



REFUGEE INFLUX: A SOCIOLOGICAL INSIGHT AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF ITS CONCOMITANT EFFECT ON FOOD SECURITY IN ETUNG CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

The study examines the impact of Cameroun refugee influx and its impact on food security in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research method in eliciting information from 400 samples from two political wards in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, using the purposive and random sampling technique. a self-administered structured questionnaire was the instrument of Data collection. Data gathered from the field was meticulously collated, coded and analyzed using simple percentages, frequency distribution, figures and simple lineal regression at 0.05 confidence level. Result revealed that there is a significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study recommends That the Cross-River state synergizes with the relevant agencies of the Federal Government as well as other international Agencies to stimulate production in Etung through agricultural programs such as farmers smallholders schemes, cassava, banana, yam, plantain plantations schemes, animal husbandry, cottage industries etc. to promote aggressive food revolution within affected areas to avert serious food crisis amongst others.

Keywords: refugee influx, food security, Cameroun, Etung Local Government Area

1. Introduction

Forced displacement is one humanitarian issue that has become a worry to governments, international agencies and non-governmental agencies. Globally, according to the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (2017), there are more displaced persons or refugees in the world than any one time in the history of mankind, and the amount of time spent in displacement for anyone refugee is on the rise (IDMC, 2016; Ojong, Iji, & Angioha, 2019). According to UNHCR (2019), as of May 2019 there were 70.8 million forcefully displaced people worldwide. 41.3 million are internally displaced in their own country as a result of civil unrest, drought and famine. 25.9 million are refugees in another country and 3.5 million are asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2019). In a world and time wherein every 2 seconds, a person is forcefully displaced, a third of refugees, 6.7 are hosted in the world's poorest nation (Amnesty International, 2019), the issue here is that it is not the short time impact of displacement that is the problem, but the fundamental medium to long term impact of displacement on the displaced and host countries that should be considered within a broader growth agenda.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2019), Africa has the second highest number of refugees with the continent accounting for 37 per cent of the world's 25.9 million refugees. One in every three refugees found in third world nations is hosted in sub-Saharan African, mainly originating from draught related issues or armed conflicts. The effect of refugee influx into host communities especially in the third world or developing nations encompasses economic, social and political domain, especially when refugees remain in their place of temporary abode for a protected period. one dominant impact or consequences of refugee influx, one that is most times cited is the effect they have on the food security of the host community.

For more than 26 months, Cameroon has witnessed some of the worst civil conflict between its military and separatists from northern, English speaking part of the country. This has driven thousands of Cameroon into displacement across the border into Nigeria. According to the UNHCR (2019) Cameroonians refugees, especially women and children continue to enter into Nigeria from the southwest and northwest regions of Cameroon. As of October 2018, the UNHCR (2019 reported that more than 35,000 Cameroonians have crossed the border into Nigeria seeking asylum. The organization maintained that it has registered 21,291 Cameroonians of which more than 50 percents are children (UNHCR, 2019). These refugees are currently in four states Taraba, Akwa Ibom, Cross River State and Benue.

In Cross River, the refugees are located in border areas of Obanliku, Etung, Akamkpa, Etung and Kwande local government area. The refugees, having fled with little possession, their presence in already impoverished communities is putting a strain on food resources (Ndem, Angioha & Dike, 2020; Ofem, & Omang, 2018; Ukwayi, Angioha & Aniah, 2019). The host communities, who are already suffering from food security and are the first respondents to the situation, who suffer from worsened food scarcity and this situation is bound to worsen in the nearest future. This study is set out

to examine the impact of refugee influx on food security in Etung local government area of Cross River State, Nigeria

2. Materials and Method

2.1 Study Area

Etung is a local government area in Cross River State, in the South-South region of Nigeria. The local government area was carved out of the old Ikom Local Government Area in 1996, by the then General Abacha Military administration. The Local Government Area covers an area of 833.07 of Sq. meters and is bounded by the Republic of Cameroun to the East, to the north by Boki and Ikom Local government area and Akamkpa to the South. The Local government area lies within the equatorial rainforest zone and has an annual rainfall that ranges from 1500mm to 3000 mm. The local government area is inhabited by the Ejagham speaking people, a distinction they share with parts of Ikom, Oukpani, Ogoja, the whole of Akamkpa, the Quos of Calabar and most parts of Northern Cameroun. the people of Etung are mostly rural farmers. For administrative purposes, the Local Government is divided into 10 wards, with its headquarters at Effraya (Omang, Liu & Eneji, 2013; Omang, Liu, Eneji & Eneji, 2012). According to the National Population Commission, the population of Etung is 80,196 (NPC, 2006).

2.2 Research Design

The study adopted the survey research design, the design was adopted because it is the best method of collecting data that will reveal the relationship between variable under study (Attah & Angioha, 2018; Omang, Agba & Archibong, 2018; Ukwaiyi, Angioha & Nwagboso, 2018). and it allows for generalization of the study by selecting a representative sample from a population that has a similar characteristic like the whole population (Ukwaiyi, Angioha & Ojong-Ejoh, 2018).

2.3 Population and Sampling

The population of the study includes all members of the host community according to the world population review (2019), the estimated population of Etung local government area stands at 79,621. The sample size used for this study is 400 arrived at using Tar Yamane sample size determinant technique 0.05 confidence level. the purposive and simple random sampling technique was used. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting two (2) wards in Etung Local Government Area. The areas were selected because these are areas where most of the Cameroonian refugees, who do not wish to go to the resettlement camps settle because of its closeness to the Cameroonian border. The wards selected is Ajassor and Agbokim. From these wards, 200 instruments were randomly distributed to members of each community.

2.3.1 Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection is the questionnaire, structure on a four-point Likert scale in the options of true, completely true, false and completely false. The questionnaire contained 7 items.

2.3.2 Method of Data Collection

Data gathered from the study area was appropriately coded and the necessary and appropriate statistical tool applied linear regression was used to analyses the data coded at 0.05 confidence level.

2.3.4 Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

3. Results and Findings

Four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaires were administered, out of which three-hundred and fifty-four (363) were retrieved, this, therefore, implies that the remaining thirty (37) copies of the questionnaire were either not completed or were wrongly filled.

3.1 Presentation of Research Question

To what extent does the influx of refugees relate to food security in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria? Frequency and percentages were first used to answer this research question and reported in Table 1 before the data were subjected to parametric statistics to test for statistical significance and reported in Table 2. From Table 1, 354 (97.5%) respondents agreed that Since the arrival of Cameroonian refugees, the price of food items have increased while 9 (2.5%) respondents disagreed. 328 respondents representing 90.3% agreed that the price of food items that people easily purchase are now sold for double the price while 35 respondents representing 9.6% disagreed with that statement.

Also, 354 (97.6%) respondents agreed that We now compete for basic food items with the foreigners while 9 (2.5%) respondents disagreed with that. 346 respondents representing 95.3% agreed that in the long run, the presence of the refugees in our community portends great danger as regard food security while 17 respondents representing 4.7% disagreed with that fact. From the response of respondents to the statements in Table 1, we could conclude that the refugee influx in Etung relates to food Security.

Table 1: Responses on Refugees and Food Security

S/N	Refugees and Food Security	SA	A	D	SD
1	Since the arrival of Cameroonian refugees, the price of food items has increased	158 (43.5)	196 (54.0)	9 (2.5)	0 (0.0)
2	The price of food items that people easily purchase are now sold for double the price	149 (41.0)	179 (49.3)	35 (9.6)	0 (0.0)
3	We now compete for basic food items with the foreigners	108 (29.8)	246 (67.8)	9 (2.5)	0 (0.0)
4	In the long run, the presence of the refugees in our community portends great danger as regard food security	125 (34.4)	221 (60.9)	9 (2.5)	8 (2.2)

*percentages are written in parenthesis

Source: Field survey, 2019.

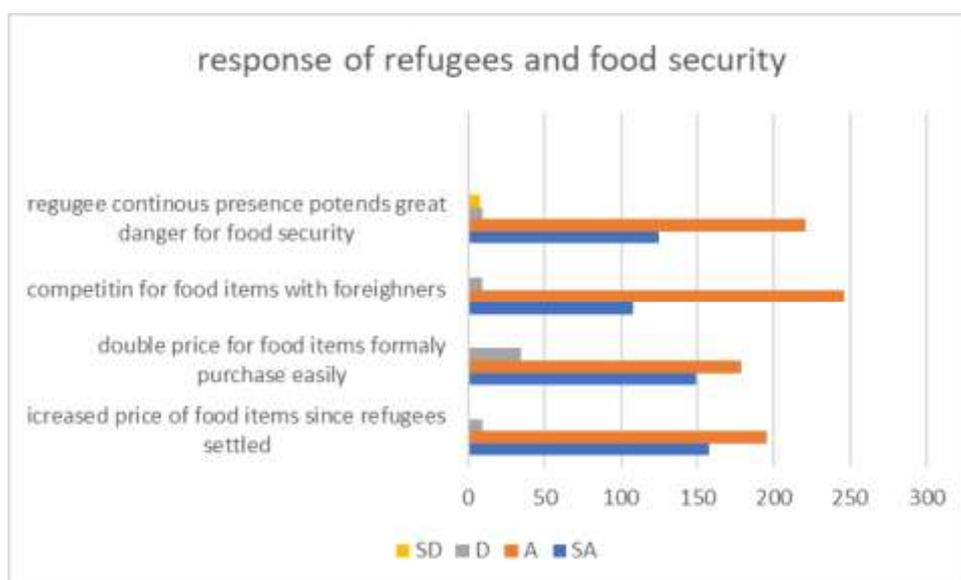


Figure 1: Graphical illustration of Responses on Refugees and Food Security

3.2 Data Analysis (Test of Hypotheses)

There is no significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is refugee influx while the dependent variable is Food Security. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Refugee Influx and Food Security

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Refugee Influx	363	6.63	1.22	0.811**	.000
Food Security	363	15.00	2.55		

*significant at 0.05 level; df = 361; critical r value = 0.098

Source: Field survey, 2019.

The result in Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.811* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 361 degrees of freedom. By this

result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria is rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

The correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed effect, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. The squared correlation $(0.811)^2$ which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 65.7% of the variance in food security in Etung is accounted for by Refugee influx. The magnitude of the effect is high; this means that refugee influx should be curtailed if improving food security in Etung is of concern. Therefore, we can conclude that There is a statistically significant relationship between refugee influx and Food Security in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The continuous influx of Cameroonian refugees into Nigerian border towns is increasing the concern for food security. The already increasing population multiplies the enormous pressure on already strained resources and local infrastructure. The findings of this study have shown that the influx of Cameroonian refugees has had an enormous negative impact of food security in Etung, this is because analysis shows that the calculated r-value of 0.811^* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 361 degrees of freedom. Based on this finding, the study recommends that;

- 1) the Cross River state synergize with the relevant agencies of the Federal Government as well as other international Agencies to stimulate production in Etung through agricultural programmes such as farmers smallholders schemes, cassava, banana, yam, plantain plantations schemes, animal husbandry, cottage industries etc. to promote aggressive food revolution within affected areas to avert serious food crisis.
- 2) the Cross River state and Nigerian government need to stimulate production in Etung through empowering the private sector and putting in place enabling environment that enable local production in meeting the demand linked to the presence of the refugees.
- 3) There is a need for the refugees to be integrated into the Etung labour market based on the occupational skills that they possess. This can be done by establishing a network between most communities and refugees working in a similar industry and also develop appreciate programmer to help assimilate refugees with lower level of skills.

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