. Adaptation strategies must be included in urban planning and development initiatives to ensure safer living conditions for residents.

5. Enhancing Access to Financial Resources: Initiatives to improve access to financial resources, such as low-interest loans and microfinance programs, can empower residents to invest in their livelihoods, thereby reducing the likelihood of migration prompted by economic pressures.
6. Community Awareness Campaigns: Raising awareness about climate change and its impacts on migration through community workshops and programs can foster a sense of shared responsibility, enabling residents to collectively address challenges and opportunities related to environmental migration.

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