



Article

Migration and the Japa Syndrome: Tracking Diaspora Remittances and Development Outcomes in Nigeria, 2015-2024

Barigbon, Christopher Barisi

1. Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

* Correspondence: christopher.barigbon@iaue.edu.ng ; christopherbarigbon@gmail.com

Abstract: Over the last decade, Nigeria has seen a dramatic surge in international migration driven by the “Japa Syndrome,” the mass exodus of skilled professionals and youth seeking better economic opportunities abroad. Diaspora remittances, while providing financial relief to households and increasing domestic consumption, also create a brain drain that retards national development, thus creating a complex socio-economic paradox. This study investigates the causes, volume, trends and socio-economic implications of diaspora remittance in Nigeria, 2015-2024 and the negative consequences of Japa Syndrome. The study seeks to inform policies that aim at optimising the benefits of remittances and minimising their negative consequences. This study is guided by four research questions, remittance trends, positive socio-economic impacts, detrimental socio-economic effect of Japa syndrome based on the Push Theory of Migration which emphasises structural factors such as unemployment, insecurity, poor governance and inadequate social services that push emigration. The study adopted a correlational research design and utilised secondary data of both quantitative and qualitative nature. The data was then analysed using content analysis in order to identify patterns, relationships and socio-economic implications. The findings indicate that the inflows of remittance are continuously increasing and affect positively household welfare and consumption. But the large scale emigration of skilled professionals has led to human capital depletion, labour market distortions, institutional inefficiencies, social disruption and increased inequality. The study concludes that diaspora remittances are important for household resilience but not sufficient for structural development without human capital retention and strategic investment. It recommends job creation and labour market strengthening, maximal utilisation of remittances, engagement of the diaspora and strengthening of institutions, to make migration a driver of sustainable national development, raising public awareness and cultural re-orientation, amongst others.

Citation: Barigbon, C. B. Migration and the Japa Syndrome: Tracking Diaspora Remittances and Development Outcomes in Nigeria, 2015-2024. American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research 2026, 7(7), 91-109

Received: 19th Apr 2026

Revised: 21st May 2026

Accepted: 08th Jun 2026

Published: 15th Jul 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Keywords: Migration, Japa Syndrome, Diaspora Remittance, Human Capital Depletion, Sustainable National Development

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Japa can be better understood in the broader context of international migration, which is the movement of people across borders due to social, political, economic or environmental causes such as unemployment, insecurity or the search for better opportunities [1]. The rising number of Nigerians – especially young people and highly qualified professionals – leaving the country for better living and employment

opportunities is highlighted in the Yoruba word “japa”, meaning “escape” or “flee”. The recent years have seen a large-scale exodus of human capital from Nigeria owing to economic stagnation, high unemployment, insecurity and subpar public services [2], [3]. The trend has been fuelled by the exit of multinational corporations, declining industrial capacity and unfavourable government policies that have shrunk domestic options.

In addition, the growth of social media and technology has made it easier to learn about opportunities in other places, thus encouraging self-initiated migration [4]. But they retain strong links with Nigeria, particularly through remittances. Nigeria has also become one of the largest recipients of remittance inflows in sub-Saharan Africa, surpassing both foreign direct investment (FDI) and official aid [5], [6]. They are the backbone of household welfare because they enable families to allocate money to small businesses, housing, health care and education.

Remittances can provide local development and economic stability, but their impact depends on governance and the investment climate. However, the continuous outflow of skilled workers presents challenges such as labour shortages, brain drain and a potential over-reliance on remittance inflows [2], [7]. As the world becomes more interconnected, so does the demand for skilled labour abroad and the opportunities for Nigerians and the widening of the skills gaps at home [8]. Understanding the linkages between migration, remittances and development is crucial for the design of appropriate policies. This study analyses the trends in migration, remittance and development in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024 to strike a balance between the benefits of diaspora remittance and the challenges of human capital flight.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since 2020, the “Japa Syndrome” or the mass emigration of young Nigerians, especially skilled professionals, has been attracting attention for its socioeconomic implications. These include unemployment, economic hardship, insecurity, political instability, and the quest for better educational or employment opportunities [9], [10]. The ongoing loss of human capital is a concern for Nigeria's growth, especially in terms of national productivity and remittances from the diaspora.

Much of the problem is around diaspora remittances, which is the money sent by Nigerians abroad to family or community to support them. They are a significant source of Nigeria's foreign exchange and contribute to household welfare, education, health and fight against poverty [11]. However, the nexus between the Japa syndrome and remittance flows remains poorly understood. Little research explores the influence of migration trends on the magnitude, pattern, and development impact of remittances [12].

Remittances are increasing household income and reducing poverty, but the continuous brain drain of talented workers is causing problems such as low productivity, underutilisation of domestic resources, and shortages of the workforce [13]. Even with remittances of \$24.3 billion in 2018 (6.1% of GDP), poverty and unemployment are still a problem [14], [15]. Technological advancement in fintech and digital banking also facilitates remittances but the drivers of migration remain the same, bad governance, instability and lack of opportunity at home [16], [10].

The study therefore addresses two main issues; the first is the persistence of competent Nigerians leaving their country due to the Japa syndrome; the second is the relationship between migration and remittances from the diaspora and their effects on the socio-economic growth. It analyses how migration affects flows of remittances, how these flows impact households and country growth, and how policies can optimise benefits and mitigate the negative consequences of brain drain. The following question helps to investigate the issues in this paper: What are the major causes of migration (the Japa syndrome) in Nigeria from 2015 to 2024? How much money has the diaspora sent to Nigeria and in what pattern during this period? What is the impact of migration and diaspora remittances on Nigeria's socio-economic development? What are the negative socio-economic implications of the Japa syndrome on Nigeria?

1.3 Conceptual Review

1.3.1 The Concept of Migration

The Japa syndrome [17], [1] is caused by the movement of persons or groups across or beyond borders for a period or permanently. Poverty, unemployment, insecurity, bad governance and lack of socio-economic opportunities are the main reasons for migration in Nigeria [17], [18]. Push and pull variables in migration were classically identified by Lee [19]. But people are coming here because of pull factors – better jobs, education, safety and amenities. People are leaving because of push factors, such as insecurity, low productivity and environmental degradation. People compare them to challenges such as cost, distance, legal constraints and cultural barriers. High population increase of 211.4 million in 2024 [20], [21], insecurity of food and employment and inequality further worsens the youth migration leading to labour shortages, dilapidated families, urban slums, and social instability [2]. Migration is also seen as a source of income, status, and foreign currency for households [9], [10].

In the past, Nigeria's migration patterns have been similar to those found in other parts of Africa. Nigerian migration has a long history and has been shaped by social, political and economic causes, with emigration driven by poverty, conflict and bad governance. Prior to colonisation, people moved for business, marriage, seasonal work and social ties [22]. The introduction of cash-crop economies, tariffs and labour recruitment practices by colonial authority sparked rural-to-urban migration to cities like Lagos, Ibadan and Port Harcourt [16]. The post-independence migration was heavily influenced by wars such as the Nigeria-Biafra War and the oil boom of the 1970s, which resulted in displacement and rapid urbanisation [23]. Economic hardship and insecurity in a region like the Niger Delta has resulted in a considerable brain drain [24]. Nigerians are still on the move even with the strict immigration laws in other countries. This goes to show what is motivating factors and the possibilities that lie beyond.

The forces of globalisation, technological development and the expansion of transnational networks have considerably accelerated international migration in present day Nigeria. The pool of emigrants is increasingly dominated by highly skilled professionals including doctors, engineers, information technology experts, academics and other professionals whose expertise is vital to national development. This pattern has contributed to the Japa phenomenon – a largely youth-led movement of emigration driven by unemployment, insecurity, poor governance and the desire for improved socio-economic conditions abroad [25].

The socio-economic implications of this migratory trend are profound and multi-dimensional. On the other hand, the mass migration of educated and highly skilled Nigerians has led to a significant loss of the nation's human capital, especially in critical sectors such as healthcare, education, engineering, and information technology. This constant brain drain has an impact on institutional capacity, weakens productivity, limits service delivery and reduces investor confidence, thus impeding sustainable national development [26], [27]. By contrast, the Nigerian diaspora has proven to be a critical source of economic support through remittances, which have a significant role in boosting household income, alleviating poverty, improving access to quality healthcare and education, supporting housing development and fostering entrepreneurial investment. Remittance inflows to Nigeria alone were estimated at about US\$24.3 billion in 2018, which was more than the country's foreign direct investment during the same period [25].

Economic, political and social factors still continue to be the major factors for Nigerian youth migration. While employment indicators have witnessed modest improvements in recent years, many young Nigerians still consider overseas labour markets as providing better employment prospects, higher earnings, greater economic stability and better career progression [28]. Migration has thus become a more and more attractive strategy for personal advancement and economic security.

It is trite that most Nigerian emigrants are highly skilled professionals working in health, education, information technology, engineering, finance and entrepreneurship. The rising participation of women in international migration is also significant, mainly driven by the search for higher education, work and career opportunities [12], [27]. Migration decisions are often supported by existing family and diaspora networks and may involve a temporary sojourn for education or a permanent move. The main push factors include economic hardship, insecurity, political instability, poor governance, environmental challenges, and limited opportunities, while attractive remuneration, improved living standards, quality education, and better working conditions abroad are powerful pull factors [11].

Largely, international migration presents a paradox to Nigeria's development path. Diaspora remittances have become a vital engine for household welfare and socio-economic development. However, the continued migration of skilled professionals continues to deplete the country's institutional capacity, productive potential and quality of public service delivery. Therefore, the ongoing persistence of the Japa phenomenon underscores the imperative need to adopt comprehensive policy measures that can tackle the depletion of skilled human resources and efficiently channel diaspora remittances and expertise to sustainable national development [29], [30].

1.3.2 The Japa Phenomenon and Its Drivers in Nigeria

The word Japa, which comes from the Yoruba language, literally means to escape or to flee. It has now become a widely recognised expression in the contemporary Nigerian discourse to describe the growing wave of emigration, especially among young people and highly skilled professionals who leave the country in search of better economic prospects, educational opportunities, career advancement and improved quality of life [31]. The scholarly interpretations conceptualise the Japa phenomenon as voluntary international migration motivated by the desire to escape poor socio-economic conditions, unemployment, insecurity, weak governance and limited opportunities for personal and professional realisation [10].

The Japa syndrome is a persistent and more coordinated exodus of Nigerians, especially the youth and the skilled workforce, to destinations like the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and various European countries. There are many complex push and pull factors motivating the migration. Major push factors are chronic unemployment, crumbling infrastructure, lack of educational and health facilities, political instability, economic uncertainty, poor governance and widespread insecurity.

Conversely, the major pull factors are: higher pay, quality education, safer living environments, better social protection schemes, more employment opportunities and better prospects for social mobility in destination countries [32]. Besides these structural determinants, the rapid proliferation of digital communication technologies and social media platforms has further augmented migration aspirations among Nigerian youths. Repeated stories of success, better standards of living and career prospects abroad have strengthened the idea that migration is the best way to achieve economic security and personal happiness [33].

Consequently, digital networks have become effective tools in influencing migration intentions and normalising the Japa culture among the youth. Japa migrants are very diverse demographically. They include highly skilled professionals, students, entrepreneurs, artisans, and informal sector workers. Although migration offers the chance for improved socio-economic outcomes, numerous migrants encounter substantial challenges, such as cultural adjustment difficulties, discrimination, social exclusion, employment insecurity, and psychological stress in their host countries [1]. Even with these challenges, economic hardship remains the main driver of emigration with the next drivers being political instability, systemic corruption, falling standards of education, lack of career prospects, and environmental pressures related to climate change and resource scarcity [9], [34]. Existing family bonds, diaspora communities, and peer networks still

serve as avenues for migration, offering financial support, information, and social capital that mitigate the perceived and real risks of international movement [35].

The Japa phenomenon has finally transcended beyond an individual migration decision to become a major socio-economic and developmental challenge for Nigeria. It reflects the aspirations of many citizens for a better standard of living and professional fulfilment, but its continued acceleration raises serious concerns about the depletion of human capital, the resilience of institutions and the country's long-term capacity for sustainable development.

1.3.3 The Concept of Diaspora and Diaspora Remittances

The etymology of the term 'diaspora' originates from the Greek word *diaspeiro*, meaning "to scatter". It is usually used to describe persons or groups of people who have been dispersed outside of their ancestral homeland but who continue to have strong cultural, social and emotional links to their country of origin [36]. Diasporas have traditionally been formed through voluntary migration and forced displacement with some of the famous ones including the Jewish diaspora, the Irish diaspora, and African populations displaced by the transatlantic slave trade [37], [38]. However, in the contemporary Nigerian context, diaspora formation is primarily a result of voluntary migration particularly among highly skilled professionals seeking better economic opportunities, better living conditions and better career prospects abroad. On the one hand, this mobility has created transnational linkages, but on the other hand, it has exacerbated concerns about the continuing flow of skilled human capital, popularly known as brain drain.

International migration has produced a major consequence in the form of the development and expansion of diaspora remittances which are one of the most tangible expressions of diaspora engagement with the country of origin. Diaspora remittances include both financial and non-financial flows from migrants to their home countries. They include, in addition to monetary transfers, the transfer of knowledge, professional skills, technological innovation, entrepreneurial skills and social capital that contribute to national development [39]. Acknowledging their strategic importance, the Central Bank of Nigeria has introduced several policy initiatives to encourage formal remittance inflows, including the 2021 Naira-for-Dollar scheme, designed to incentivise the use of official remittance channels [40].

The economic importance of diaspora remittances to Nigeria cannot be overstated. Remittance inflows were over US\$24 billion in 2019 and were one of the largest and most reliable sources of foreign exchange earnings for the country [41]. Together with their macroeconomic contribution, remittances play a crucial role in enhancing household welfare through supporting consumption, education, health care, housing and small enterprise development. Equally important is the re-integration of migrants and diaspora professionals for the transfer of knowledge, technological expertise, managerial competence and innovative practices conducive to entrepreneurship, for the strengthening of institutional capacity and for the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development. Hence, the developmental contribution of the Nigerian diaspora goes far beyond remittances, and makes it an important partner in Nigeria's long-term economic transformation.

1.3.4 The Concept of Socio-economic Development

The idea of development has moved away from a narrow focus on economic growth and modernisation as described by Rostow's stages of economic growth [42] to a broader understanding which is focused on human welfare and structural transformation. Critical scholars such as Walter Rodney and Claude Ake argue that meaningful development, particularly in Africa, must grapple with the enduring effects of colonialism, dependency, exploitation, and inequality. Development is thus increasingly understood as a people-centred process that seeks to improve living standards, promote social justice and expand opportunities for all [43].

This is the view reflected in Sen's capability approach [44], which views development as the expansion of human capabilities, freedoms and choices. It also forms the basis of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI) which measures development in terms of health, education and income rather than economic output alone [45]. Development is thus viewed as a multi-dimensional process in which economic development is integrated with social development, institutional effectiveness and equity. Here, socio-economic development refers to the simultaneous improvement of economic and social conditions to enhance the quality of life. It encompasses not only income growth but also improvement in education, healthcare, employment, governance and opportunity access [44], [45].

The growth is usually calculated with a combination of economic and social indicators. The economic indicators are GDP per capita, employment, income distribution, and infrastructure [46]. Social indicators are life expectancy, educational attainment, healthcare, gender equality, and civic participation. Composite indices such as the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) offer a more holistic assessment by combining economic and human dimensions of development [45]. Socio-economic development is therefore best viewed as a multidimensional process that fosters sustainable, inclusive and equitable improvements in human well-being [47], [44].

1.4 Theoretical Underpinning

The present study is anchored on the push-pull theory of Migration developed by Everett S. Lee [19]. The theory interprets migration as a rational choice, affected by circumstances in the source and destination areas. According to Lee, migration occurs when the perceived benefits of moving to a new location exceed the costs and constraints of movement. The theory identifies four main determinants of migration: push factors in the place of origin, pull factors in the destination, intervening obstacles such as immigration regulations and travel costs, and personal factors such as individual aspirations, education, age and family circumstances.

The theory's central assumption is that negative socio-economic and political conditions in origin places push people to migrate and positive economic, social and institutional conditions in destination countries pull them. Migration, therefore, is viewed as a rational response to the differentials in opportunities and living conditions between societies of origin and destination. The assumptions of the push-pull theory offer an appropriate framework for interrogating the variables of this study. The independent variable, migration (the Japa syndrome), is described by the interplay of potent push factors in Nigeria including unemployment, inflation, insecurity, poor governance, inadequate infrastructure and declining public services, and the corresponding pull factors such as higher wages, quality education, advanced healthcare systems, political stability and better career prospects in countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and other developed economies. Such structural differences have accentuated the outflow of young people and skilled professionals in the period between 2015 and 2024.

The theory further explains the growth of diaspora remittances, the intervening variable in this study. As migrants become economically established in destination countries, they maintain financial and social ties with their families and communities through remittances. These transfers enhance household income, education, health care, housing and investments, and also contribute to Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and macroeconomic stability.

Concerning the dependent variable, socio-economic development, the push-pull theory shows the two-sided effects of migration. Diaspora remittances, on the one hand, spur economic activity, reduce poverty, foster entrepreneurship and enhance household welfare. On the other hand, the sustained emigration of highly skilled professionals depletes Nigeria's human capital, weakens institutional capacity, reduces productivity

and undermines long-term national development. The theory thus takes into account the paradox of the Japa phenomenon: migration brings about considerable gains in development via remittances, while at the same time entails substantial costs in development due to the loss of skilled labour.

The relevance of the push-pull theory to this study is that it offers a single analytical framework for the explanation of the causes, processes and consequences of migration. It illustrates how structural conditions in Nigeria affect migration decisions, how migration produces diaspora remittances and how these remittances interact with positive and negative aspects of socio-economic development. This theory therefore provides a robust framework for analysing the nexus between migration, diaspora remittances and socio-economic development in Nigeria in the period 2015-2024.

2. Materials and Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employs a correlational research design through the analysis of secondary data to investigate the nexus between migration, diaspora remittances and socio-economic development in Nigeria in the light of Japa syndrome (2015-2024). The design is appropriate in that the study uses existing quantitative and qualitative data generated by reputable national and international institutions and does not collect primary data.

2.2 Sources of Data

The data were sourced from official publications of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) [6], National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) [28], Federal Ministry of Finance, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) [48] and the World Bank [49]. The peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy documents and institutional reports were used to supplement these sources, providing contextual and empirical evidence on migration patterns, diaspora remittances and socio-economic development.

2.3 Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection involved a systematic review of statistical bulletins, migration reports, development indicators and relevant scholarly literature published in the study period. The data were analysed through thematic and content analysis to find recurring patterns and to establish the links between migration, diaspora remittances and socio-economic development. With this analytical framework, the study has been able to interpret how the Japa phenomenon has impacted the inflow of remittances and their contribution to Nigeria's socio-economic development between 2015 and 2024.

3. Result

3.1 Research Question 1: What are the primary drivers of migration (the Japa syndrome) in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024?

Table 1. Primary Drivers of Migration (Japa Syndrome) in Nigeria (2015–2024)

Drivers	Key Evidence/Description
Economic Hardship	Unemployment rate of 33.3% (2022); youth unemployment exceeding 40%; declining real wages; graduate unemployment; over 90% of workers engaged in the informal sector.
Inflation and Currency Instability	Depreciation of the naira from approximately ₦360/US\$1 (2020) to over ₦1,600/US\$1 (2024); inflation exceeding 28%, resulting in a severe cost-of-living crisis.
Underemployment and Skills Mismatch	High incidence of graduates employed in low-skilled occupations; underemployment estimated at about 20%; widespread low-productivity employment.

Drivers	Key Evidence/Description
Demographic Pressure	Over 60% of the population is below 25 years of age, with more than 4.5 million young people entering the labour market annually.
Insecurity and Violence	Persistent terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts; over 3,600 reported kidnapping cases in 2023.
Governance and Institutional Weakness	High levels of corruption (145th of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index); weak public institutions, inconsistent policies, and inadequate public service delivery.
Poor Infrastructure and Public Services	Unreliable electricity supply averaging 4–6 hours daily; inadequate healthcare facilities; limited access to quality education and other essential services.
Educational and Professional Opportunities Abroad	Approximately 71,000 Nigerians enrolled in UK universities (2022); significant wage differentials; superior research, educational, and career opportunities abroad.
Diaspora Networks and Migration Culture	Nigerian diaspora estimated at over five million people; strong family and peer networks; social media influence; remittance inflows of approximately US\$20.1 billion in 2023.
Poverty and Household Survival	More than 40% of Nigerians living below the national poverty line; widespread food insecurity and multidimensional poverty driving migration as a household survival strategy.

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2026) from CBN, NBS, World Bank, NiDCOM, UNESCO, OECD, Transparency International, and other secondary sources.

The data in the table indicate that economic hardship is the main driver of migration from Nigeria. The economy is characterised by persistent high unemployment especially among the youth, rampant underemployment, low wages and the prevalence of informal employment which have significantly reduced economic opportunities [50], [46]. The challenges have been worsened by low industrialisation, macroeconomic instability, rapid currency depreciation from about N360 to the US dollar in 2020 to over N1,600 in 2024, and inflation, which was about 28% in 2024 [51], [52]. These conditions have cumulatively eroded the purchasing power and driven out-migration of skilled professionals looking for better economic opportunities and career advancement.

Besides economic pressures, insecurity, poor governance and demographic dynamics have also accelerated the Japa phenomenon. Persistent terrorism, banditry, communal violence, urban crime, and political instability have undermined human security, while weak institutions, corruption, policy inconsistency, and inadequate public service delivery have diminished public confidence in the capacity of the state to provide opportunities and social protection [46], [53], [54], [55], [56]. The lack of infrastructure, electricity, health and education has made migration an even more rational response to adverse domestic conditions [57].

3.2. Research Question 2: What is the trend and volume of diaspora remittances to Nigeria in the period 2015-2024?

Diaspora remittances have been a core lifeline for Nigerian households and the economy in 2015-2024, supporting consumption, providing foreign currencies and helping to stabilise the volatility of oil revenues. There are transfers of the household that are obligatory and kinship motivated. They are more resilient in recessions and currency

crisis than investment flows. Remittance inflows to Nigeria increased further to about US\$21 billion in 2015 from US\$19–20 billion in previous years despite periods of economic downturns [49], [58]. It underscores the strategic importance of the diaspora to the internal survival and development of Nigeria.

Table 2. Diaspora Remittance Inflow into Nigeria, 2015-2024

S/No	Year	Remittance Inflow (USD Billion)
1.	2015	21.2
2.	2016	19.7
3.	2017	22.0
4.	2018	24.31
5.	2019	23.81
6.	2020	17.21
7.	2021	19.20
8.	2022	20.90
9.	2023	19.50
10.	2024	20.93

Source: Compiled by the Researcher, 2026 from World Bank, 2015-2024; CBN, 2015-2024

Diaspora remittances continued to be a significant source of foreign financial inflows to Nigeria during the period under review, according to the data shown in Table 2. Remittance inflows generally topped US\$17 billion annually, despite fluctuating in reaction to both domestic and global economic situations. This highlights the critical relevance of the Nigerian diaspora to household welfare and national economic stability. Remittance inflows rose from US\$21.2 billion in 2015 to US\$24.31 billion in 2018 before somewhat declining to US\$23.81 billion in 2019, as Table 2 illustrates. The COVID-19 pandemic's economic disruptions, which limited worldwide economic activity and decreased migrants' earning potential, are reflected in the reduction to US\$17.21 billion in 2020. Remittances are resilient and counter-cyclical during uncertain economic times, as seen by the steady recovery of remittance inflows to US\$19.20 billion in 2021, US\$20.90 billion in 2022, US\$19.50 billion in 2023, and US\$20.93 billion in 2024 [59], [60].

3.3. Research Question 3: What is the Influence of Migration and Diaspora Remittances on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria?

According to the data, Nigeria's socioeconomic development is impacted by migration and diaspora remittances in both positive and bad ways. Positively, remittance inflows continued to be significant during the course of the research, reaching over US\$20.93 billion in 2024 [61]. Particularly during times of economic uncertainty and diminishing oil revenues, these inflows supported household income, foreign exchange earnings, and macroeconomic stability [62].

The data also demonstrate how remittances enhanced household welfare by funding small-scale enterprises, housing, food, healthcare, and education. Local economic activity was boosted by rising household consumption, and the development of human capital was aided by investments in healthcare and education. Remittances enhanced the balance of payments, bolstered foreign exchange reserves, and lessened the impact of inflation and currency depreciation at the national level.

Additionally, the research points to the indirect developmental benefits of migration through diaspora engagement. Professionals from the diaspora and returning migrants supported institutional growth and economic productivity through investment, entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer, and technological innovation [63].

3.4. Research Question 4: What Detrimental Socio-Economic Effects Does the Japa Syndrome Have on Nigeria?

The data revealed that the Japa syndrome had a significant negative socio-economic impact on Nigeria from 2015 to 2024 with the loss of qualified labour in critical economic sectors being a major factor. The ongoing loss of highly skilled personnel has harmed the long-term development prospects, institutional efficacy and productive capacity of the country [56], [64], [65].

The healthcare industry has experienced the greatest tangible impact. The available data show that between 2017 and 2023, almost 75,000 Nigerian nurses relocated to the US, UK, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Australia and other countries, and 18,224 Nigerian health workers have been issued UK Health and Care visas in less than a year [66]. The Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria (MHWUN) said the figures were based on information from the UK government and the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM). In response to the growing movement of health professionals, the Federal Government, in conjunction with the World Health Organization, adopted the National Health Workforce movement Policy in 2024 [64], [67].

The available research also shows the extent to which the migration of medical professionals has drastically reduced the number of qualified workers in the Nigerian health care sector. Recent WHO studies have identified Nigeria as one of the countries with a large health professional gap owing, in part, to continued international migration. The continuous exodus of physicians, nurses and other medical workers has increased the workload of the remaining staff, reduced access to quality healthcare and made it harder for the health sector to cope with the needs of a growing population [56], [64].

The Japa syndrome has led to a continuing loss of highly qualified workers, which has had a negative impact on education, research, engineering, information technology and other knowledge-intensive industries outside of the healthcare sector, data shows. The brain drain of academics, researchers, engineers and technology specialists has eroded the pool of specialised human capital needed for innovation, scientific research and industrial development. These deficiencies have constrained Nigeria's institutional performance and limited Nigeria's ability to compete in a more knowledge-driven global economy.

3.5. Drivers of Migration (Japa Syndrome) in Nigeria

The findings indicate that migration from Nigeria between 2015 and 2024 is largely a structurally induced phenomenon than a lifestyle choice. The main causes of the Japa syndrome are economic hardship, unemployment, insecurity, deficiencies in governance, inadequate infrastructure and demographic pressures. Results align with de Haas [68] and the World Bank [5] who identify worsening economic conditions and lack of job prospects as the primary drivers of skilled migration from poor nations. They also support the projected income model of Todaro and Smith [43] which claims that economic opportunities in the future exert a greater influence on migration decisions than the current employment status.

The findings also provide further support for Lee's Push Theory [19] as they demonstrate how institutional flaws and structural deprivation create a sustained push for emigration. However, the analysis finds that apart from the conventional push factors, inflation and currency devaluation are important modern drivers of migration. This suggests that macroeconomic instability is now a significant factor in Nigerian migration decisions. The study also reveals that Nigeria's youthful population adds to the pressure to move. The findings suggest that a rapidly growing youth population combined with limited job opportunities is a major driver for young people to migrate abroad [69]. Insecurity was a major factor in the Japa syndrome. The findings align with studies by Betts [70] and Clemens and Postel [71] who contend that migration is increasingly shaped by threats to human security. Migration has become an economic strategy and a way of insuring personal safety due to terrorism, kidnapping and communal violence in Nigeria.

Also, the study demonstrates how poor public service delivery, weak institutions and corruption all fuel migratory intentions. The result is in line with the findings of Docquier et al. [72] that relate institutional quality to migration outcomes. The findings generally

support the theoretical framework of the study, which posits that migration in Nigeria is largely a response to historical structural problems and not an individual choice, by revealing that the Japa syndrome is caused by the interaction of economic, demographic and sociopolitical factors.

3.6. Patterns and Trends of Diaspora Remittances

According to the data presented and analysed, Nigeria received an average of US\$20–25 billion in diaspora remittances every year from 2015 to 2024, with inflows peaking in 2018, falling in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and then recovering. The results are consistent with earlier studies which show that Nigeria is the largest receiver of remittances in the Sub-Saharan Africa [59]. Gupta et al. [73] contend that, in times of domestic economic hardship, remittances are counter-cyclical and serve as an important informal safety net for households. This is supported by data showing the durability of remittance flows.

Moreover, the results show that remittances from the diaspora have become a major source of foreign cash and household income. Remittances not only support food, housing, health care and education, but also help households cope with inflation, unemployment and currency depreciation. They also contribute to foreign exchange earnings and to macroeconomic stability. The steady flow of money despite economic turmoil speaks volumes about the financial ties Nigerians living abroad have with families back home.

But the report also highlights a big conundrum. While remittances reduce short-term economic vulnerability and improve household welfare, their continuing growth signals an increasing dependence on migration as a means of livelihood. This means that instead of tackling the root causes of unemployment, poor institutions, and a lack of local opportunities, remittances are a temporary fix for economic distress. Remittances therefore cannot substitute policies that bring about profitable investment, job creation and sustainable economic development.

These findings support Lee's push theory [19], indicating that remittances are an adaptive response to structural economic constraints that continue to push migration. Furthermore, they are consistent with the cumulative causation thesis of Massey et al. [74] who argued that migrant networks facilitate later migration through the provision of financial support and information flows. Thus, the findings demonstrate the intricate relationship between migration and development. Migration nurtures the social and economic factors that facilitate the Japa syndrome, while simultaneously offering economic relief through remittances.

3.7. Socio-economic Benefits of Diaspora Remittances

Findings show that diaspora remittances have significantly contributed to Nigeria's socioeconomic development and household welfare. Remittances increased household income, improved food security, reduced the risk of poverty and helped families pay for housing, health care and education. These results are consistent with those of Orozco [75], who argues that migrants mostly use remittances to improve the wellbeing of their families and Adams and Page [76] who found that remittances help to reduce poverty.

The research showed that remittances not only helped households but also enhanced household resilience during periods of inflation, unemployment, and economic instability. They also boosted foreign exchange earnings. This strengthens the migration-development nexus, acknowledging migration as an important source of financial resources to support socioeconomic development. The results, however, suggest that the impact of remittances on development is still modest. Most remittances are used for household consumption and not productive investment, which limits their ability to generate lasting economic change. This finding reinforces de Haas's argument [77] that remittances cannot drive sustainable growth without supportive institutions and sensible macroeconomic policies.

Largely, the findings suggest that while diaspora remittances are an important means of improving household welfare and strengthening the economy, their developmental potential is largely contingent on good governance, investment-friendly policies, and

institutional arrangements that can translate private transfers into broader national development outcomes.

3.8. The Detrimental Socio-Economic Effects of Japa Syndrome on Nigeria

While the financial gains from remittances of the diaspora are significant, the findings show that the Japa syndrome has had major adverse socioeconomic effects on Nigeria. The country's institutional capacity has been weakened, productivity in key sectors, including public administration, health care, education and engineering has declined, and the country's human capital has been degraded by the ongoing exodus of qualified people. These results support the claim by Opara and Nsonwu [78] that the exit of trained professionals hinders service delivery and national development.

The study also showed that the migration of economically engaged residents had led to a lack of skilled workers, a shrinking tax base and increased hiring and training costs in both the public and private sectors. This indicates that numerous companies are having trouble filling highly skilled positions and their reliance on overseas expertise is growing. These trends discourage innovation, economic diversification and the capacity of institutions to provide essential public services.

The results indicate that although diaspora remittances provide important financial support to households and contribute to foreign exchange gains, they are not sufficient to offset the long-term developmental costs of continuous brain drain. Instead, remittances mainly help to ameliorate household financial misery, while worker shortages, deteriorating institutional capacity and decreased productivity continue to threaten sustainable socio-economic growth. The results also indicate that migration could worsen socioeconomic inequality as recipients of remittances tend to have higher welfare and those who lack access to diaspora assistance tend to be relatively disadvantaged [79][80]. Furthermore, the ongoing loss of highly skilled people from Nigeria's innovation ecosystem constrains the country's capacity to leverage its people capital for national development and raises doubts about the applicability of the brain gain hypothesis in Nigeria.

These results lend support to Lee's Push Theory [19], which states that migration is a response to instability, structural deprivation and poor governance. They also reveal that unless effective policies on institutional strengthening, human capital retention and purposeful diaspora engagement are implemented, the socioeconomic costs of the Japa syndrome will continue to outweigh its developmental advantages. The general outcome of the study is that even though migration triggers significant remittance flows, its long-term consequences include the depletion of the institutional capacity and skilled human resources needed for long-term sustainable national growth.

4. Discussion

The findings show that the Japa syndrome in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024 was driven primarily by persistent structural conditions rather than by individual lifestyle preferences. High unemployment, declining real wages, underemployment, inflation, currency depreciation, insecurity, weak governance, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to quality public services collectively encouraged young people and skilled professionals to seek opportunities abroad. These findings support Lee's Push-Pull Theory [19], which explains migration as a response to unfavourable conditions in the country of origin and more attractive economic, social, and institutional conditions in destination countries. They are also consistent with Todaro and Smith [43], who argue that expected future income and employment opportunities strongly influence migration decisions. In the Nigerian context, the widening differences in wages, career development, security, education, healthcare, and quality of life between Nigeria and major destination countries made international migration a rational strategy for personal advancement and household survival.

The analysis further demonstrates that contemporary migration decisions are influenced by the interaction of economic, demographic, political, and technological factors. Nigeria's large youth population and the continuous entry of young people into a labour market with insufficient employment opportunities intensify the pressure to

migrate. Insecurity arising from terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, and communal violence also transforms migration into a strategy for protecting both economic well-being and personal safety. At the same time, social media, diaspora networks, and digital communication have reduced informational barriers by exposing prospective migrants to educational opportunities, employment openings, and perceived success stories abroad. These networks provide information, financial support, accommodation, and social connections that lower the perceived risks of migration. This finding supports the cumulative causation perspective of Massey et al. [74], which suggests that established migrant networks make subsequent migration easier and increasingly self-sustaining.

Diaspora remittance data reveal a generally resilient but fluctuating pattern during the period under review. Remittance inflows increased from US\$21.2 billion in 2015 to a peak of US\$24.31 billion in 2018, before falling sharply to US\$17.21 billion in 2020. The reduction in 2020 can be linked to the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected migrant employment and income in destination countries. However, the recovery to US\$19.20 billion in 2021, US\$20.90 billion in 2022, and US\$20.93 billion in 2024 indicates that remittances remained a relatively stable source of external finance. This pattern confirms the counter-cyclical character of remittances, as migrants frequently continue supporting their families even during periods of economic instability. It is also consistent with World Bank evidence identifying Nigeria as one of the largest remittance-receiving countries in sub-Saharan Africa [59].

At the household level, remittances contributed positively to income, consumption, food security, housing, education, healthcare, and small-business activities. These transfers strengthened household resilience against unemployment, inflation, currency depreciation, and declining purchasing power. The findings agree with Orozco [75], who maintains that remittances are primarily used to improve family welfare, and with Adams and Page [76], who found that international migration and remittances contribute to poverty reduction in developing economies. By financing education and healthcare, remittances may also support long-term human-capital development. Their contribution therefore extends beyond immediate consumption, particularly when recipient households invest in schooling, productive assets, housing, or microenterprises.

At the macroeconomic level, remittances provided Nigeria with foreign exchange, supported the balance of payments, and partially cushioned the economy against fluctuations in oil revenues. Diaspora engagement also produced non-financial benefits through professional knowledge, technology transfer, entrepreneurship, investment, and international networks. Nevertheless, the findings show that these advantages have not automatically generated broad structural development. A substantial proportion of remittance income is used to meet immediate household needs rather than to finance productive investment. This does not reduce its importance for household welfare, but it limits its capacity to create employment, expand industrial production, or strengthen public institutions. The result supports de Haas [77], who argues that remittances cannot independently produce sustainable development in the absence of effective institutions, favourable investment conditions, and sound macroeconomic policies.

The findings therefore reveal a major migration–development paradox. Although the Japa syndrome increases the number of diaspora members capable of sending money home, the same process removes skilled professionals whose knowledge and expertise are essential to national development. The sustained emigration of doctors, nurses, academics, engineers, information-technology specialists, and other professionals has weakened institutional capacity and reduced the supply of skilled labour in critical sectors. In healthcare, the departure of trained personnel has increased the workload of remaining workers and reduced the system’s capacity to respond adequately to the needs of a rapidly growing population. Similar losses in education, research, engineering, and technology weaken innovation, knowledge production, and economic competitiveness. These findings support Opara and Nsonwu [78], who concluded that skilled emigration negatively affects service delivery and long-term development in Nigeria.

The negative effects of skilled migration also extend to labour-market distortions, institutional inefficiency, higher recruitment and training costs, and a reduction in the

domestic tax base. Organisations may be required to repeatedly recruit and train replacements, while shortages of experienced personnel reduce productivity and service quality. Migration may also deepen socioeconomic inequality because households receiving diaspora remittances may be better able to cope with economic hardship than households without migrant relatives. In addition, family separation may generate emotional and social consequences for spouses, children, and older dependants left behind. These results show that the developmental effects of migration cannot be evaluated solely by comparing remittance volumes with other financial inflows. The social and institutional costs of losing skilled human capital must also be considered.

The findings reinforce the explanatory value of the Push-Pull Theory by demonstrating that the causes, processes, and consequences of migration are interconnected. Structural weaknesses in Nigeria push citizens abroad, favourable conditions in destination countries pull them, and migrants subsequently maintain transnational relationships through remittances and knowledge transfers. However, the results also extend the theory by showing that migration outcomes create feedback effects. Remittances improve household welfare and may finance further migration, while the success of migrants strengthens the social perception that leaving Nigeria is the most reliable path to security and advancement. Migration therefore becomes both a consequence of domestic underdevelopment and a process that may reproduce further migration.

From a policy perspective, the evidence indicates that attempting to prevent migration through restrictive measures would not address its underlying causes. A more effective approach would be to reduce the structural pressures that encourage emigration while strengthening the developmental contribution of the diaspora. This requires job creation, competitive remuneration, improved working conditions, professional career pathways, better security, reliable infrastructure, stronger public institutions, and consistent economic policies. At the same time, government institutions should lower formal remittance costs, develop secure diaspora investment instruments, protect diaspora investments, and create structured opportunities for temporary return, professional collaboration, mentoring, research partnerships, and technology transfer.

Overall, the study demonstrates that diaspora remittances are essential to household resilience but cannot compensate fully for the long-term developmental consequences of continuous skilled emigration. Remittances provide immediate financial relief and support consumption, education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship, whereas brain drain weakens the human and institutional resources required for sustainable development. The central implication is that migration can contribute more effectively to Nigeria's development only when remittance inflows are connected to productive investment and when national policies simultaneously address unemployment, insecurity, institutional weakness, and poor public-service delivery. Without these reforms, the Japa syndrome will continue to generate substantial private benefits for migrant households while imposing significant collective costs on Nigeria's long-term socioeconomic development.

5. Conclusion

The paper examined the causes of migration (Japa Syndrome), the trends and socioeconomic effects of diaspora remittances in Nigeria from 2015 to 2024, and the damaging effects of a mass exodus of young people and highly skilled professionals from the country. The study, which used a correlational research design and secondary quantitative and qualitative data analysed through content analysis, established that diaspora remittances increased steadily over time and supported households, improved access to healthcare and education, and sustained domestic consumption.

However, the results also revealed serious developmental problems. In addition to eroding institutional capacity, distorting labour markets, and exacerbating socioeconomic inequality, migration of qualified professionals has also drained human capital in critical sectors such as technology, medicine and education. The wider ramifications go beyond the economy into social life, as seen in family separation and the psychological effects on

children left behind. Remittances improve household wellbeing, but seldom result in lucrative investments that can raise the economy over the long run.

Moreover, the analysis reveals that structural reasons such as high unemployment, insecurity, bad governance and poor social services remain significant drivers of emigration, which supports the explanatory power of push theory. This makes migration a logical reaction to internal limitations as well as a factor in Nigeria's socio-economic problems. The study concludes that while remittances from the diaspora provide some temporary relief, the ongoing departure of talented Nigerians puts national development at risk.

5.1 Recommendations

The findings of the study indicate that the migration challenges and socio-economic impacts of diaspora remittances in Nigeria require coordinated multi-level interventions. A comprehensive package of strategic, policy, and legislative measures is therefore necessary to minimise the negative effects of migration while maximising the development potential of remittances.

5.2 Human Capital Retention

It is important to retain skilled professionals to reduce brain drain. The Federal and State Ministries of Health, Education and Labour, professional bodies and human capital development agencies should put in place competitive remuneration structures, structured career progression, improved working conditions and continuous professional development programmes. The National Assembly should also consider passing sector-specific retention legislation that offers incentives for critical professionals in health, education, engineering and technology. These include bonded scholarship schemes, rural posting allowances and tax relief for professionals serving in underserved areas. These measures will reduce the incentive to migrate, boost institutional capacity in critical sectors and make the career paths within Nigeria more attractive.

5.3 Job Creation and Labour Market Strengthening

The structural push factors of employment opportunities must be expanded to tackle migration. Ministries of Labour and Employment, Youth Development and Industry, Trade and Investment, in collaboration with the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission and private sector stakeholders, should implement youth employment initiatives, support small and medium sized enterprises through financing and capacity-building, and promote partnerships for high-skill job creation. Policy reforms should also target vocational training, apprenticeship systems and labour market information systems to improve the transition from education to employment. The National Assembly should strengthen labour and enterprise legislation to encourage local investment, protect workers and stimulate job-rich sectors of the economy. These interventions will improve productive engagement, reduce unemployment induced migration and contribute to economic stability.

5.4 Maximal Utilisation of Diaspora Remittances

Diaspora remittances should be directed towards productive investment, not just consumption. The Central Bank of Nigeria, the Ministry of Finance, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission and relevant investment agencies should develop diaspora bonds, diaspora investment funds and secure remittance-linked savings instruments. They should also promote tax incentives, lower transaction costs and increase the financial literacy of remittance recipients. At the legislative level, a framework for diaspora investment protection should be created to guarantee transparency, investor confidence and the safe repatriation of profits. These measures will increase the contribution of diaspora funds to sustainable development in infrastructure, agriculture, housing, education and entrepreneurship.

5.5 Improving Governance and Institutional Capacity

We need better governance to address the push factors of insecurity, corruption, weak institutions, and poor service delivery. The Presidency, state governments, anti-corruption agencies, and public service reform institutions should increase transparency, enforce accountability, expand digital governance systems, and improve the efficiency of public institutions. Policy reforms should aim to strengthen professionalism in the public

sector, merit-based recruitment and performance monitoring in key ministries and agencies. The National Assembly should also strengthen legislation on anti-corruption, procurement and public finance to ensure greater institutional integrity. The more talented professionals that strong institutions can retain, the more they can build public trust and an enabling environment for investment and economic growth.

5.6 Diaspora Engagement and Return Migration

There is a need to strategically harness the skills and knowledge of the Nigerian diaspora for national development. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Labour, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission and professional bodies should facilitate temporary and permanent return migration, create placement opportunities in critical sectors, promote knowledge transfer and provide incentives such as tax relief, housing support and streamlined work permits for returnees. Policy measures should also include recognition of foreign qualifications, simplified procedures for reintegration and structured programmes for diaspora volunteers. The National Assembly needs to pass legislation to formalise diaspora engagement, protect returnees, and institutionalise diaspora participation in national development planning. These approaches will maximise the intellectual and financial inputs of the Diaspora to national development.

5.7 Raising Public Awareness and Cultural Reorientation

Changing how societies see migration is important to reduce aspirational emigration. The Ministries of Information and Education, civil society organisations, media houses and religious and community leaders should carry out public campaigns on local success stories, include civic, entrepreneurship and career guidance education in school curricula, and hold national sensitisation workshops. Policy interventions should also build awareness around realistic migration, youth mentorship and reorientation of values towards productivity and national service. The government should support media and educational programmes that offer balanced narratives about migration, return migration and opportunities within Nigeria. This will foster appreciation of opportunities within the country, improve national building and foster responsible migration practices.

5.8 Legislative and Policy Reforms for Migration Management

A national framework is needed to coordinate migration governance, diaspora engagement and workforce retention. The Federal Government should review and strengthen existing migration-related policies including the National Migration Policy, National Diaspora Policy and sector-specific workforce policies for coherence and effective implementation. The National Assembly should enact a comprehensive Migration and Diaspora Development Act to provide a legal framework for managing migration, diaspora investment, return migration and inter-agency coordination. Such legislation should also define institutional responsibilities, mechanisms for data sharing, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and sanctions for policy non-compliance. A national migration observatory should also be established to provide reliable data on trends in emigration, flow of remittances, labour shortages and the outcomes of return migration. These legislative and policy reforms will provide the institutional foundations necessary for better managing migration and integrating it into Nigeria's long-term development goals.

REFERENCES

- [1] O. Emedem, "Migration and development outcomes in Nigeria," *African Journal of Social Research*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 88–105, 2024.
- [2] A. Y. Toyese and I. E. Olubodun, "The Japa syndrome of human capital and its socio-economic implications on Nigerians," *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, 2024.
- [3] E. Ogbu, "Migration and the philosophy of brain drain in Nigeria," *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 44–60, 2019.
- [4] I. Adegoke, "Digital technology and migration trends among Nigerian youths," *Nigerian Journal of Information Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 34–50, 2023.

- [5] World Bank, *World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank, 2023.
- [6] Central Bank of Nigeria, *Statistical Bulletin: Remittances and Financial Flows*. Abuja, Nigeria: Central Bank of Nigeria, 2021.
- [7] World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank, 2006.
- [8] International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2020*. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM, 2020.
- [9] A. Akeerebari, "Drivers of youth emigration in Nigeria: The Japa syndrome," *African Migration Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 78–95, 2022.
- [10] A. E. Olumoyo and O. C. Abiri, "'Japa' syndrome: Causes, effects and solutions for sustainable national development," *International Journal of Development and Economic Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 5, pp. 87–95, 2023.
- [11] R. Okunade and T. Awosusi, "Diaspora remittances and household welfare in Nigeria," *African Journal of Economic Development*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 88–107, 2023.
- [12] F. Adekunle, T. Olufemi, and S. Balogun, "Youth migration and remittances in Nigeria: Patterns and policy implications," *Journal of African Migration Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 101–120, 2022.
- [13] O. Adeagbo and A. Ayansola, "Brain drains and its implications for development in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 23–39, 2014.
- [14] World Bank, *Nigeria Economic Update*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank, 2020.
- [15] KNOMAD, *Migration and Remittance Data*. Washington, DC, USA: KNOMAD, 2020.
- [16] R. Don-Baridam, "Historical and contemporary migration in Nigeria," *Journal of African Development*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 33–50, 2023.
- [17] S. Bukar, M. Ibrahim, and L. Musa, "Patterns and drivers of migration in Nigeria," *Journal of Migration Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 56–74, 2021.
- [18] M. Ghani, "Migration, employment, and socio-economic development in Nigeria," *African Economic Review*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 45–63, 2017.
- [19] E. S. Lee, "A theory of migration," *Demography*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 47–57, 1966, doi: 10.2307/2060063.
- [20] United Nations, *World Population Prospects 2023*. New York, NY, USA: United Nations, 2023.
- [21] United Nations, *World Population Prospects 2017*. New York, NY, USA: United Nations, 2017.
- [22] A. C. Osigwe and C. V. Madichie, "Remittances, exchange rate and monetary policy in Nigeria," *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 2015.
- [23] C. Ilu, "Post-independence migration patterns in Nigeria," *Journal of African Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 55–70, 2019.
- [24] M. Loto and A. Alao, "Regional migration patterns and human capital flight in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Migration Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 22–41, 2016.
- [25] F. Oladipo, "Migration trends and diaspora remittances in Nigeria," *Journal of African Economic Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 65–84, 2020.
- [26] C. Ajeli, "Brain drain and human capital in Nigeria: An assessment," *Journal of Economic and Social Policy*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 67–84, 2019.
- [27] A. Olubiyi, "Skilled migration and brain drain in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Human Capital Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 12–30, 2015.
- [28] National Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Statistics: Unemployment and Underemployment Report*. Abuja, Nigeria: NBS, 2020.
- [29] African Centre for Strategic Studies, *Migration Trends and Human Capital Flows in Africa*. Washington, DC, USA: ACSS, 2023.
- [30] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Migration Policy Review: Trends and Strategies*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2023.
- [31] A. Akwagyiram, "Understanding Japa: The youth exodus from Nigeria," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 12–29, 2024.

- [32] J. Kehinde, "Push-pull dynamics of Nigerian youth migration," *Journal of Contemporary Migration Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 39–57, 2024.
- [33] A. Alechenu, "Social media and youth migration aspirations in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Sociology*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 45–61, 2021.
- [34] R. Nwiado, D. Korgbeelo, and P. Onu, "Drivers of youth migration in Nigeria," *African Journal of Population Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 45–62, 2021.
- [35] D. Ewubare and R. Okpoi, "Migration networks and youth mobility in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Population Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 14–32, 2018.
- [36] M. Ember and I. Skoggard, *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*. New York, NY, USA: Springer, 2004.
- [37] E. Nkwede, "The African diaspora and development," *African Journal of Migration*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 15–33, 2015.
- [38] S. Jayasuriya and D. Pankhurst, "Historical perspectives on African diasporas," *Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 23–46, 2003.
- [39] International Organization for Migration, *World Migration 2006: Managing Migration Challenges and Responses for People on the Move*. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM, 2006.
- [40] Punch, "CBN launches Naira-for-Dollar remittance scheme," *Punch Newspaper*, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://punchng.com>
- [41] R. Yusuf, P. Adewale, and S. Bello, "Diaspora remittances and economic development in Nigeria," *African Journal of Finance and Development*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 12–31, 2023.
- [42] W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- [43] M. Todaro and S. Smith, *Economic Development*, 12th ed. London, U.K.: Pearson, 2015.
- [44] A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- [45] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier — Human Development and the Anthropocene*. New York, NY, USA: UNDP, 2020.
- [46] World Bank, *Nigeria Economic Report: Growth, Employment, and Development*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank, 2023.
- [47] A. Drewnowski, "Indicators of socio-economic development: Conceptual perspectives," *Development Review*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 5–21, 1974.
- [48] Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, *National Diaspora Policy*. Abuja, Nigeria: NiDCOM, 2021.
- [49] World Bank, *Remittances Data, 2015–2024*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank, 2024.
- [50] National Bureau of Statistics, *Nigeria Unemployment and Underemployment Survey*. Abuja, Nigeria: NBS, 2022.
- [51] Central Bank of Nigeria, *Economic and Financial Review*. Abuja, Nigeria: Central Bank of Nigeria, 2024.
- [52] Central Bank of Nigeria, *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2023*. Abuja, Nigeria: Central Bank of Nigeria, 2024.
- [53] International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2024*. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM, 2024.
- [54] Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*. Berlin, Germany: Transparency International, 2023.
- [55] Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report: Nigeria Edition*. Berlin, Germany: Transparency International, 2024.
- [56] World Health Organization, *Global Health Workforce Statistics*. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO, 2023.
- [57] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report: Nigeria*. Paris, France: UNESCO, 2022.
- [58] T. Nevin and F. Omosomi, *Migration and Remittances in Nigeria: Trends and Policy Implications*. University Press, 2019.
- [59] World Bank, *Diaspora Remittance Trends: Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC, USA: World Bank, 2024.
- [60] Reuters, "Nigerian diaspora remittances hit \$20.9 billion," *Reuters News Service*, 2025.
- [61] O. Adeagbo, "Diaspora remittances and economic growth in Nigeria," *African Journal of Economic Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 55–72, 2023.

- [62] J. Olsson, "Remittances and macroeconomic stability in Nigeria," *African Economic Review*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 45–60, 2023.
- [63] S. Castles, *Migration and Development: Perspectives from the South*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration, 2012.
- [64] World Health Organization, "WHO, UK Government supports Nigeria in developing a strategic approach to managing health workforce migration," WHO Regional Office for Africa, Mar. 7, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/nigeria/news/who-uk-government-supports-nigeria-developing-strategic-approach-managing-health-workforce-migration>
- [65] Nigerian Young Professionals Forum, "Human capital flight in Nigeria." [Online]. Available: <https://nypf.org.ng>
- [66] The Guardian, "Nigeria faces severe doctor shortage amid mass emigration," *The Guardian Newspaper*, Lagos, Nigeria, Mar. 12, 2023.
- [67] O. Ezigbo, "FG unveils policy to manage migration of health workers," *ThisDay*, Lagos, Nigeria, 2024.
- [68] H. de Haas, "Migration dynamics in developing countries: Insights from Nigeria," *Migration Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 112–130, 2021.
- [69] H. Urdal, "A clash of generations? Youth bulges and political violence," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 607–629, 2006.
- [70] A. Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement*. Ithaca, NY, USA: Cornell University Press, 2013.
- [71] M. Clemens and H. Postel, "Deterring emigration with foreign aid: Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol. 66, no. 1, pp. 1–37, 2018.
- [72] F. Docquier, L. Lowell, and A. Marfouk, "A gendered assessment of skilled emigration," *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 6410, pp. 1–43, 2014, doi: 10.1596/1813-9450-6410.
- [73] S. Gupta, C. Pattillo, and S. Wagh, "Impact of remittances on poverty and financial development in Sub-Saharan Africa," *IMF Working Paper* WP/09/216, International Monetary Fund, 2009.
- [74] D. S. Massey, J. Arango, G. Hugo, A. Kouaouci, A. Pellegrino, and J. E. Taylor, "Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal," *Population and Development Review*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 431–466, 1993.
- [75] M. Orozco, *Worker Remittances: An International Comparison*. Washington, DC, USA: Migration Policy Institute, 2003.
- [76] R. Adams and J. Page, "Do international migration and remittances reduce poverty in developing countries?" *World Development*, vol. 33, no. 10, pp. 1645–1669, 2005, doi: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.05.004.
- [77] H. de Haas, "Migration and development: A theoretical perspective," *International Migration Review*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 227–264, 2010.
- [78] F. Opara and J. Nsonwu, "Brain drain and its socio-economic consequences in Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 23–40, 2024.
- [79] O. John-Oti and E. John-Oti, "Youth emigration and socio-economic inequality in Nigeria," *African Development Review*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 75–91, 2025.
- [80] Federal Republic of Nigeria, *National Migration Policy*. Abuja, Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Interior, 2015.