

Cameroon Refugees' Settlement in Ogoja, Nigeria: Implication on Labour Market and the Environment

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Corresponding Author

Edem Ebong A.¹

Agba, A. Ogaboh²

Iji, M. Eru³

¹Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

^{2,3}Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

³Email: ogabohagba@umical.edu.ng Tel: 234(0)8072727272

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of Cameroon refugees' resettlement on labour market and the environment of Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two objectives and hypotheses were raised for the study. Descriptive survey design was used which allows for purposive and simple random sampling of 384 participants from Cameroon refugee camp in Ogoja and its environs. Elicited data were analyzed using Lineal Regression. Results revealed that the camping of Cameroon refugees has significantly altered the dynamics of the labour market in Ogoja Local Government Area. Results also publicized the negative effect of refugee settlement on sanitation and ecology of Ogoja Local Government Area. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others that the Cross River State Government, the Federal Government and other aid agencies should provide jobs and livelihood programmes that will help refugees achieve self-reliance, good sanitary condition and boost the economy of Ogoja Local Government Area.

Keywords: Labour market, Environment, Refugee resettlement.

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Highlights of this paper

- This study examined the impact of Cameroon refugees' resettlement on labour market and the environment of Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.
- Two objectives and hypotheses were raised for the study.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most disturbing issues that is causing international upheaval and has gained international prominence is the issue of forced displacement and migration. This is because since the beginning of this century, more people have been displaced than any time in the history of mankind as a result of civil crisis, persecution, poverty, poor governance and other societal ills. According to the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(2019\)](#) the world refugee population is at its highest level ever recorded, 2.3 million people having been forced from their home in 2018 alone. According to the report of [UNHCR \(2018\)](#) from 2009 to 2018 the world population of displaced persons grew from 43.3 to 70.8 million. These figures includes 25.9million refugees, 41.3 internally displaced persons and 3.5 million persons seeking asylum ([IDMC, 2018](#))([UNHCR, 2019](#)).

By the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019, Syrian internally displaced persons constitute the world's highest displaced persons with a population of 13 million having in displacement internally, asylum or refugees. Columbia has the second highest with 8million of its population having in displacement, most of whom are refugees outside their country ([UNHCR, 2019](#)). In Africa, Congo has the highest population of displaced persons and the world's third highest with a total of 5.4 million having in displacement.

According to the report by the United Nations office for the coordination of [Humanitarian Affairs \(2019\)](#) political struggle between the Cameroonian government and armed specialist from 2016 triggered by dispute over the educational system and judiciary have led to the displacement of over 437,500 Cameroonians in the North-West and South West regions of the Nation. According to the UNHCR and with support from the Nigerian government, as at December 2018, more than 37,000 Cameroonian have fled to Nigeria with 32,000 recorded and spread across four states, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Benue State and Taraba ([UNHCR, 2019](#)). Cross River state have the highest number of Cameroonians refugees, with the UNHCR registering a 17,003 thousand refugees, most of them housed in Ogoja local government where government created a refugee camp for them ([UNHCR, 2018](#)).

One of the issues that come with refugees setting in any community is the socio-economic effect that resettled refugees have on host communities. Results from the study have shown the effect that refugee resettlement has on the labour market and the cost of food host communities ([Borjas, 2013](#); [Ogaboh, Akpanudoedehe, & Ushie, 2010](#)). This paper seeks to examine the impact labor force and environmental implication of Cameroonian refugee resettlement in Ogoja Local government Area of cross River State, Nigeria.

1.1. Research Question

In order to find solution to the study at hand, this study seeks to answer the following question;

- What impact does refugee resettlement have on labour force activity in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River state, Nigeria?
- What is the extent of impact does refugee resettlement have on the environment in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River state, Nigeria.

1.2. Research Objectives

The study seeks to specifically;

- determine the impact of refugee resettlement on labour force activity.

- ii. Investigate the impact of refugee resettlement on the environment.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

- i. Refugee resettlement does not have any impact on labour force activity.
- ii. Refugee resettlement does not have any impact on the environment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Refugee Resettlement and Labor Force Activities

Results from the works of scholars on the relationship between refugee resettlement and labour force activities have produced different results. [Bilgili and Loschmann \(2018\)](#) examined the influence that Congolese refugees have on Rwandan community labour force activities and economic welfare. Data was collected from 3 refugee sites and their surrounding areas that compared households and individuals within communities at various distance to the refugee settlement. Results revealed that residing close to refugee camps makes it more likely that the individual will be engaged in wage employment. Evidence from the data also revealed that females living near to the refugee settlement have higher rate of being employment in business both as principal and additional activities.

[Maystadt and Verwimp \(2014\)](#) took a descriptive approach in studying the consequence of Refugees on labour market of Western Tanzania, using a measure of the presence of refugee based on their proximity and the number in the refugee camp. Results revealed that local agricultural workers found competition in getting employment due to the presence of refugees. Results also revealed that self-employed agricultural producers benefitted from cheap labor. Findings revealed that skilled workers also found jobs as a result of the presence of international organization and aids agencies. But self-employed businesses suffered as a result of outside entrepreneurs.

[Alix-Garcia and Saah \(2010\)](#) in their study found that refugee resettlement causes shockwave on the local communities leading to increase in food price, increasing cost of housing and increasing lack of wage employment. [Glitz \(2012\)](#) study, using migration regulation on proximity of family members found little negative effect on of refugee on wage employment and internal migration. [Tumen \(2016\)](#) examined the influx of Syrian refugees into turkey and found a modest reduction in native informal employment and a marginal increase in native formal employment in local employment market. [Ruiz and Vargas-Silva \(2016\)](#) study findings revealed complementary results that shows that refugee resettlement made it more likely that members of native community engage in within household agriculture activities as oppose to working outside the household as employees, including as agricultural employees.

2.2. Refugee Resettlement and Host Environment

Evidence has shown that refugee resettlement and pro-longed stay can have effect on the environment. According to [Mori \(1996\)](#) a typical influx of refugee is unpredictable and unplanned and when they are settled, little consideration is given to their impact on the environment, ecosystem and hovel growth. The scholars maintain that refugee resettlement brings about several environmental practice that damages the ecosystem such as free cutting for the purpose of firewood use and construction.

[Jacobsen \(1994\)](#) study finding revealed that refugee resettlement have negative impact on the environment, as it brings about increase in population size, deforestation, increase in water and food consumption. The author contend that refugees bring with them environmental threat through their activities. [Berry \(2008\)](#) carried out a study on the impact of Rwandan and Burundian refugees on Tanzanian environment, which focus on environmental

degradation and water use. Findings revealed that there was escalation on environmental problems such as use of water, depletion of natural resources, and illegal land use and harvesting.

Martin et al. (2017) maintain that refugees are already placed in environment that are hostiles, with little vegetation and little access to clean water, particularly for livestock and growing vegetables. Hence, they are forced to make do with what they can, thereby contributing to further depletion of natural resources.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Study and Setting

The study area, Ogoja Local Government Area is located in the Northern part of present day Cross River state. The Local Government Area with a land mass of 972 km² lies between latitude 5°32' and 4°27' North and longitude 7°50' and 2°20' East with a populace of 171,901 (National Population Commission, 2006; Ojong, Iji, & Angioha, 2019) the Area is bounded to the east by obudu Local Government Area, to the west by Yala Local Government Area, Bokwara to the southwest and Boki to the south east. Boki local Government is predominantly a Christian society with a few Muslims and traditional religious worshippers. The basic occupation of the indigenes is farming. The Area has many ethnic groups such as Nwang, Ekopgmya, Esham, Nmang, Barsar, Mbube, Ishibori. The Local Government Area is one of the oldest province in Nigeria and is home to a secondary school health facility, one private health facility and many primary health facilities. With the influx of refugees into Nigeria from Cameroon, Ogoja became home to more than 17,003 refugees housed in Adagom community in the Local Government Area.

3.2. Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Survey research design is used to gather needed information on the actions, opinions, characteristics of a large population (Agba, Mboto, & Agba, 2013; Angioha & Ugal, 2019; Angioha., Nwagboso, Ironbar, & Ishie, 2018). It is used to examine the relationship between two or more variables. Survey is used to quantitatively describe aspects of a population. For this study, it is used to examine the labour force and physical environment impact of refugee resettlement in Cameroon.

3.3. Population and Sampling

The population of the study is both members of the host community and refugees. The population includes male and female of both communities. The sample used for this study is 384 arrived at using the survey monkey sample size determinant technique as at 95% confidence level and a margin error of 5% . The purposive and sample random sampling technique was used to select the appropriate sample size of the study.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select Adagom community. The community was selected because it is where the refugee camp is situated. The random sampling technique was then used to select the appropriate sample needed for the study.

3.4. Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire and key information interview. The questionnaire was developed from the review of literature and design on a plant Likert scale. The instrument was made up of two section. Section 1 contains the bio data of the respondents and the section 2 contains questions on the topic understudy. The researcher also conducted oral interview on some individuals in the position to provide information on the topic understudy.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

Data generated from the field was collated, tallied and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences version 20. Inferential statistics such as lineal regression was used to analysis the data at 0.5 level of significance.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Data Analysis

4.1.1. Hypothesis One

Refugee resettlement does not have any impact on labour force activities. For this study, The independent variable in this hypothesis is Refugee resettlement (categorised into - low, moderate, high), and dependent variable is labour force activity. Mean score, standard deviation and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the data at 95 % and presented in Table 1 graphical illustration in Figure 1, 2 and 3.

Table-1. Summary simple linear regression analysis of Refugee settlement and Labour force activities.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation					
Refugee settlement	14.0599	4.23213					
Labour force activities	23.3073	9.17791					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig
Regression	2121.450	1	16.255	.202 ^a	.081	.078	.000 ^a
Residual	49856.290	382					
Total	51977.740	383					

Note: p < 0.05.

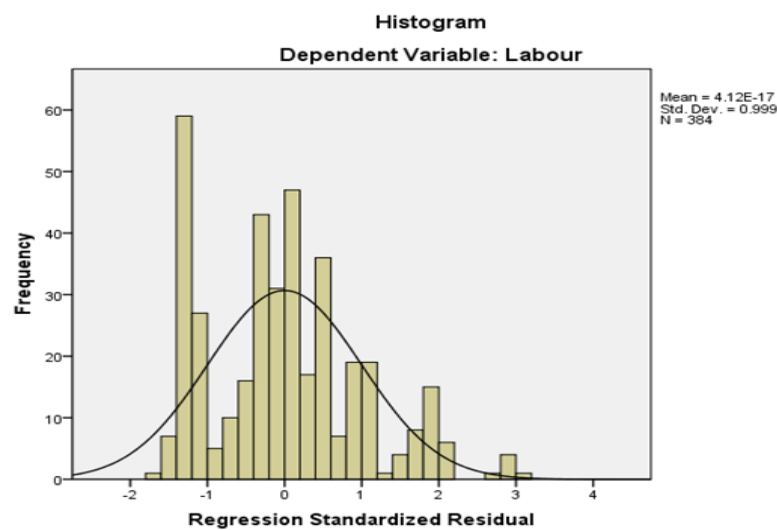


Figure-1. Regression Standard Residual Chart for labour force activities.

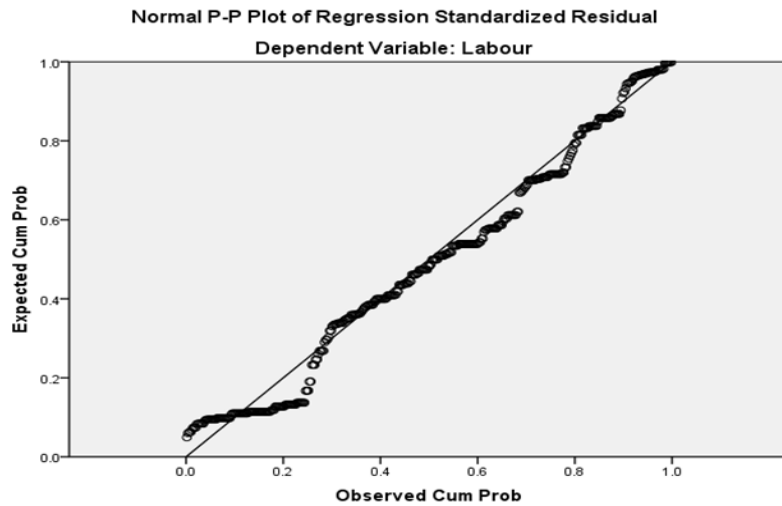


Figure-2. Normal P-P plot of Regression Standardized Residual for labour force activities.

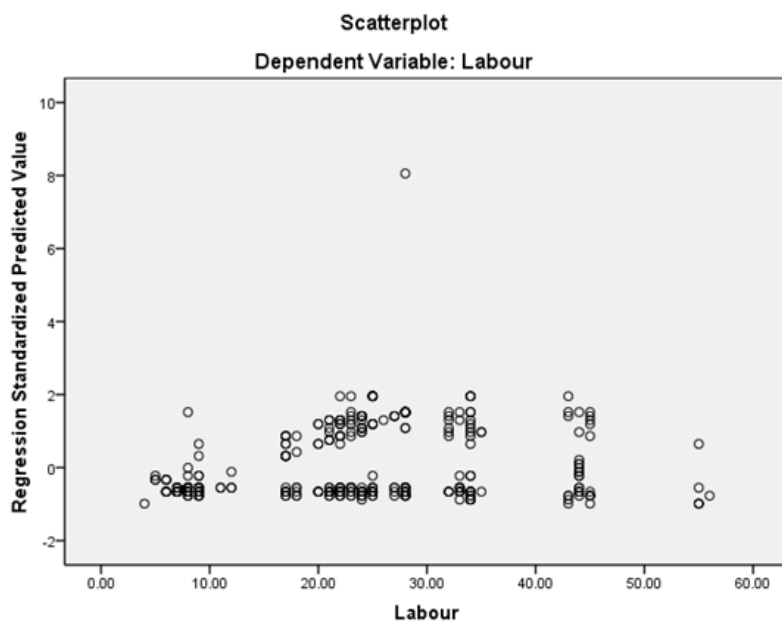


Figure-3. Scatterplot Chart for labour force activities.

The result shows that the R-value of 0.202^a is significant at 0.05 alpha level ($p = .000^a < 0.05$), therefore hypothesis stated is rejected. Implying a significant contribution of refugees' settlement on labour force activities. Also, the R² -value of .081 means that 81% of total variance in labour force activity is accounted for by refugee resettlement. Furthermore, the regression ANOVA shows that, there was a high joint linear association (contribution) of Refugee settlement on labour force activity in given by the $F(1, 383) = 16.255; p < 0.05$. The adjusted R² (.078) shows some shrinkage of the unadjusted value (.081) indicating that the model can be used for generalizing the population under study. From this analysis it is concluded that refugee settlement significantly predict labour force activities.

4.1.2. Hypothesis Two

Refugee resettlement does not have any impact on the environment. The independent variable is Refugee resettlement (categorised into - low, moderate, high), and dependent variable is environment activities. Mean score, standard deviation and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to analyse the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and presented in Table 1 graphical illustration in Figure 1, 2 and 3.

Table-2. Summary simple linear regression analysis of Refugee settlement and Environment activities.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation					
Refugee settlement	13.2057	4.37451					
Environment	40.8385	12.14748					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig
Regression	3217.002	1	23.057	.239 ^a	.087	.084	.000 ^a
Residual	53298.988	964					
Total	56515.990	965					

Note: p < 0.05.

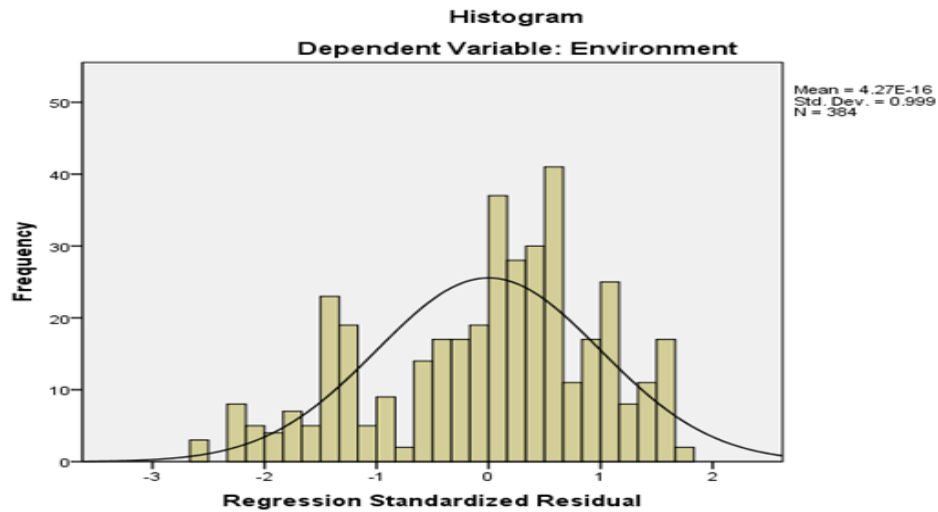


Figure-4. Regression Standard Residual Chart for environment activities.

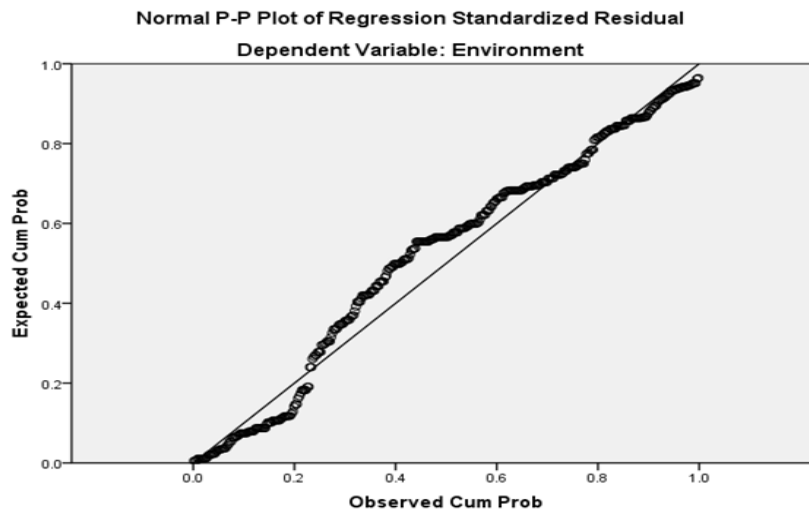


Figure-5. Normal P-P plot of Regression Standardized Residual for environment activities.

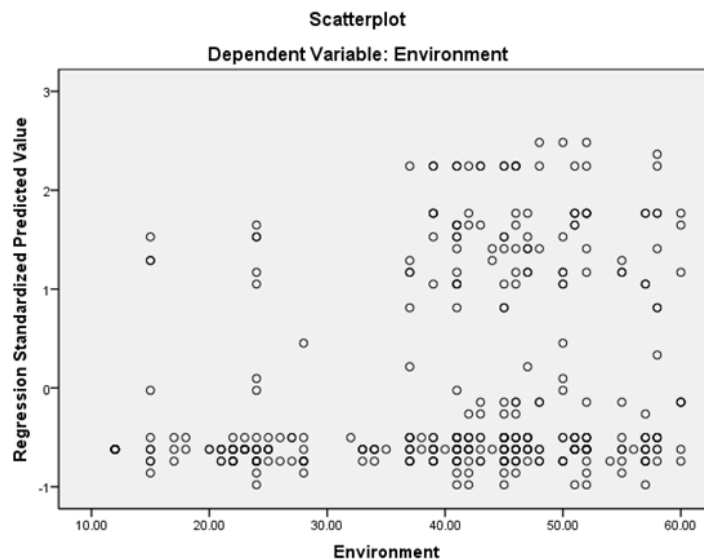


Figure-6. Scatterplot Chart for environment activities.

The result of data analysis as presented in Table 2 with graphical illustration in Figure 4, 5 and 6 shows that the R-value of 0.239a^a is significant at 0.05 alpha level ($p = .000^a < 0.05$), therefore the stated null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant contribution of refugee settlement on environment activities in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River state, Nigeria.

Also, the R² –value of .087 implies that 87% of total variance in environmental activities is accounted for by Refugee settlement. Furthermore, the regression ANOVA showed a high joint linear association (contribution) of the Refugee settlement on environment activities given by the $F(1, 383) = 23.057; p < 0.05$. The adjusted R² (.084) shows some shrinkage of the unadjusted value (.087) indicating that the model could be generalized on the population. Based on the result, it was concluded that refugee settlement significantly predict environment activities in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River state, Nigeria.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

Results from the analysis of the hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant contribution of refugees settlement on labour force activities in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River state, Nigeria. This result implies that refugee resettlement has an effect on labour force. The findings is similar to that of Loschimam, Bilgili and Loschmann (2018) whose study findings revealed that residing close to refugee camps makes it more likely that the individual will be engaged in wage employment. Findings also revealed that females living near to the refugee settlement have higher occurrence of self-employment in business both as primary and secondary activities.

Maystadt and Verwimp (2014) revealed that local agricultural workers found fiercer competition in getting employment due to the presence of refugees. The study findings also revealed that self-employed agricultural producers benefitted from cheap labor. Findings revealed that skilled workers also found jobs as a result of the presence of international organization and aids agencies. But self-employed businesses suffered as a result of outside entrepreneurs. Alix-Garcia and Saah (2010) in their study found that refugee resettlement causes shockwave on the local communities leading to increase in food price, increasing cost of housing and increasing lack of wage employment. Ruiz and Vargas-Silva (2016) study findings revealed complementary results that shows that refugee resettlement made it more likely that members of native community engage in within household agriculture activities as oppose to working outside the household as employees, including as agricultural employees.

Result from analysis of second hypothesis revealed that refugee resettlement significantly predicts environment activities in Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River state, Nigeria. The result implies that refugee resettlement has an impact on the environment. The findings of this study is similar to the findings of Mori (1996) found that refugee resettlement courses several damaging environmental practice such as free cutting for the purpose of construction and firewood use. Jacobsen (1994) study revealed that refugee resettlement have negative impact on the environment, as it causes sharp increase on population, deforestation, increase in water consumption and increase in population. Berry (2008) carried out a study on the impact of Rwandan and Burundian refugees on Tanzanian environment, revealed that there was escalation on environmental problems such as use of water, reduction in resources, and indiscriminate land use and harvesting

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study seeks to examine the impact of labor force and environmental implication of Cameroonian refugee resettlement in Ogoja Local government Area of cross River State, Nigeria. From the analysis of data gathered, Results revealed that there is a significant contribution of refugees' settlement on labour force activities. The result also revealed that refugee resettlement significantly predicts environment. Based on these findings, the Study recommends that;

- i. The Cross River state Government, the Federal Government and other aid agencies need to provide jobs and livelihood programs that will help refugees achieve self-reliance also boosting the economy of host community. The more integrated refugees become, the stronger the contribution to the economy of the host the community.
- ii. Government with the assistance of international relief agencies such as UNHCR must take the necessary steps to realistically make an estimation of the quantity of natural resources that will be used for refugee relief operations.

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