



## EFFECTS OF MIGRATION FACTORS ON DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTHS MIGRATING FROM EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA TO ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST

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### ABSTRACT:

A decline in migration from Ejigbo to Ivory Coast has been observed, prompting the need for an exploratory study to investigate the potential factors contributing to this trend. This research therefore, explores the effects of migration factors on demographic characteristics of youths migrating from Ejigbo Local Government Area to Abidjan, Ivory Coast. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 168 returnees from 12 autonomous districts in Ivory Coast, and data was collected using a structured interview schedule. Descriptive analysis and Chi-square tests were employed to analyze the data and identify potential relationships between variables. The findings of the study showed that the mean age of respondents was 27 years. Economic hardship ranked first as a significant problem driving people away from Ejigbo with a Weighted Mean Score of 2.32, Limited job opportunities ranked second with a WMS of 1.22, while Insecurity ranked third with a WMS of 1.04, this implies that economic hardship still persist in Ejigbo couple with limited job opportunities. On the other hand, economic opportunities ranked first with respect to opportunities that attract individuals to Ivory coast with a WMS of 3.47, Social network (family/friends) ranked second with a WMS of 0.77. there is an association between Occupation (  $\chi^2= 28.714$ ,  $r= 0.000$ ), Age (  $\chi^2= 267.238$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), Religion (  $\chi^2= 94.964$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), Marital status (  $\chi^2= 117.381$ ,  $p= 0.000$ ) Educational level (  $\chi^2= 109.571$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) of the respondents and Driving factors influencing their decisions. It was concluded that economic hardship ranked first as a significant problem driving people away from Ejigbo. Therefore, the Nigeria government should reduce cost of living in other to reduce economic hardship.

### KEYWORDS:

**AGE, ECONOMIC HARDSHIP, INSECURITY, OCCUPATION AND SOCIAL NETWORK.**

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The recent increase in youth emigration from Nigeria, commonly referred to as the "Japa Syndrome," has emerged as a significant aspect of current migration discussions. The term, which originates from the Yoruba word "Japa," meaning "to flee or escape quickly," highlights the increasing trend of Nigerian youths, particularly those who are educated and skilled, leaving the country to seek improved economic opportunities, safety, and a better quality of life abroad (Akinrinade&Ogen, 2022). While this phenomenon is primarily directed towards Western nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, it is also influencing internal migration patterns across Africa. Notably, there has been a decline in the traditional migration of Ejigbo youths to Abidjan, Ivory

Coast, a practice that has persisted for decades, necessitating a re-evaluation of the changing migration dynamics in the region.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2019), over 1.3 million Nigerians migrated to other countries between 2015 and 2018. The majority of these migrants were male, predominantly aged between 20 and 50 years. Migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by a range of factors, including economic, geographic, demographic, and political considerations (World Migration Report 2024). Many Nigerians, particularly youth, have sought opportunities to migrate to countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and various European nations, as well as other regions worldwide. The trend of

migration continues to be significant. For example, the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria reported a substantial number of visa applications and grants in 2024.

For several decades, youths from Ejigbo, primarily belonging to the Yoruba ethnic group, have relocated to Abidjan in pursuit of economic opportunities and an improved quality of life. This migration trend has substantially influenced the socio-economic landscapes of both Ejigbo and Abidjan. Contemporary observations indicate a decline in this longstanding migratory behaviour, with a reduced number of Ejigbo youths migrating to Abidjan. In the current context referred to as the "Japa" era, when many Nigerians, young and old are emigrating from Nigeria in droves, one would expect that there would be an increase in migration from Ejigbo to Abidjan. To the contrary, there is declining flow from Ejigbo to Abidjan.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES ARE TO;**

- Describe the demographic characteristics of respondents in the study area.
- Examine migration factors that pertains to youth in the study area.

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:**

- **Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between migration factors and demographic characteristics of youths in the study area

**2. METHODOLOGY**

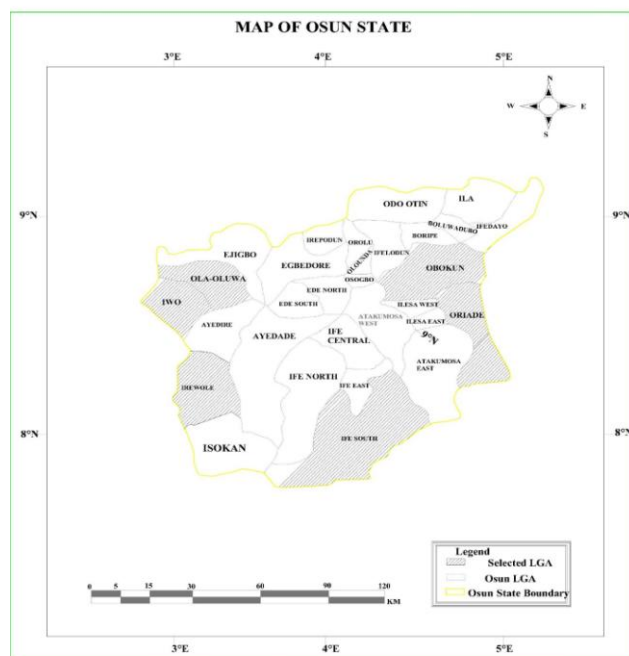
The Study area was Ejigbo local government area. Ejigbo is a local government area in Osun State, Nigeria, known for its rich cultural heritage and agricultural practices. The area has a significant youth population, making it an ideal

location for studying migration trends. Studying Ejigbo provides insights into the migration patterns of youths from a specific cultural and economic context. Understanding the factors influencing migration decisions in this area can inform policies and interventions tailored to the needs of this population.

The study was carried out in the villages within Ejigbo town of Osun State. Osun State is found in the Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, situated between latitude 7°05'N and longitude 4°35'E and is bordered by Kwara, Ekiti, Ondo, Ogun and Oyo. Osogbo is the state's capital while other prominent towns include Ede, Iwo, Ile-ife, Ilesa and Esa-oke.

Ejigbo is a prominent town in Yoruba land and the headquarters of the Ejigbo Local Government Area. Its proximity to major cities and transportation routes makes it a strategic location for trade and commerce. It is located in the middle of the region, about 40km northwest of Osogbo, the capital and 95 km north-east of Ibadan. It has an area of 373 square kilometres and a population of 132,641 as at 2006 census. The average annual rainfall is 1330mm

Significant markets, such as the Ogiyan-Ejigbo, are recognized for their competitive pricing in buying and selling goods. Another notable market is OjaEjigbo, a central traditional market situated in the heart of the city, directly in front of the palace. This market draws merchants from across Ejigbo town and serves as a popular venue for nighttime shopping and social interactions. It attracts thousands of buyers and sellers dealing in a variety of commodities, thereby contributing to the economic landscape of the state.



**FIGURE 1: MAP OF OSUN STATE SHOWING THE STUDY AREA.**

The population for this study comprises youths from

Ejigbo aged 18 to 30 who have either previously migrated

to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, or have contemplated migration. This age bracket was selected based on the greater likelihood of these individuals being economically active and mobile.

In this study, the implementation of a comprehensive sampling procedure and the determination of an appropriate sample size are essential for ensuring the reliability and generalizability of the findings. A Purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents for this study. Ejigbo town has one (1) block.

The study was carried out in every part of Ejigbo town of Osun state. The second stage involved a random selection of twelve (12) cells (villages) from the selected block and the last stage involve the systematic random selection of 40% of identified migrants from Ivory Coast who reside within Ejigbo Local Government Area (at the interval of 4). This implies that a total of one hundred and sixty-eight (168) migrants will constitute the sample size for this study as presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE SIZE**

| Selected Block in Osun state | Random Selection of cells in the block | Number of Identified Migrants from Ivory Coast residing in Ejigbo | (40%) of Respondents |
|------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| <b>EJIGBO</b>                | Ejigbo                                 | 279   | 112                  |
|                              | Igbon                                  | 10  | 4                    |
|                              | Ijimoba                                | 12  | 5                    |
|                              | Olla                                   | 15  | 6                    |
|                              | Songbe                                 | 25  | 10                   |
|                              | Olorin                                 | 17  | 7                    |
|                              | Osuntedo                               | 15  | 6                    |
|                              | Iwata                                  | 13  | 5                    |
|                              | Afake                                  | 10  | 4                    |
|                              | Inisa Egoro                            | 7   | 3                    |
|                              | Ibogunde                               | 5   | 2                    |
|                              | Isundunrin                             | 9   | 4                    |
|                              | <b>12</b>                              | <b>417</b>  | <b>168</b>           |

**Source: Field survey by the Author, 2025.**

This research emphasized the utilization of both primary and secondary data collection methodologies. The timeline has been partitioned into sections that are structured in accordance with the study's objectives. The descriptive

statistics was used to analyze the objectives of the paper while Chi-square analysis was used to test the null hypothesis.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:**

Table 2 presented the demographic information of respondents.

**OCCUPATION**

The result indicated that 46.4% were Artisans, 39.3% were Traders, while 14.3% were self-employed. This implies that respondents have historically engaged in transnational migration in search of improved livelihood opportunities. The present decline in migration therefore suggest either a shift in local economic viability or the diminishing attractiveness of foreign destinations like Ivory Coast. As Yendawet *al.*, (2019) note, migrants in West Africa have historically operated across borders within the sub-region as itinerant traders and service providers, often rooted in artisanal and petty-trading backgrounds

**SEX**

Distribution of the respondents in the study area indicated that above average (56.5%) were female, while 43.5% were male.

**AGE**

The result indicated that majority of the respondent were between age of 26-30 years, while 27.4% were between the age of 18-25 years. The mean age of the respondents was 27 years, this implies that migration in the study area was predominantly among the youth, this aligns with regional studies indicating that migration in West Africa is predominantly undertaken by young adults (Adepoju, 2005). However, the fact that this migration-prone group now appears to be staying back in Ejigbo may reflect a shifting perception of the risks and rewards of migration. As observed by Anarfiet *al.* (2003), ‘changes in the aspirations and opportunities of youth significantly affect migration decisions in sub-Saharan Africa.

**RELIGION**

The result revealed that 64.9% of the respondent were practicing Islam, 31.5%, were practicing Christianity, while very few 3.6% were the respondents were engaged in

traditional religion. This result implies that none of the three identified belief systems in the study area are bias to migrating to seek greener pastures. This result aligns with Olutayo and Adeoye (2021) who observed that religious diversity among migrants in Nigeria does not translate into religion-based migration biases, reinforcing the notion that migration is a shared livelihood strategy beyond religious lines.

**MARITAL STATUS**

The result revealed that 50.6% of the respondents indicated that they were married, 40.5% were single, 6.5% were divorced, while 2.4% of the respondents were widowed, this result implies that with a majority being married and possibly having family commitments, the decline in migration from Ejigbo to Ivory Coast could be partly influenced by family responsibilities and social stability at home. Meanwhile, fewer singles migrating might reflect other deterrents, such as economic downturn, stricter migration policies, or better local opportunities.

**LEVEL OF EDUCATION**

The result revealed that 55.4% of the respondents had secondary school education, 31.0% had primary school education, 9.5% had tertiary education, while 4.2% had no formal education, the result implies a predominantly low-to-mid education levels among Ejigbo residents, which may limit international migration potential, particularly through skilled or formal channels. Combined with potentially improving local opportunities, this helps explain the decline in migration to Ivory Coast. This affirms the conclusion of Afrobarometer (2017) who opined that majority of respondents who had considered emigrating were motivated by the desire for better economic opportunities, which are often linked to higher educational attainment. This suggests that improving education can reduce the factors driving migration.

**TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**N = 168**

| Demographic information | Frequency | Percentage | Mean |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|------|
| <b>Occupation</b>       |           |            |      |
| Civil servant           | 24        | 14.3       |      |
| Self employed           | ----      | ----       |      |
| Unemployed              | ----      | ----       |      |
| Trading                 | 66        | 39.3       |      |
| Craftmen / Artisan      | 78        | 46.4       |      |
| <b>Sex</b>              |           |            |      |
| Male                    | 73        | 43.5       |      |
| Female                  | 95        | 56.5       |      |
| <b>Age</b>              |           |            |      |

|                           |      |      |          |
|---------------------------|------|------|----------|
| 18-25                     | 46   | 27.4 | 27 years |
| 26-30                     | 122  | 72.6 |          |
| <b>Religion</b>           |      |      |          |
| Christianity              | 53   | 31.5 |          |
| Islam                     | 109  | 64.9 |          |
| Traditional               | 6    | 3.6  |          |
| <b>Marital status</b>     |      |      |          |
| Single                    | 68   | 40.5 |          |
| Married                   | 85   | 50.6 |          |
| Divorced                  | 11   | 6.5  |          |
| Divorced                  | 4    | 2.4  |          |
| Widowed                   | ---- | ---- |          |
| <b>Level of education</b> |      |      |          |
| No formal education       | 7    | 4.2  |          |
| Primary education         | 52   | 31.0 |          |
| Secondary education       | 93   | 55.4 |          |
| Tertiary education        | 16   | 9.5  |          |

Source: Field survey by the Author, 2025.

**DRIVERS OF MIGRATION:**

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents based on the drivers and factors influencing migration, using 1-5 rating scale, 1 being not significant, and 5 being very significant, economic hardship ranked first as a significant difficulties or problem driving people away from Ejigbo with a Weighted Mean Score of 2.32, Limited job opportunities ranked second with a WMS of 1.22, while Insecurity ranked third with a WMS of 1.04, this implies

that economic hardship still persist in Ejigbo couple with limited job opportunities.

On the other hand, economic opportunities ranked first with respect to opportunities that attract individuals to Ivory coast with a WMS of 3.47, Social network (family/friends) ranked second with a WMS of 0.77, Safety and security ranked third with a WMS of 0.26, while Political stability ranked fourth with a WMS of 0.06, summarily this result implies that driving factors in Ivory coast are more than that of Ejigbo.

**TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO MIGRATION DRIVING FACTORS**

| Driving factors  | WMS  | Rank            |
|--|------|-----------------|
| <b>Significant difficulties/problems driving people away from Ejigbo</b> |      |                 |
| Economic hardship  | 2.32 | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Limited job opportunities  | 1.22 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Insecurity   | 1.04 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| <b>Opportunities attract individuals to Ivory Coast</b>                  |      |                 |
| Economic opportunities   | 3.47 | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Social networks (family/friends)   | 0.77 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Safety and security  | 0.26 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Political stability  | 0.06 | 4 <sup>th</sup> |

Source: Field survey by the Author, 2025.

WMS= Weighted Mean Score

\*Multiple responses

Test of hypotheses:

**Chi-square analysis showing an association between Demographic information of the respondents and the driving factors**

Table 4 shows that there is an association between Occupation ( $\chi^2 = 28.714, p = 0.000$ ), Age ( $\chi^2 = 267.238, p = 0.000$ ), Religion ( $\chi^2 = 94.964, p = 0.000$ ), Marital status ( $\chi^2 = 117.381, p = 0.000$ ) Educational level ( $\chi^2 = 109.571, p = 0.000$ ) of the respondents and Driving factors influencing their decisions, this implies that these demographic characteristics influence what motivates individuals, whether they are being pushed by negative

conditions (e.g., unemployment, conflict) or pulled by positive opportunities (e.g., better jobs, education) in areas such as migration, relocation, or employment choices. This shows that decline in migration from Ejigbo to Ivory coast was influenced by some driving factors such as better alternative travelling destinations, female gender preference and family reunification. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between migration factors and demographic characteristics of youths in the study area was rejected.

**TABLE 4: CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS SHOWING AN ASSOCIATION BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THE DRIVING FACTORS**

| Demographic information | $\chi^2$ | DF | P- value | Remark          |
|-------------------------|----------|----|----------|-----------------|
| Occupation              | 28.714   | 2  | 0.000    | Significant     |
| Sex                     | 2.881    | 1  | 0.090    | Not Significant |
| Age                     | 267.238  | 15 | 0.000    | Significant     |
| Religion                | 94.964   | 2  | 0.000    | Significant     |
| Marital status          | 117.381  | 3  | 0.000    | Significant     |
| Educational level       | 109.571  | 3  | 0.000    | Significant     |

Source: Computed data, 2025.

**4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Economic hardship ranked first as a significant difficulties or problem driving people away from Ejigbo. Therefore, the Nigeria government should reduce cost of living and create more income opportunities for vulnerable and poor Nigerians: in other totheir reduce economic hardship.

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