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**Socio-Economic Drivers of Rural–Urban Migration: Evidence from Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*This study investigates the socio-economic drivers of rural–urban migration in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Nigeria, to understand the factors influencing migration decisions and their implications for sustainable urban development. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research collected data from 357 respondents using structured questionnaires, interviews, and field observations. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative responses were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings indicate that the primary drivers of migration include the search for employment (39.77%), better living conditions (17.65%), family reunification (15.69%), education (12.60%), and security concerns (10.64%). Migration patterns revealed an almost equal distribution between individuals moving alone and with their families, with 39.49% of respondents experiencing secondary migration within the city. The impact of migration on sustainable development was mixed: housing availability and waste management were rated negatively, while employment opportunities were slightly positive. The study further highlights perceived inefficiencies in local government interventions for effectively managing migration. The research concludes that both economic and social factors significantly influence rural–urban migration, necessitating integrated policies that address rural poverty, urban infrastructure, and employment creation. Strategic planning and inclusive policy interventions are essential to harness migration’s potential for sustainable development in AMAC.*

**Keywords:** Rural–urban migration, Healthcare service, Education facilities, Employment opportunities, Housing availability, Sustainable development, Migration patterns

**INTRODUCTION**

Rural–urban migration has become one of the most defining demographic trends in many developing countries, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa. As individuals and households move from rural settlements to urban centres in search of better opportunities, cities experience rapid population growth, altering their socio-economic and spatial structures (Adewuyi, 2020). Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation, continues to witness significant rural–urban inflows driven by socio-economic disparities between rural communities and emerging urban areas (Abeke et al., 2025). This shift has far-reaching implications for sustainable development, urban planning, and social welfare.

In Nigeria, the persistent inequalities in income distribution, employment opportunities, access to education, and availability of social amenities have been widely documented as major contributors to rural–urban population movements (Olanrewaju & Adebayo, 2019). Urban centres often offer perceived or actual opportunities for improved livelihoods, compelling young, economically active individuals to relocate from rural areas (Umar et al., 2025). As a result, migration becomes both a survival strategy and a pathway for socio-economic advancement among rural dwellers (Ajayi, 2021). This phenomenon intensifies pressures on receiving urban centres, particularly those experiencing rapid economic expansion.

Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), the central urban hub within Nigeria’s Federal Capital Territory (FCT), is one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the country. Over the past decades, AMAC has attracted migrants from various states due to its status as the administrative centre, its relatively

developed infrastructure, and its expanding labour market (Federal Capital Territory Administration, 2022). The influx of migrants into AMAC has contributed to the city's rising population density while also presenting challenges in housing, transportation, sanitation, and service delivery. Understanding the socio-economic factors driving this migration trend is therefore essential for informed policy design.

Several socio-economic drivers have been identified in the literature, including unemployment, low agricultural productivity, poor rural infrastructure, insecurity, and aspirations for better education and healthcare services (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2020; Magaji & Adamu, 2011). For AMAC, these drivers are further reinforced by its strategic economic opportunities and the concentration of government ministries, private firms, and service-based industries. Migrants often perceive the area council as a gateway to improved economic prospects, even when such expectations are not always met (Okeke & Onuoha, 2021). Consequently, the dynamics of migration into AMAC reflect both push factors from rural communities and pull factors related to urban attractiveness.

Despite numerous studies on migration in Nigeria, empirical research has paid little attention to the socio-economic determinants influencing migrant inflows into the Abuja Municipal Area Council. Given AMAC's unique role as the administrative and economic nucleus of the FCT, there is a need for localised and context-specific evidence. This study, therefore, investigates the socio-economic drivers of rural–urban migration into AMAC, providing new insights to inform urban planning, social policy formulation, and sustainable development efforts within the Federal Capital Territory.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Conceptual Review

#### Socio-Economic Drivers

Socio-economic drivers are the economic and social conditions that influence individual and household decisions, including whether to remain in a place or migrate. These drivers typically include income levels, employment opportunities, quality of education and health services, cost of living, access to infrastructure, social inequality, climate change, conflict, and overall living standards (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014; Abubakar et al., 2025; Jafaru et al., 2025; Musa et al., 2024). In migration studies, socio-economic drivers are often conceptualised as both “push” factors, such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of basic services in origin areas (Lee, 1966; Magaji, 2004; Adekoya et al., 2025; Ibrahim et al., 2025) and “pull” factors, such as better wages, job prospects, and improved social amenities in destination areas (Todaro & Smith, 2020; Oyinloye et al., 2025). Thus, socio-economic drivers shape people's aspirations and capabilities, making migration a strategic response to improve livelihoods and reduce vulnerability (de Haas, 2010).

#### Rural–Urban Migration

Rural–urban migration refers to the internal movement of people from rural or agrarian communities to urban centres within the same country, primarily in search of better socio-economic opportunities and living conditions (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA], 2019). This form of migration is commonly driven by declining agricultural incomes, land pressure, and inadequate rural services, alongside the perceived or actual availability of wage employment, education, healthcare, and modern amenities in cities (Adepoju, 2010; Todaro & Smith, 2020). In many developing countries, including Nigeria, rural–urban migration is a significant component of urbanisation, reshaping demographic patterns, labour markets, and the demand for infrastructure and social services in urban areas (Aworemi et al., 2011; UN DESA, 2019; Musa et al., 2022).

### Theoretical Review

#### Push-Pull Theory of Migration

Lee's Push–Pull Theory of Migration is highly relevant to this study, as it provides a clear framework for understanding the socio-economic forces driving rural–urban migration. According to Lee (1966), migration decisions are shaped by push factors in the place of origin, such as unemployment, poverty, poor infrastructure, and limited social services and pull factors in destination areas, including better job prospects, improved living conditions, and greater access to education and healthcare. The theory also highlights intervening obstacles, such as distance, transportation costs, and information gaps, which may influence the likelihood of migration. Applied to Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), the theory helps

explain why individuals leave rural communities due to socio-economic hardships while being attracted to AMAC's perceived opportunities and urban advantages. Thus, Lee's framework provides a robust theoretical basis for analysing the socio-economic drivers influencing the migration patterns examined in this study.

### Empirical Review

Henderson and Kriticos (2021) investigate rural–urban migration in contexts of advanced urbanisation by analysing Brazilian data to assess the relevance of the Harris–Todaro model. Their study validates the model's core proposition that expected urban income continues to shape migration choices even in highly urbanised environments. They argue that income expectations remain a powerful determinant of mobility despite urban saturation, highlighting persistent labour-market disparities. The authors recommend that urban policies prioritise tackling unemployment and underemployment as essential measures for managing migration flows in densely populated urban settings.

Zysk (2021) explores the environmental and economic motivations underlying migration from urban centres to suburban areas through interviews with 164 individuals who relocated from the city to the Wrocław suburbs in Poland. The study reveals that environmental considerations—particularly the pursuit of cleaner air, personal recreational space, and improved living conditions—serve as primary drivers of migration. Economic factors, meanwhile, influence migrants' specific choices among suburban alternatives. Based on these findings, the author recommends that urban planning frameworks integrate both environmental and economic dimensions to effectively regulate suburban expansion and align infrastructure development with population shifts.

Ezeudu and Tukur (2024) assess how poverty and unemployment contribute to rural–urban migration in Nigeria and the resulting implications for urban resource strain and rural decline using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Their results demonstrate that high poverty levels and job scarcity in rural areas are pivotal drivers of migration, which, in turn, exacerbates pressure on urban services while accelerating socioeconomic deterioration in originating rural communities. They recommend that policymakers implement comprehensive strategies to reduce rural poverty and unemployment as a necessary step toward moderating migration intensity.

Nyoni and Kollampambil (2022) evaluate the impact of rural–urban migration on the well-being of households in migrant-sending communities using econometric analysis based on panel data from the National Income Dynamics Study. Their findings indicate that migration significantly improves both economic and subjective well-being for households left behind, with remittance inflows serving as the primary channel of benefit. The authors recommend that policymakers acknowledge migration as a legitimate livelihood strategy and develop policies that support households that rely on it, particularly in rural areas with limited economic prospects.

Lagakos, Mobarak, and Waugh (2023) examine the welfare implications of incentivising rural–urban migration using a dynamic general equilibrium model and field experiment data. Their analysis shows that although migration subsidies may not substantially resolve spatial labour misallocation, they provide an important insurance mechanism for rural households facing economic vulnerability. The authors therefore recommend that migration-related interventions focus on enhancing their role as economic insurance rather than solely on labour-market optimisation across regions.

Obi-Egbedi and Taiwo (2024) analyze the welfare impact of rural–urban migration on farming households in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria, using descriptive statistics, Foster–Greer–Thorbecke poverty indices, and propensity score matching. Their study finds that migration contributes notably to poverty reduction through remittances sent by urban-based migrants. In response to these findings, the authors recommend integrating migration into broader poverty-reduction frameworks and enhancing urban employment opportunities to sustain remittance flows and strengthen household welfare.

### Gap in the Literature

A review of the existing empirical literature shows that while numerous studies have examined the determinants and consequences of migration across various contexts, significant gaps remain regarding localised evidence on the socio-economic drivers of rural–urban migration, particularly within Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). Prior studies have predominantly focused on highly urbanised countries such as Brazil (Henderson & Kriticos, 2021), suburban migration dynamics in Europe (Zysk, 2021), and

national-level analyses of migration drivers and welfare effects in Nigeria and other African countries (Ezeudu & Tukur, 2024; Nyoni & Kollamparambil, 2022). Although these studies provide valuable insights, they do not specifically address how poverty, unemployment, environmental conditions, income expectations, and urban opportunities interact to influence migration into AMAC, a rapidly growing administrative and economic hub with unique demographic patterns. Furthermore, existing research has largely emphasised either the causes or the welfare outcomes of migration, with limited attention to how these socio-economic drivers collectively shape migration flows into Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. This gap underscores the need for a context-specific investigation that examines the socio-economic motivations underlying rural–urban migration into AMAC to provide evidence-based guidance for local policy and urban planning.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to systematically gather and analyse data on the socio-economic factors influencing rural–urban migration into Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). This design is well-suited for investigating human mobility patterns because it allows the researcher to obtain diverse perspectives directly from migrants and relevant stakeholders (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through this approach, the study evaluates prevailing migration trends, identifies the dominant socio-economic drivers, and explores migrants' experiences in AMAC.

A mixed-methods strategy will be applied, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques to strengthen analytical depth. The quantitative component involves distributing structured questionnaires to collect statistical data on migrants' demographic characteristics and motivations for relocation. The qualitative component consists of interviews and document analysis, providing richer insights into migrants' lived experiences, structural challenges, and the broader implications of rural–urban mobility. This combination enhances the robustness and credibility of the findings.

### **Population of the Study**

The target population for this research includes individuals and institutions directly involved in or affected by rural–urban migration processes in AMAC. This comprises migrants residing in both formal and informal settlements, residents, and officials from bodies such as the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), and the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. These stakeholders shape policy implementation, manage urban services, and provide administrative insight into demographic changes.

Urban planners and migration experts are included in the population because their professional assessments contribute to understanding how socio-economic drivers influence settlement patterns and infrastructural pressures (Adewale, 2020). Migrants' perspectives are essential, as their testimonies reveal the motivations, challenges, and coping strategies associated with movement into AMAC. Academics and researchers specialising in migration and urbanisation further enrich the demographic scope. Given Abuja's population growth rate of 6.2% annually (NPC, 2019), capturing a broad representation of groups ensures a holistic understanding of the push-and-pull factors driving migration into the Federal Capital Territory (World Bank, 2023).

### **Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

A multi-stage sampling approach will be used to ensure fair representation across different locations and stakeholder groups. First, AMAC will be stratified into high-density, medium-density, and low-density zones. Within these strata, purposive sampling will identify key informants such as policymakers, planners, and migration experts whose knowledge is crucial for understanding policy and socio-economic dynamics. Simple random sampling will then be applied to select migrants and residents within each stratum to prevent selection bias.

Sample size determination will utilise Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n =sample size

The population of the study,

$e$  = tolerable error at 5% (0.05).

Where:

$n$  = sample size

$N$  = total population

$e$  = margin of error (5%)

Based on an estimated population of 2.5 million people in AMAC, a sample of approximately 400 respondents will be selected to ensure statistical significance and generalizability<sup>3.4</sup> Sources of Data Collection.

The study will draw on both primary and secondary data sources.

**Primary data** will include:

**Surveys:** Structured questionnaires administered to migrants and residents to gather firsthand data on socio-economic drivers such as employment, income disparities, education, and access to services.

**Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with policymakers and urban planners to explore migration dynamics and administrative responses.

**Observations:** Field assessments of settlement patterns, infrastructural conditions, and areas experiencing population influx.

**Secondary data** will include reports from the National Population Commission (NPC), policy documents from AMAC and FCDA, scholarly publications on rural–urban migration, and international datasets from the World Bank and United Nations. This combination enhances the reliability, depth, and contextual relevance of the study.

### Research Instruments

The study will employ a blend of quantitative and qualitative instruments to generate comprehensive data on migration drivers in AMAC. The primary quantitative instrument is a structured questionnaire featuring closed-ended and Likert-scale items designed to measure socio-economic factors influencing migration, including employment, income expectations, social services, and environmental pressures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A semi-structured interview guide will be used to collect qualitative data from key informants, enabling a deeper exploration of the processes shaping migration decisions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). An observation checklist and a document review guide will also be used to assess settlement characteristics and analyse existing institutional records. This triangulation improves data richness and enhances credibility (Saunders et al., 2019).

### Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

To ensure accuracy and consistency, several procedures will be undertaken to establish validity and reliability. Validity will be addressed by seeking expert evaluation for face validity, aligning instrument content with research objectives and existing literature for content validity, and conducting pilot testing to establish construct validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Reliability will be ensured through test–retest procedures, calculation of Cronbach’s alpha with a minimum acceptable value of 0.7 for internal consistency (Bryman, 2016), and inter-rater reliability for qualitative data by engaging multiple coders. These safeguards will minimise measurement errors and improve the overall instrument’s trustworthiness.

### Method of Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques will be employed. Quantitative data gathered through questionnaires will be analysed using SPSS (version 26). Descriptive statistics—such as percentages, means, and standard deviations — will summarise the major socio-economic drivers of migration. Inferential statistical analyses, including Chi-square tests and multiple regression, will be used to examine relationships between migration drivers (e.g., poverty, employment, income expectations) and migrants’ relocation decisions.

Qualitative data obtained through interviews and observations will be analysed using thematic analysis. This will involve transcribing responses, coding patterns, and organising findings into themes such

as employment motivations, service disparities, and socio-economic push–pull factors. NVivo software will be used to assist with data organisation and triangulation. This mixed analytic approach ensures both numerical precision and contextual insight.

### Ethical Considerations

The study will adhere to standard ethical guidelines to protect participants and maintain research integrity. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, who will be assured of voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained by assigning codes rather than personal identifiers and securing data through encrypted storage. Hard-copy materials will be safely stored in locked cabinets, and passwords and encryption will protect digital files. Data will be retained for five years before secure disposal. The researcher will maintain neutrality, avoid bias, and report findings objectively. These measures ensure compliance with ethical research principles.

### Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Findings

This section presents, analyses, and discusses findings on the socio-economic drivers of rural–urban migration into Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Nigeria. Data were generated from 357 valid questionnaires and complemented with qualitative responses and interviews.

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

**Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20 years	32	8.96
21–30 years	104	29.13
31–40 years	116	32.49
41–50 years	65	18.21
Above 50 years	40	11.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.1 shows that respondents aged 31–40 years constitute the largest share (32.49%), followed closely by those aged 21–30 (29.13%). These two categories represent young and economically active individuals who typically migrate in search of better livelihood opportunities. Respondents aged 41–50 years make up 18.21%, while those aged 50+ constitute 11.20%. The least represented group is those below 20 years (8.96%). This age structure suggests that migration into AMAC is dominated by adults in their productive years, which aligns with migration theories emphasising economic motives among youthful populations.

**Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	198	55.46
Female	154	43.15
Other	5	1.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.2 reveals that males (55.46%) form the majority of respondents, suggesting that migration into AMAC is slightly male-dominated. Females constitute 43.15%, indicating substantial female representation in the migrant population, likely driven by employment, education, and family reunification. A small fraction (1.40%) was identified with “Other,” reflecting inclusiveness in gender reporting. This distribution shows that both genders actively participate in migration decisions, providing balanced insights for understanding socio-economic migration drivers in AMAC.

**Table 4.3: Marital Status of Respondents**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	123	34.46
Married	192	53.78
Divorced	24	6.72
Widowed	18	5.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.3 shows that married individuals form the majority (53.78%), suggesting that urban migration into AMAC includes many households relocating for stability, employment, and improved welfare. Singles account for 34.46% and represent young adults beginning their career pursuits. Divorced (6.72%) and widowed respondents (5.04%) form smaller segments that may face unique socio-economic vulnerabilities influencing migration decisions. This distribution highlights the diversity of family backgrounds represented within AMAC’s migrant population.

**Table 4.4: Educational Qualification of Respondents**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal education	23	6.44
Primary	41	11.49
Secondary	98	27.45
Tertiary	174	48.74
Others	21	5.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

The data in Table 4.4 indicate that almost half of the respondents (48.74%) possess tertiary education, showing that AMAC attracts relatively educated migrants. Another 27.45% have secondary education, reflecting mid-level educational attainment. Respondents with only primary education (11.49%) or no education (6.44%) indicate the presence of low-skilled migrants who may be drawn to informal-sector opportunities. Those in the “Other” category (5.88%) likely represent vocationally trained individuals. This educational mix suggests that migration into AMAC is driven by both skilled and unskilled workers seeking different socio-economic opportunities.

**Table 4.5: Employment Status of Respondents**

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employed	129	36.14
Self-employed	103	28.85
Unemployed	78	21.85
Student	47	13.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.5 shows that 36.14% of respondents are formally employed, while 28.85% are self-employed, reflecting AMAC’s vibrant labour and entrepreneurial landscape. Unemployment accounts for

21.85%, revealing economic pressures that may influence migration decisions. Students constitute 13.16%, illustrating AMAC’s role as an educational destination. Overall, the employment structure shows that migrants are diverse in their labour status but are primarily motivated by economic prospects.

**Table 4.6: Duration of Stay in AMAC**

Duration (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1	34	9.52
1–5	97	27.18
6–10	112	31.38
11–15	66	18.49
Over 15	48	13.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.6 shows that most respondents (31.38%) have lived in AMAC for 6–10 years, indicating a medium-term period of settlement and integration. Those with 1–5 years of residence (27.18%) represent recent migrants still adapting to urban systems. Long-term residents with over 11 years’ stay (31.93% collectively) provide insight into how migration pressures have evolved. Only 9.52% are newcomers with less than one year in the area. This pattern suggests continuous inflows and population growth, contributing to AMAC’s expanding urban landscape.

#### Urban Migration Patterns in AMAC

**Table 4.7: Primary Reason for Migration to AMAC**

Reason	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Search for employment	142	39.77
Education	45	12.60
Security	38	10.64
Family reunification	56	15.69
Better living conditions	63	17.65
Others	13	3.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.7 shows that employment search (39.77%) is the dominant driver of migration into AMAC, confirming the strong economic basis of rural–urban mobility. Better living conditions (17.65%) and family reunification (15.69%) also feature prominently, reflecting social and welfare motivations. Education (12.60%) indicates AMAC’s capacity as an academic centre, while migration driven by security concerns (10.64%) reveals displacement from conflict-prone regions. The “Others” category (3.64%) represents personal or less common migration motives. Overall, the findings reflect multi-dimensional drivers of urban migration.

**Table 4.8: Migration Status**

Migrated Alone or with Family	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Alone	178	49.86
With Family	179	50.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.8 shows an almost equal split between respondents who migrated alone (49.86%) and those who migrated with their families (50.14%). This balance indicates that AMAC attracts both independent migrants, likely job seekers, and family groups seeking long-term stability. The data suggest

that migration into AMAC is not merely temporary or exploratory but includes significant permanent or semi-permanent relocations.

**Table 4.9: Secondary Migration within Abuja**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	141	39.49
No	216	60.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.9 shows that 39.49% of respondents experienced secondary migration within Abuja, indicating a high level of internal movement driven by housing affordability, proximity to employment, or access to social services. However, 60.51% remained in their initial settlement, reflecting relative stability. This pattern highlights both mobility challenges and location-based opportunities within AMAC.

**Impact of Urban Migration on Sustainable Development**

**Table 4.10: Rating of Migration Impact on Development Indicators**

Indicator	Mean Score	Interpretation
Housing availability	2.24	Negative
Access to water/sanitation	2.53	Moderately Negative
Healthcare services	2.69	Neutral
Education facilities	2.89	Neutral to Slightly Positive
Transportation/infrastructure	2.62	Neutral
Waste management	2.38	Negative
Employment opportunities	3.05	Slightly Positive

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.10 demonstrates that migration has strained AMAC’s housing supply (mean = 2.24) and waste management systems (mean = 2.38), indicating negative impacts. Access to water and sanitation is moderately negative (2.53), suggesting pressure on essential services. Healthcare (2.69) and transportation (2.62) received neutral ratings, indicating functional but stretched services. Education facilities show slight improvement (2.89), reflecting government and private investments. Employment opportunities, the most positively rated indicator (3.05), suggest that migration contributes to labour availability and local market expansion.

**Table 4.11: Effectiveness of Local Government in Managing Migration**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	89	24.93
No	189	52.94
Not Sure	79	22.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.11 shows that only 24.93% of respondents believe the local government effectively manages migration challenges, while a majority (52.94%) believe it does not. Another 22.13% are uncertain, suggesting gaps in communication and policy awareness. The negative perception may be tied to challenges such as inadequate housing, strained services, poor waste management, and traffic congestion. This highlights the need for stronger governance, improved planning, and better stakeholder engagement in AMAC.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Respondents emphasised issues such as high rental costs, pressure on public facilities, traffic congestion, inefficiencies in waste management, and deteriorating environmental conditions. Despite these challenges, migration has enhanced access to education, diversified economic opportunities, and

stimulated local markets. Recommendations include strengthening enforcement of urban planning, expanding social amenities, investing in modern waste management, and creating jobs to ensure AMAC's sustainable development.

### **Interview Analysis**

Key informants confirmed a rising influx of migrants into AMAC driven by employment, security, and better infrastructure. They highlighted the strain on housing, schools, health facilities, roads, and water systems. Planners noted unregulated development, congestion, loss of green spaces, and public service overstretch. Experts recommended coordinated multi-level governance, community participation, long-term planning, and investment in service delivery to sustainably manage migration.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings from the reviewed empirical studies collectively highlight that rural–urban migration is primarily driven by socio-economic pressures, such as unemployment, poverty, and the expectation of better income opportunities in urban centres. Studies such as Henderson and Kriticos (2021) reaffirm that expected urban income continues to shape migration decisions even in highly urbanised settings, suggesting that perceived economic benefits remain a dominant pull factor. Similarly, evidence from Ezeudu and Tukur (2024) further demonstrates that poverty and unemployment in rural regions are influential push factors that compel individuals to migrate in search of improved livelihoods, often resulting in significant strain on urban infrastructure and services. Research from Nyoni and Kollamparambil (2022) and Obi-Egbedi and Taiwo (2024) shows that rural–urban migration can positively affect household well-being through remittances and income transfers, highlighting migration as a coping mechanism and a pathway to poverty reduction for rural families.

Despite these positive welfare effects, the findings also underscore the complex nature of migration decisions, which extend beyond economic motivations. Zysk's (2021) study reveals that environmental and quality-of-life factors, such as air quality and access to personal space, also influence migration patterns, particularly toward suburban areas. The work of Lagakos, Mobarak, and Waugh (2023) further shows that migration may serve as an insurance mechanism for vulnerable households rather than simply a response to labour market distortions. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that interrelated socio-economic, environmental, and institutional factors shape migration. However, they also indicate the need for targeted policies that address rural poverty, enhance urban employment opportunities, and incorporate environmental planning, especially within rapidly growing urban areas such as Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), where migration pressures continue to intensify.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, the reviewed literature provides strong evidence that rural–urban migration is primarily driven by a combination of socio-economic factors, including poverty, unemployment, income expectations, and improved livelihood opportunities in urban areas. These drivers are further reinforced by environmental and quality-of-life considerations, illustrating that migration decisions are multifaceted and context-dependent. Although migration has been shown to improve household welfare through remittances, income diversification, and enhanced resilience, it also puts significant pressure on urban infrastructure, housing, and social services. The absence of localised studies focusing specifically on Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) highlights a critical gap in current research, underscoring the need to understand better the unique socio-economic dynamics influencing migration into Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory.

Based on these insights, the study recommends that policymakers implement integrated strategies to reduce the socio-economic pressures that compel rural residents to migrate. This includes expanding rural employment opportunities, improving access to basic services, and promoting sustainable agricultural development to reduce poverty at its root. In urban centres such as AMAC, government agencies should strengthen urban planning systems, expand job opportunities, and invest in infrastructure capable of accommodating population growth driven by migration. Policies that support safe and productive migration, such as skills training, social protection programs, and inclusive economic planning, should also be prioritised. By addressing both the push and pull factors of migration, these recommendations can foster balanced regional development and reduce the strain on rapidly urbanising areas.

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