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Editorial

Journal of Social and Development Sciences (JSDS) is a scholarly journal that deals with the disciplines of social and development sciences. JSDS publishes research work that meaningfully contributes to the theoretical bases of contemporary developments in society, business and related disciplines. The work submitted for publication consideration in JSDS should address empirical and theoretical contributions in the subjects related to the scope of the journal in particular and allied theories and practices in general. The scope of JSDS includes: sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, international relations, linguistics, history, public relations, hospitality & tourism and project management. Author(s) should declare that work submitted to the journal is original, not under consideration for publication by another journal, and that all listed authors approve its submission to JSDS. It is JSDS policy to welcome submissions for consideration, which are original, and not under consideration for publication by another journal at the same time. Author (s) can submit: Research Paper, Conceptual Paper, Case Studies and Book Review. The current issue of JSDS consists of papers of scholars from Netherlands, Turkey, Qatar, South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Bangadesh. Refugees' remittances to precarious IDPs, European Nations' Asylum Paradox in Perspective, Fiscal Policy Variables and Industrial Growth, Rebuilding The Foundation To Mitigate Moral Decadence in Contemporary Society, Advancing Educational Relevance, Skill-Based Pedagogy and Employability and Sex Trafficking and Emerging Clandestine Sex Work are some of the major practices and concepts examined in these studies. Journal received research submissions related to all aspects of major themes and tracks. All the submitted papers were first assessed by the editorial team for relevance and originality of the work and blindly peer-reviewed by the external reviewers depending on the subject matter of the paper. After the rigorous peer-review process, the submitted papers were selected based on originality, significance, and clarity of purpose. The current issue will therefore be a unique offer, where scholars will be able to appreciate the latest results in their field of expertise and to acquire additional knowledge in other relevant fields.

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PAPERS

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Refugees' remittances to precarious IDPs in North Syria, Al-Raeai, between 2017 and 2023

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Abstract: This study explores the impact and role of refugee remittances to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as part of the repertoire of financial coping strategies of displaced people, with a focus on the Al-Raeai region in northwestern Syria. Our paper examines the 'dual precarity' of both refugees and IDPs, contributing to the literature on refugee studies. The paper outlines the frequency and unique features of remittances, and the extent to which they contribute to household income and spending patterns. Moreover, it highlights the IDPs' concerns when remittances are interrupted and the potential alternatives. Factors other than war and conflict, COVID-19 and the earthquake (natural disasters) for instance, are also explored. Our research shows that remittances are indispensable for the IDPs, are determined by the senders' country of origin, and enhance the bonds between families and social circles, especially in emergency events.

Keywords: *Remittances, Hawala, Precarious IDPs, Refugees, Syria*

1. Introduction

The conflict in Syria has forced more than 13.4 million people to leave their homes, 7.2 million of them are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), many of whom live in makeshift camps, cities and villages in northern Syria. Until August 2023, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) estimated that 2.9 million IDPs were staying in northwest Syria alone. IDPs live under precarious circumstances, experiencing a high degree of vulnerability, instability and anxiety about further displacement. Because of the ongoing conflict, it is very difficult to get a clear estimate of the overall flow of remittances sent into Syria after 2011.

Owing to the lack of adequate banking infrastructure and international sanctions on the Syrian banking system, nearly all remittances are sent through informal channels. However, in such a context, remittances sent by refugees became a source of support for IDPs, who are dealing with both material deprivation and anxiety, to help alleviate the consequences of displacement. While there are abundant studies of coping strategies during economic and financial crises, coping strategies are still largely overlooked in the context of armed conflicts, particularly when it comes to the role of remittances sent by refugees (Dercon 2005; Lokshin et al. 2004).

This study explores the impact and role of refugee remittances as part of the repertoire of financial coping strategies of internally displaced people with a focus on the Al-Raeai region in northwestern Syria. It does so by exploring the unique features and effects of these remittances compared with other sources of income, the extent to which they contribute to IDP households' income, their social impact, the risks of interruption, and finally, how they have been affected by natural disasters like the 7th of February 2023 earthquake and the Covid-19 pandemic.

On 11th July 2023, the UN Security Council failed to reauthorize the use of the Bab al-Hawa border crossing for the delivery of humanitarian aid into Syria, a critical lifeline to more than 4.1 million people in the country's northwest, many of whom were forcibly displaced during the 11-year war. In this context, remittances from refugees to IDPs through informal channels became an increasingly important alternative to the efforts of other countries and international organizations to support Syrian IDPs.

The uniqueness of studying the remittances from refugees to IDPs stems from a 'dual precarity' experience. Despite the considerable challenges they face (asylum-seeking process and their financial (un)stability, new

country…), refugees continue to send money to their IDP families, relatives, or friends. On the receiving side of the flow, IDPs undergo several living challenges: poor places of displacement are usually coupled with very precarious stability and financial security conditions. After 13 years of ongoing conflict, some families have been displaced multiple times, each time adapting to a new context with different needs.

In this context, the study focuses on the remittances associated with conditions of protracted displacement, such as a lack of job opportunities, short of financial support, and the stalemate and absence of a political solution to the Syrian crisis in the foreseeable future. In many cases, remittances are urgent responses to unforeseeable changes such as intensified military operations, bombing-related injuries, sudden decisions to leave for a safer place, but also natural catastrophes and pandemic outbreaks.

Despite the increasing research interest in the role of money transfers in conflict countries, remittances from refugees to IDPs have been overlooked in existing literature (Rodima-Taylor 2013). The study of the dynamics and impacts of remittances is extremely important for all those interested in poverty and forced migration issues. Evidence suggests that remittances are affected by factors and contexts of forced displacement that differ from factors in other contexts, such as economic migration (Justino 2011).

This paper is an original contribution to bridge the gap, based on the particular and interesting case of Syria, where dual precarity characterizes both the sender (refugee) and recipient (IDPs). What makes the Syrian case very special is the precarious status, albeit relatively different, of both the sender (the refugee) and the recipient (the IDP). Hence, the study of remittances in the Syrian context is of great empirical and theoretical significance to make an original contribution to fill part of this gap.

2. Remittances and *Hawala*

It has been estimated that official remittances amounted to as much as $548 billion for low and middle-income countries in 2020 (Rodima-Taylor 2022: 43). While there is an array of literature about how individuals cope with economic and financial crises, there is little research into coping strategies during active armed conflicts. In conflict contexts, civilian households' coping strategies differ depending on the context where they are evolving, and thus, the nature of the crisis they are facing. Justino outlines different sets of impacts of armed conflict on households' welfare and policy responses. He argues that households tend to adopt five common coping strategies. These are: "savings, low-risk activities and agriculture, migration, labour reallocation, and self-recruiting into armed groups" (Justino 2011: 28).

Rodima-Taylor argues that "remittances are a primary mechanism for rebuilding family ties and kin connections in war-torn settings" (Rodima-Taylor 2022: 44). This makes remittances a bonding tool that harnesses the families and friends' links and glues their connections even though the paths have completely diverted. Being directly channelled into families' budgets to supplement their income, remittances play a crucial role in enabling people to survive, especially during crises and conflicts, as outbreaks of armed conflicts generate abrupt destruction of infrastructure, trust, and investments (Justino 2011: 15).

The broad literature on remittances has looked into factors and determinants of remittances in the case of economic migration. Stark and Bloom advanced in their work, the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM), three major motivations for migration: relative deprivation, insurance, and investment (Stark and Bloom 1985: 174-175). From the NELM perspective, migration is a choice taken by households to improve and diversify income-generating opportunities (Fransen and Mazzucato 2014: 58).

In contexts of large numbers of people fleeing their homes in fear for their lives, however, remittances become a consequence rather than a key driver to leave (Lindley 2009: 1316). In such circumstances, the main motive for sending remittances is altruism (Stark 1988: 468). Remittances become a lifeline, helping people facing insecurities or escaping the conflict, supplementing additional resources in first-asylum countries, and helping refugees recover once the conflict comes to an end (Van Hear and Cohen 2015: 5).

Hence, for refugees, the pressure to remit might be more obvious, expressed by a higher tendency to remit when family members are in danger. Furthermore, instability and insecurity contribute to the urgency of

remittance to the home country, be it to family or friends. In most cases, those who leave for economic reasons are the ones who remit the most to their families (Arestoff et al. 2012: 520-521). It was also observed that uncertainty in home countries tends to make remittances continuous but limited (Lindley 2008: 8-9). Furthermore, pressure to remit has an impact on long-term decisions such as investment and education (Tharmalingam 2011: 183).

Remittance patterns may change, particularly if one is remitting to many people living in different locations and settings, as remittance motives can change from one location to another, and the amount can be maintained, but the location may shift (Vargas-Silva 2017; Van Hear et al. 2009). Patterns may also change with failing governmental services and with disrupted family ties due to the conflict and displacement context (Vargas-Silva 2017: 136-137). Although forced displacement often happens suddenly, in most cases it proceeds in a series of stages leading to greater instability. Such dynamics make the analysis of the determinants of remittances more complex.

Remittances are sent both through official and informal channels, where official agencies have an interest in opening outlets in refugee camps, because of agglomeration (Crisp 2003: 136-137). Informal channels include sending money with trusted family members or friends (Cockayne and Shetret 2012: 10). Furthermore, as displacement is sudden, remittance businesses need time to establish and start operating, while the limited options and lack of available competition increase remittance fees (Beck and Martínez Pería 2011: 117). Such limitations pave the road for the *hawala* business to flourish.

It is worth mentioning that sanctions, particularly in the money transfer business, have a secondary impact on the remittance process as the amount of money tends to be under $500 in most cases. Schramm and Taube define *hawala* as "club-like arrangements, which can provide the transaction parties with an institutional framework to assure enforcement of contracts without relying on any national law" (Schramm and Taube 2003: 405).

Despite their importance, migration flows between developing countries receive less attention compared to flows between developing and developed countries. Furthermore, remittances in conflict and post-conflict environments, especially in the case of forced displacement, have received scant attention due to a paucity of data and unstable settings for research. Yet, it is noteworthy that people are more likely to remit to countries in conflict, would that be to assist family members of friends, or to finance armed parties (Carling et al. 2012).

Dual precarity and remittances

A sizable body of literature has looked into the impact of remittances, from emigrants to their home countries, on development, analyzing their influence on receiving countries (Yang 2006: 27). Some authors have focused on the role of remittances in enhancing investment activities, especially in education and entrepreneurship (Carling et al. 2012: 304). Others have looked at remittances, where they were mostly used to finance consumption on food and healthcare, especially in modest-income households (Amuedo-Dorantes 2005: 13). Nevertheless, the use of remittances is suggested to vary depending on the context of receiving countries (Carling et al. 2012: 290-292).

To date, however, there has been no study looking into the context of refugees remitting to IDPs, be it family, relatives, or friends. Hence, our research project is the first of its kind to investigate the remittance transfers of refugee-IDPs. The key characteristic of the refugee-IDP remittances process is the dual precarity of both the sender and the receiver. We define dual precarity as the state of instability and lack of financial security of both senders and recipients of remittances in their new contexts. In the case of refugees, instability is attributed to the long asylum process, the integration trajectory, and entry to the job market.

The IDP, on the other hand, faces multiple challenges about the protracted conflict, the shortage of humanitarian aid and its distribution inefficiency and recurrent displacement escaping the active fighting and bombardments. Finally, the empirical case under study is concurrent in the sense that it is evolving and changing as we write. Therefore, it aims to push the literature forward on how refugees are filling a gap that governments and international organizations should have addressed. It does so by empirically investigating the case of Syria in the specific context of Al-Raeai.

The case of Syria

Despite its magnitude, the Syrian conflict is still not fully studied. Studies related to the Syrian refugees' context have mostly analyzed the causes of fleeing the country and the current state of refugees in host countries. To a lesser degree, studies have focused on money transfers. In 2019, remittances sent to Syria through formal channels alone amounted to 1.6 billion USD. As per the World Bank report of April 2020, most of the money transfers came from Saudi Arabia, accounting for twenty-nine percent, followed by Lebanon with seventeen percent, Jordan with fifteen percent, and Turkey with fourteen percent.

Moreover, remittances sent are more frequent but have low amounts (Chehade et al. 2017: 4). On the other hand, remittances sent to Syria mostly go through informal channels, followed by money sent with family connections, while formal channels are used the least (Dean 2015: 16). This indicates that the $1.6 is likely a small proportion of the total remittances flowing into the hands of the families inside the country through informal channels and networks.

In the literature on remittances, no studies have focused on IDPs in general, let alone on remittances they receive from refugees, although there are some policy papers and NGO reports. In addition to examining the motives for remitting, the project examines the uses of remittances to help IDPs adapt to their precarious situations. Moreover, by examining the motives for remitting, such as sacrifice, sense of responsibility and participation, the project explores the uses of remittances to help IDPs adapt to their precarious situations.

3. Research methodology

The research adopts a qualitative approach. In-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of 15 heads of displaced Syrian households in the Al-Raeai area during March 2023, in the aftermath of the earthquake that hit southern Turkey and northwest Syria in February 2023. A trained research assistant facilitated interviews under the full supervision of the research team. The main task of the research assistant was fixing interviews and taking notes when online interviews were not feasible.

When it was not possible for the research team to conduct interviews themselves, the research assistant conducted interviews under the supervision of the research team. Participants fall into two categories: the first category concerns those who still regularly receive remittances from their relatives abroad, while the second category includes those who receive remittances intermittently and in varying amounts. This distinction helped to understand the uniqueness and impact of remittances as a lifeline for IDPs. By comparing these two groups, the study aimed to highlight the varying degrees of financial stability and support among IDPs. The heads of the household were interviewed because of their relevance as the persons directly responsible for the living conditions of the family. Their insights provided a comprehensive view of how remittances influence daily survival and long-term resilience.

Located in northern Syria, the Al-Raeai region attracted 1,875 displaced families from all regions of Syria due to its safety and proximity to the Turkish border (1 km). The Al-Raeai region had a pre-war population of 15,873 people, according to the 2004 national census. Moreover, the researchers and the assistants belong to the area, and their families are still living there. This made it feasible to conduct interviews and collect data safely. In other words, the team had already developed a substantial level of trust with the targeted group, as they were well-known through their families, recurrent TV appearances, and publications. This pre-existing trust facilitated open and honest communication during the interviews, ensuring the reliability and depth of the collected data.

The interview questions addressed the extent to which remittances contribute to household income, how they are spent, and their frequency. They also explored the unique features of remittances, concerns about their loss, and potential alternatives. Additionally, the questions examined the impact of COVID-19 and the earthquake on remittance flows, as well as their social impact in bonding families together. Concurrent to the interviews, data were analyzed to identify themes and allow for reflexivity (Mason 2018). Interviews continued until we reached data saturation (Hennink and Kaiser 2022). When the data were saturated, we did a final reflection to ensure that we included new themes in the final analysis of the materials. This iterative process ensured that the analysis was comprehensive and captured the nuanced experiences of the participants. By

continuously reflecting on the data, the research team was able to adapt and refine their approach, enhancing the overall robustness of the study.

As expected, we encountered several difficulties during the interviews. Respondents often felt reluctant or afraid to discuss the amount of remittances they received. Another challenge arose when the head of the household was a female in a male-dominated context. However, we developed solutions and mitigation strategies for every potential scenario, such as relying on kinship relationships and female introductory assistance to conduct interviews with female heads of families. We conducted all interviews in Arabic. Finally, we recorded and transcribed all interviews. We then analyzed the data to find patterns within and identify themes for the final envisioned output (Lund 2014: 234).

4. Remittances Frequency

Given the importance of remittances sent from refugees to IDPs, we asked the study sample about the frequency and regularity of these remittances. Sixty percent of the sample indicated that they receive regular remittances, either monthly, fortnightly, or, in two cases, quarterly. For example, one participant told us, "My son, who lives in Turkey, sends me a monthly remittance worth between 75 and 50 US dollars." Another participant explained, "I have two brothers in Germany who take turns sending a monthly remittance worth 100 US dollars." These regular remittances provide a crucial and stable source of income for many families, helping them to meet their basic needs and manage their household expenses. The consistency of these funds plays a significant role in ensuring financial stability and reducing the uncertainty faced by IDPs in their daily lives.

One participant who has siblings in Turkey noted, "My brothers who live in Turkey send us financial aid depending on their working conditions. Their money transfers to us are irregular." Similar to other participants with family members in Turkey, one interviewee said, "I receive Turkish lira remittances from my children living in Turkey every two weeks, which is equivalent to about 50 US dollars." Another participant highlighted, "I receive financial assistance from some of my relatives living in Europe, but less frequently, depending on their circumstances. These irregular remittances, while less predictable, still provide essential support for the recipients. The variability in the frequency and amount of these funds reflects the fluctuating economic conditions faced by the senders, yet they remain a vital source of aid for the families in Syria.

We notice from the responses of the sample members that first-degree relatives, such as sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters, send the vast majority of remittances, while more distant relatives send a small percentage. The value of the remittances ranges from 150 to 50 US dollars, highlighting the importance of this small amount in supporting the resilience of the displaced people. Moreover, with the challenges and conditions of their precarious displacement, we observe that regular and periodic money transfers depend on the conditions and stability of the sender. For instance, a refugee in Europe is in a better position to remit than a refugee residing in Turkey, Lebanon, or Jordan. This discrepancy underscores the varying levels of financial security among refugees in different regions and their ability to support their families back home.

One participant points out, "Sometimes the *hawala* is delayed because my son's salary is overdue. Consequently, the regularity and quantity of remittances are affected by the dual instability of both the refugee and the IDP. When we compare the remittances coming from economic migrants in circumstances different from those of refugees, we find a clear variation in terms of the periodicity and regularity of the remittances, as well as in the amount of the remittances and their uses, as we outline below. This comparison highlights the significant impact that the sender's stability has on the financial support received by IDPs.

In summary, the frequency and regularity of remittances play a crucial role in the financial stability of IDPs. While many families rely on consistent monthly or fortnightly remittances, others experience irregular support due to the economic instability of their relatives abroad. This variability underscores the importance of understanding the broader socio-economic contexts affecting both the senders and recipients of remittances. By examining these patterns, we gain valuable insights into the resilience strategies of displaced families and the critical role that remittances play in their daily survival and long-term well-being.

Remittance contribution to the recipient's income and how it is spent

One of the main themes in our research was the contribution of the transferred money to the income of the displaced family. We asked interviewees how much of their overall income these remittances represented, considering that the amounts were relatively small. Respondents reported that the percentage of remittances in their households' total income ranged between one hundred percent and thirty percent. This range highlights the varying degrees of dependency on remittances among displaced families. For some, remittances are the sole source of income, while others supplement their earnings with these funds. The data also revealed that families receiving higher percentages of their income from remittances often face greater economic instability, underscoring the critical role these funds play in their survival.

Specifically, thirteen point four percent of the respondents stated that remittances are their only source of income, while twenty-six point six percent indicated that remittances contribute thirty percent of their total income. Additionally, forty percent of the sample revealed that remittances make up fifty percent of their total income, and twenty percent said that remittances make up seventy-five percent of their total income. These findings highlight the significant role that remittances play in the financial stability of displaced families, despite the relatively small amounts received.

By reading the percentages in the respondents' answers, we notice that the displaced community in the studied area relies heavily on remittances for its resilience and adaptation to displacement and its precarious conditions. Although remittance amounts are small, they are the only source of income for some families with no other means of support. As shown by the data, remittances constitute a key income support for seventy percent of the households residing in the area of study. One participant added that he receives money transfers regularly from his brothers, who are refugees in Germany and the Netherlands, and I have six children and my mother lives with us. The *hawala* covers seventy-five percent of my total living needs. The rest I manage through intermittent work.

One participant points out, "There are no job opportunities and aid from organizations is scarce and distributed unfairly. So, our main dependence is on the transfers from my immigrant children to Turkey. Another participant added, "The *hawala* is about half of my income. I receive some intermittent assistance from an organization, and I have a cow that I can milk to cover some of the living expenses. These statements highlight the critical role that remittances play in the financial survival of displaced families, especially in the absence of reliable local support and job opportunities.

When it comes to employment opportunities, one of the respondents, who is a teacher, iterates, "The monthly salary is small and does not cover half of the family's needs. So, we rely on the *hawala* from the benefactors. This reliance on remittances is further emphasized by the challenging conditions of displacement, including lack of employment, low wage levels, and the unavailability or unfair distribution of local or international assistance. Thus, it is evident from the respondents' answers that remittances hold high qualitative importance and weight in the makeup of total income for displaced families.

We asked the study sample how they spent the money and whether they could save or invest any part of it. All respondents confirmed that they spent the remittances on necessities such as food, clothing, and medication. Therefore, they had no room for saving or investing due to the small amounts and irregularity of the receipts. This highlights the precarious financial situation of the displaced families, who rely on these funds for their immediate survival needs.

Considering that refugees are not fully settled yet, it is worth noting that the decrease in remittances relates to the refugees' working conditions. Literature on the economic effects of labor migrant remittances emphasizes that these remittances are used more for investment rather than consumption (Adams 2006). This makes the remittances sent to IDPs by refugees differ significantly from those originating from labor migrants, due to the variations in both contexts. The immediate consumption of remittances by IDPs underscores the urgent and ongoing need for financial support in their daily lives.

The social role of remittances

Remittances had a social impact in addition to their economic one, specifically in supporting the adaptation of IDPs to their precarious displacement circumstances. The question explored the social dimension and the role that remittances played for both the receiver and the sender within their social circles. Participants shared various insights into how these financial transfers influenced their social dynamics and emotional well-being. One participant highlighted the emotional connection, stating, "When my brother sends me money and tells me this, I feel a sense of contribution and responsibility in his voice. He feels that he is responsible for covering our needs. This sentiment underscores the psychological and relational aspects of remittances, where the act of sending money fosters a sense of duty and emotional support.

Another participant mentioned the enhanced social status, saying, "Our son has strengthened his position in the family and has become a respected and appreciated member of our social circle because of the money transfers he has been making. This response illustrates how remittances can elevate the sender's standing within their community, leading to increased respect and appreciation. The financial support provided through remittances not only aids in meeting basic needs but also reinforces social bonds and enhances the social capital of both the sender and the receiver. These narratives highlight the multifaceted impact of remittances, extending beyond mere economic assistance to include significant social and emotional dimensions.

Another participant points out that "my son has sacrificed his studies to support us. He went to the workshops in Turkey to work and cover the needs of his family. This is a great sacrifice. This statement highlights the profound sense of responsibility the sender feels towards his displaced family, as he strives to support them both morally and psychologically by ensuring their financial stability. Such contributions play a crucial role in helping IDPs avoid depression, humiliation, and need through the *hawala* sent. One participant emphasized this impact, stating, "The *hawala* helps us live as dignified as possible and protects us from despair and depression. This underscores the psychological relief and dignity that financial support can provide.

Another participant added, "My son tells me: do not stand in line to wait for help. I will send you a *hawala* whenever I can. This sentiment reflects the sender's commitment to maintaining the dignity and well-being of his family, ensuring they do not have to rely on external aid. The remittances thus serve not only as a financial lifeline but also as a means of preserving the social and emotional well-being of the recipients. These narratives illustrate the multifaceted role of remittances in enhancing the quality of life for IDPs, providing both economic support and emotional reassurance.

Most respondents focused on how remittances strengthened and appreciated the sender's status within their social environment. Recipients felt more satisfied and relatively stable, which improved their social relationships. These money transfers enhanced social cohesion and strengthened family and social ties. One participant remarked, "What motivates my brothers to send us money is the value of the family bond and connection, which is a genuine value in our society. This highlights the cultural importance of family bonds in motivating remittances.

Another participant pointed out, "We received irregular remittances from my brother's friend from Sweden, who is a Christian. This example illustrates how remittances promote community engagement, family connection, assistance, and solidarity, transcending religious and cultural boundaries. The act of sending money not only provides financial support but also reinforces the values of social cohesion and mutual aid within the community. These narratives underscore the significant social impact of remittances, fostering stronger family ties and a sense of community solidarity.

These acts clearly indicate the personal motivations and values of both the sender and the recipient IDP, such as sacrifice. Both parties aim to survive the difficult circumstances of war and conflict. One participant recalled, "My brother sends us money when living conditions worsen without us asking him. This highlights the proactive support provided by family members during times of need. Another participant emphasized that their "son works in difficult conditions where he takes up very hard jobs to help us. This underscores the sacrifices made by the sender to ensure their family's well-being.

However, we could not explore whether there were any IDPs with refugee family members who did not support their relatives in their displacement. This gap in our research leaves an area for further investigation to understand the full spectrum of family dynamics and support systems among displaced populations. The narratives provided illustrate the significant role of remittances in maintaining family connections and providing essential support during challenging times.

In times of crises, especially during protracted conflicts, social relations and cohesion often face challenges related to individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Friedkin 2004). Social group members are generally perceived to become more individualistic and focused on their own survival. However, our case study provides counter-evidence, showing that in times of precarity, social bonds can be strengthened through financial support to one's family and community. This financial assistance fosters a sense of solidarity and mutual aid, countering the tendency towards individualism.

The case of yet-to-be-settled refugees remitting to their precarious IDP family members or friends in the aftermath of displacement or natural disasters shows how such incidents can bring the community together and strengthen emotional bonds. These remittances, given as gifts and charity, are non-refundable and irreversible, highlighting the altruistic nature of the support. This contrasts with labor migrant remittances, which typically result from household migration decisions and are primarily used for investment. The financial aid provided by refugees underscores the importance of solidarity and mutual support in times of crisis, fostering a sense of community and reinforcing emotional connections among those affected by displacement and natural disasters.

Crises and natural disasters impact on remittances.

In the literature on labor migrant remittances, a key finding is that they tend to be counter-cyclical: migrants remit more during economic downturns in their home country (Frankel 2011). For example, Dean and Choi found that income shocks related to rainfall patterns led to an increase in remittances from labor migrants to their family members (Yang and Choi 2007). This pattern shows that labor migrant remittances to family members increase in response to economic hardships. In this exogenous context, labor migrant remittances to family members are similar to those of refugees to IDPs. Both groups send more financial support during crises, highlighting the critical role of remittances in providing economic stability and support during challenging times.

However, there is a crucial difference between labor migration and refugee migration. In the example of the Philippines, migration is usually a pre-planned endeavor, often a collective decision involving other family members to ensure a financially secure future. In contrast, leaving one's country as a refugee is typically a forced and individual decision made by the asylum seeker in search of safety, with financial security being a secondary concern. This distinction raises the question: to what extent are refugee-to-IDP remittances similarly counter-cyclical? Understanding this difference is essential to grasping the unique dynamics of remittances sent by refugees compared to those sent by labor migrants.

In early 2020, the world faced a severe economic shock due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, which imposed lockdowns and halted most economic activities. Additionally, in February 2023, a devastating earthquake struck southern Turkey and northwestern Syria, resulting in high human casualties and significant infrastructure damage. The study sample was asked whether remittances were affected by such emergencies and natural disasters, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the February 2023 earthquake in northwest Syria. Participants were also questioned about personal emergencies within their families, such as sickness, medical treatment, or death. These inquiries aimed to understand the impact of crises on the flow of remittances and the ability of senders to provide financial support during challenging times.

One participant noted, "During the coronavirus period, remittances stopped because my son lost his job in Gaziantep, Turkey. This indicates that economic shocks in refugee destinations can reduce the amount of remittances sent. Another participant shared, "During the coronavirus period, my family and I contracted the virus. Our children sent us extra money to cover recovery expenses and treatment. However, the remittances were affected by the lockdowns and work circumstances in Turkey. These accounts highlight how the

pandemic's economic impact and health crises influenced the flow of remittances, demonstrating the vulnerability of financial support systems during global emergencies.

On the other hand, one participant noted, "The amount of the *hawala* increased during the earthquake because of the damage caused to our house. This indicates that not only medical issues or natural disasters impact the amount and frequency of the *hawala*, but other factors also affect money transfers. One participant reported, "When we have special occasions like marriage parties, Eid, or deaths, my brothers send us extra money. Another respondent stressed, "The quantity of *hawala* increased when our house sank during the floods and when the earthquake happened. These accounts show that various events, from natural disasters to personal milestones, influence the flow of remittances, highlighting the adaptability and responsiveness of financial support systems to different needs.

By reviewing the participants' responses, we conclude that remittances are affected by emergency conditions. *Hawala* transfers from refugees in Turkey noticeably decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic due to their work circumstances. In contrast, remittances from refugees in Europe remained largely unaffected. Additionally, the earthquake response from refugees residing in Europe was substantially higher than that in other countries. These observations highlight the varying impacts of emergencies on remittance flows, depending on the refugees' location and their ability to maintain financial stability during crises.

There was a remarkable increase in the amounts of money sent to families in the Al-Raeai area, let alone in the directly impacted areas of Jenderis and Idlib to the west of the country. This surge in remittances highlights the critical role of financial support during times of crisis. Additionally, other circumstances such as joyful celebrations, Eid festivities, and emergency health conditions also led to an increase in the amount of remittances received. Refugees often sent special remittances for these events or occasions, in addition to the usual amounts they regularly transferred.

The increased remittances during emergencies and special occasions demonstrate the strong sense of responsibility and solidarity among refugees towards their families. These financial contributions not only provide essential economic support but also reinforce social bonds and emotional connections. The ability of refugees to mobilize additional resources during critical times reflects their resilience and commitment to their families' well-being. Overall, the findings illustrate the multifaceted impact of remittances, extending beyond economic assistance to include significant social and emotional dimensions, thereby enhancing the quality of life for IDPs in challenging circumstances.

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of remittances from a family member supporting the capacities of their relatives in their home country, refugee-IDP remittances exhibit a pattern similar to that of economic migrants' remittances. However, substantial differences exist due to the precarious conditions faced by both refugees and IDPs. Most IDPs encounter fragility and instability during their displacement. This dual precarity, common to both parties in the remittance relationship, helps us understand the unique pattern of remittances in the context of asylum and displacement and the accompanying difficult circumstances.

Remittances sent by refugees to their displaced relatives contribute significantly to their disposable income, often making up a large portion of their financial resources. These remittances are unique as they occur in the context of forced displacement. IDPs face precarious conditions characterized by limited employment opportunities, low wages, and persistent insecurity. Some IDPs have experienced multiple displacements, further exacerbating their instability. Similarly, refugees often face unstable conditions, lacking a stable work environment. Moreover, IDPs have limited alternative sources of income, making remittances a crucial lifeline. If remittances cease, IDPs lose an essential lifeline of support that is nearly impossible to replace, given the current political stalemate and internationally politicized aid deliveries.

Remittances also play a vital social role by instilling values of solidarity, cooperation, and sacrifice, especially in precarious circumstances. They promote family cohesion, highlight the sender's social status, and help recipients maintain a balanced social presence, protecting them from feelings of humiliation and extreme need.

In the absence of structural lending channels or local social assistance, remittances underscore values such as sacrifice and responsibility.

The role of remittances becomes particularly evident in exceptional circumstances such as natural disasters, diseases, and family events, where the amount sent can increase or decrease depending on the refugee's changing circumstances. There has been a significant lack of action by relief and humanitarian organizations in the studied area, or at least a proper and transparent needs assessment. In many regions in Syria, assistance is politicized by the region's de facto forces. Data indicate that this type of remittance, through its impact and mechanisms, is crucial for addressing poverty and forced displacement. These lifelines are influenced by factors and contexts of forced displacement that differ from other migration contexts.

In addition to the topics covered by the research questions, new themes emerged from participants' conversations and responses. Participants highlighted several critical issues, including the shortcomings of humanitarian and relief organizations in the region. They pointed out the lack of aid and the inequity in its distribution, which often leaves many in dire need without sufficient support. This inadequacy of aid exacerbates the already precarious conditions faced by IDPs and refugees, who rely heavily on remittances as a primary source of financial stability.

Furthermore, participants emphasized the near absence of a stable work environment due to regional uncertainty and political stalemate. The ongoing conflict and lack of political resolution create an unstable economic landscape, making it difficult for both refugees and IDPs to find consistent employment. Limited employment opportunities and low wage rates further compound their financial struggles, forcing them to depend even more on remittances from family members abroad.

These new themes underscore the complex dynamics of remittances in the context of forced displacement. The reliance on remittances is not just a matter of financial necessity but also a reflection of the broader socio-economic challenges faced by displaced populations. The lack of effective humanitarian aid and the unstable economic conditions highlight the critical role that remittances play in sustaining these communities.

Given these findings, more research should be conducted to explore these new themes in greater depth. Understanding the full extent of the shortcomings in humanitarian aid, the impact of political and economic instability, and the role of remittances in mitigating these challenges is essential. Such research would provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play and inform more effective policies and interventions to support displaced populations.

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European Nations' Asylum Paradox in Perspective: Exploring Italy-Albania's Refugees Pact Asylum Processing under the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol

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Abstract: This study explores Italy-Albania's refugees pact asylum processing to create awareness about humanitarian issues, the 1951 Convention's contravention, and to expose Italy's (Europeans') asylum paradox. Asylum successful applicants get access to Italy, whereas unsuccessful applicants are repatriated. This study is significant because of the open arms Europeans received Ukrainian refugees, whereas Syrian and Afghan refugees were neglected. The paper adopts Building an infrastructure of Dissent, and Civil Solidarity as a Transformative Practice, exploring Italy-Albania's pact. The study adopts a literature review, otherwise known as a 'meta study'. The study identifies that Europeans, through civil solidarity, signed the Convention, protected European descent refugees. However, the 1967 Protocol results in refugees floodgate'. Most refugees are non-Europeans. Regarding priorities shift from humanitarian issues to infrastructural development. This explains the European asylum paradox. Far-right ideologies deemed nations safe in the absence of war. Conflicts and cultural practices tantamount to persecution are ignored in asylum seeking. Modern migration consists of a mixed bag is frowned upon in processing asylum. Only push and pull factors are considered. Some nations are deemed 'safe'. Applications from such nations are ignored. Unsuccessful applicants are repatriated, which violates human rights and contravenes the 1951 Convention. This study argues that, unlike in the 1950s, when humanitarian and civil solidarity concerned Contracting States, nowadays, nations prioritize infrastructure over human rights. Far-right ideologies 'fan' Italy-Albania's pact violates human rights and contravenes the Convention. The paper recommends the Convention's re-examination to be abreast with time, since Contracting States nowadays value infrastructure over civil solidarity.

Keywords: *Italian government, Albania refugee camp pact, European nations, Asylum paradox, The 1951 Geneva Convention.*

1. Introduction

The study explores Italy-Albania's refugee camp pact asylum processing to create awareness about human rights abuse, and the 1951 Geneva Convention contravention by Italy. It further explores the European nations' asylum paradox, specifically in Italy, where asylum seekers camped in Albania for their documents to be processed. Successful applicants for refugee status are permitted to enter Italy, whereas unsuccessful applicants are repatriated to their country of origin (COOs). The study is relevant because Europeans open their arms to receive refugees from the European region (Ukraine), whereas refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and other African countries were discriminated against and 'neglected' (Oyebamiji et al., 2022). For instance, in Britain, Elmbridge Borough Council, since March 2022, pays £600 per month as a "thank you" to new volunteers who host Ukrainian families (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2024). The paper adopts Building an infrastructure of Dissent (Fischer & Jørgensen, 2021, 24) and Civil Solidarity as a Transformative Practice (Agustín et al., 2024) concepts to explore Italy-Albania's refugee camp pact. Both concepts explain how the 1951 Convention is implemented to extend solidarity to European descent refugees by prioritising civil solidarity over infrastructure. However, nowadays infrastructure is prioritised over civil solidarity; Italy is signatory to the Convention, which serves her as a Contracting State; which far-right group is a component of but does not believe that solidarity should be extended to refugees automatically. Why Italy as a contravening state to the 1951 Geneva Convention, which aims to protect refugees decide to process refugees in Albania? This study is different from the existing research because of a novel approach to externalising refugees processing, which is the subject of academic inquiry and ongoing legal due to its unique jurisdictional setup. Further, the study departs from norms of processing asylum seekers in the CODs.

The devastating First World War (1914-1918) left millions of people homeless. People fled their countries to seek sanctuary in other nations (Parkins, 2010). The number of migrants to other nations for sanctuary increased drastically during the Second World War (1939-1945). Since millions were resettled and deported forcefully. Throughout the 20th Century, nations were concerned about human rights issues. As a result, a policy

was formulated and enshrined in international law that promotes and protects the refugees' rights (Weissbrodt & De La Vega, 2007). In 1921 League of Nations tried to protect refugees but was unsuccessful. In July 1951, the U.N. Convention was 'born' to protect specifically European refugees, enshrined in the non-refoulement principle (U.N. Geneva Convention, 1951; Adebayo, 2015).

The 1951 Convention laid down who refugees were, their protection, types of assistance that should be extended to them, and rights in CODs (U.N. Convention, 1951). Later, the 1967 Protocol was signed to extend the 1951 Convention to other nations. This opened the 'refugee floodgate' (Fermi, 2021). It created refugee problems globally. The 1951 Geneva Convention stipulates that an asylum seeker is "a person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaits a decision on an application for refugee status under relevant international and national instructions. In case of a negative decision, the person may leave the country and be expelled unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian grounds". However, people with war crime records were exempted from refugee status (Mujuzi, 2020). During the post-war period, the refugees were Soviet dissidents and intellectuals (Fermi, 2021).

The 1967 Protocol opened refugees to developed nations. Especially, in European nations that enforced them to design harsher policies to assess refugee applications (Weissbrodt & De La Vega, 2007). Former British prime minister Sunak's ideology to ''stop the boats, which aimed to process asylum application claims in Rwanda, was 'halted' (The Guardian, 2024). Because of a change in governance, which brought Starmer as the new prime minister (Vorvornator, 2024). Also, Italy funded the Albanian refugee camp with the capacity to host 880 asylum seekers aims to process 36,000 refugees per year. The pre-deportation centre was called CPR with 144 and 20 places to sleep and prison, respectively (The Guardian, 2024). Despite objections from human rights associations about the pact of breaching international law, it was tacitly endorsed by the European Union (EU) (The Guardian, 2024). The pact was signed by Italy's far-right prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, and her counterpart, Edi Rama of Albania, in November 2023. The far right ideologies are based on hierarchy, authority, nationalism, order, and dignity as opposed to socialism and equality (Hameleers, 2019). The pact will cost Italy €670m (£560m) over five years. The facilities are operated by Italy under its jurisdiction with Italian security, and staff and judges to hear cases through video from Rome. Meanwhile, the Albanian guards provide external security (The Guardian, 2024). The key point of the 1951 Convention and 1969 protocol was to protect refugees in the CODs but did not mandate external processing of refugees in third countries. However, this study contradicts which results of externalisation and human rights abuse. This study aims to expose human rights abuses in the refugee externalisation process. Further, to create awareness about Italy as a Contracting member's contravention of the 1951 Geneva Convention, she was a signatory to.

According to Italy-Albania's refugees pact, there will be initial screening of asylum seekers on board of rescue ships before they are sent to Albania for further screening (The Guardian, 2024). Asylum seekers intercepted in Italian waters are deemed to be most vulnerable, including children and women will be shipped to Italy (The Guardian, 2024). Other EU nations aim to adopt harsher immigration stances, bought into the idea amid the pressure on far-right groups who made significant headway in EU elections in summer 2024 (The Guardian, 2024). European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen asserted that the bloc would "be able to draw lessons from this (*Italy-Albania's refugees camp pact*), experience in practice" (The Guardian, 2024) (Italics are mine). The UK prime minister, Starmer, who expressed ''great interest'' in the migration pact with Meloni, promised to support the irregular migration crackdown with £4m (The Guardian, 2024). Meloni's idea is nurtured by the far-right ideology that believes in segregation instead of inclusivity. As she was noted to have once noted that Italy should repatriate migrants and "sink the boats that rescued them" (Silverstein, 2020; Al Jazeera, 2024). In the past, Meloni advocated for a naval blockade of North Africa (Silverstein, 2020).

Carling and Talleraas' (2016) research observed that European asylum policy is founded on a paradox principle. Carling and Talleraas (2016) elaborate that European nations nowadays prioritise infrastructural development over humanitarian rights or civil solidarity. Meanwhile, they committed themselves through the signatory of the 1951 Convention to grant access and protect people who have a well-founded fear of persecution on individuality as enshrined in international law. Since most refugees were of European descent. Currently, European nations have strived to make it difficult for people with well-founded fears of persecution to reach their territory and launch applications (Carling & Telleraas, 2016). This portrays European nations' upholding of humanitarian rights in theory but not in practice. It displays what the paper termed 'double

standard'. Perhaps, the explanation could be that modern refugees are non-European descendants, unlike in the 1950s when the Convention was constituted.

Rights groups and Amnesty International have criticised that Italy-Albania's controversial migration pact breaches international law. Amnesty International (2024) describes the Albania refugee camp as "a cruel experiment [that] is a stain on the Italian government", and Doctors Without Borders argues that the pact "raises serious human rights concerns" (Silverstein, 2020; Al Jazeera, 2024). Migration expert Matteo Villa of Datalab Europe, quoted in Reuters (2024), concurs that: "The more migrants decide to undertake the journey, the higher the probability of being brought to Italy because the capacity of the Albanian centre is fixed". Matteo continued that "No matter how you look at it, not only will the idea of opening a centre in Albania not be part of the solution, but it will become part of the problem". However, Meloni brushed aside criticisms that "it is a new, courageous, unprecedented path, but one that perfectly reflects the European spirit and has everything it takes to be followed also with other non-EU nations. Italy-Albania's refugee camp was opened on 11 October 2024 with 24 asylum seekers amid the criticisms. This study contributes to the potential contravention of the non-refoulment principle under the 1951 Convention and 1969 Protocol by Contracting members regarding human rights abuses due to offshore processing of asylum seekers.

Are human rights under the 1951 Convention breached by the Italian government? And is Italy's far-right government 'thrown away' civil solidarity over infrastructural development? The study aims to explore human rights abuse in Italy-Albania's pact under the 1951 Convention to create awareness globally. Specifically, to EU nations that aim to adopt this controversial pact, which contravenes international law. The paper is structured as follows: theoretical framework, literature review, and methodology. The rest are findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

Civic Solidarity as a Transformative Practice-Building and Infrastructure of Dissent concepts.

The study adopts the concepts of Building an infrastructure of Dissent (Fischer & Jørgensen, 2021) and Civil Solidarity as a Transformative Practice (Sears, 2014; Agustín et al., 2024). Both concepts capture how the 1951 Convention is implemented to show solidarity to EU descendant refugees. Italy's signatory serves as a Contracting State, where far-right groups were components, but it does not believe that solidarity should be extended to refugees automatically.

Solidarity is a relational practice. It is also contentious; it erupts strongly in the moment of disruption. It involves alliance-building among diverse actors (states, organisations, refugees, and the U.N.). It is situated in time and space and organised in multi-scalar relations. It relates to institutions, organisations, and States differently (Agustín et al., 2024; Fischer & Jørgensen, 2021). Solidarity practices criss-cross geographical and national borders. Solidarity bonds people together. To understand solidarity, villages, urban scale, and states serve as both empirical sites for solidarity practices and provide an analytical lens (Darling, 2021). States are analysing how solidarity can become institutionalised, which leads to an alternative infrastructure of inclusion. The spatial and relational solidarity's understanding differentiates between autonomous, civil, and institutional forms of solidarity (Agustín et al., 2024). Bauder and Juffs (2020, p 46) claim that civil solidarity is "complex, multi-dimensional, and normative". Civil solidarity in the context of intervention entails the manner the Contracting States organised within the 1951 Convention to assist individuals and groups of people (refugees) who are in need. It involves a large number of actors (States), organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and individuals. Civil solidarity is practiced by individuals, civil society, and nations, but the degree varies depending on the claims and strategies of each institution.

Elaborating on activities of civil societies and states involves focusing on the dynamics of contestation and action. Solidarity is a concept that can be linked to the notion of dissent. Jørgensen and Agustín (2015) defined dissent as "social and political questioning (not just mere critique or a need for palliative reforms), undoing consensus and rendering excluded actors and struggles visible". From the explanation, dissent assumes relevance as experience opposed to the dominant order to render new members, struggles, and difficulties, and organising them visibly. Sears (2014) describes dissent in his book *The Next New Left* coined the term ''infrastructure of dissent". According to Sears (2014), research infrastructure provides social movement with important capacities, namely: capacity for solidarity; collective dreams; collective learning; and collective

memory. Therefore, exploring the Contracting States under the 1951 Convention, such as Italy's solidarity to refugees, helps identify how States provide resources and infrastructure to support various forms of dissent (Jørgensen & Agustín, 2015).

In Sears' (2014) research framework, of infrastructure of dissent involves the capacity of solidarity as part of an integral component. However, Sears (2014) asserts that far-right ideologies do not regard solidarity as an automatic response to injustice, but rather it needs to be cultivated. In other words, while individuals, Contracting States, and the United Nations sympathise intuitively with refugees, various nations require resources and infrastructure to enable solidarity as effective praxis. Hence, the global sympathy will not be useful as in transformative one, if it is not translated from theory to practice through the Contracting States.

Italy, as a nation, through civil solidarity, sympathised with European descent refugees who signed the 1951 Convention protects EU refugees. Later, it was extended to the 1967 Protocol to protect global refugees. The far-right politicians were the 'infrastructure of dissent', which embodies the civil solidarity as an integral part of Italy's signature to protect global refugees. However, the far-right politicians do not regard Italy's solidarity as an automatic reaction to refugees' plight, but rather that 'action' is needed before rewards. Hence, far-right groups' assumption of power in Italy established an Albanian refugee camp to examine asylum applications. Successful applicants would be brought to Italy, whereas unsuccessful applicants will be repatriated to their COO. This process explains how the 1951 Convention served as ''the concept of civil solidarity'', the Italian government, through solidarity, becomes the Contracting State, over which the far-right politicians have less control.

The framework elaborates on the reasons European nations engage in the asylum paradox. The Contracting States are willing to extend solidarity to refugees through their signatory to the 1951 Convention. But prioritising resources and infrastructure over civil solidarity are bottlenecks that hamper the needed assistance to refugees. Hence, human rights abuse and contravention of the 1951 Convention. To summarise the framework, resources and infrastructural development are rated over humanitarian issues, unlike in the 1950s civil solidarity and humanitarian issues were rated over infrastructural development.

2. Literature Review

Arguments about Italy-Albania's refugees pact contravention of the 1951 Convention and human rights abuse

According to the 1951 U.N. Convention, refugees are individuals or groups of people who move outside their nation's boundaries. Because of well-founded fear, security concerns, holding different ideologies and political views from the ruling government, and they are persecuted by the authorities (Weissbrodt & De La Vega, 2007). This implies that the COD becomes the sanctuary to protect the refugees rather than the COO. They cannot be repatriated to their COO until the conditions are conducive. On their return, they are no longer refugees in the COD or assume permanent status or naturalised citizens in the COD (Korac, 2003).

International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2018) on humanitarian grounds defined refugees as "anyone who, owing to the well-founded fear of precautions for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country" (U.N. Geneva Convention, 1951, Act 1A).

The Cartagena (1984) declaration stipulates that "among refugees [are included] persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order". This implies that individuals or groups of people may not necessarily leave their nation due to war or genocide to qualify as asylum seekers. People may become refugees because of internal conflict, human rights violations, and chieftaincy issues. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain that a nation is safe to deny asylum seekers refugee status, as Italy declared 21 nations as 'safe' (The Guardian, 2024). A country may not necessarily be at war before people's life is disrupted. There could be discrimination and persecution by individuals or groups of people through beliefs, religion, gender, and other cultural practices.

Principles of non-discrimination, non-penalisation, and non-refoulement under the 1951 Convention
The core principles of the 1951 Convention are non-discrimination, non-penalisation, and non-refoulement. On humanitarian grounds, it is enshrined in the 1951 Convention that individuals should not be discriminated against based on age, race, religion, or gender, among others (Lerner, 2003). This implies that each one's human rights must be upheld in high esteem irrespective of race, gender, and COO, as was enshrined in the Convention of Article 13 (Lerner, 2003).

The Convention further stipulates that non-penalisation of an individual being persecuted, and there is a well-founded fear that s/he happens to enter any Contracting States illegally (Durieux, 2014). It means the individual being persecuted needs to be protected by Contracting States. This is confirmed by Article 31 of the 1951 Convention (Durieux, 2014). This explanation indicates that asylum seekers found in the waters of Italy and shipped to the Albanian refugee camp contravened the 1951 Convention (Durieux, 2024).

Non-refoulement is concerned about an asylum seeker not being repatriated to their COO (Juss, 2013). The international law asserts that even if the person is denied asylum in the country where the application is launched, s/he should be given some period of time to find another safe country to seek asylum. In case the first nation does not grant refugee status on humanitarian grounds (Otieno, 2021). This implies that the 1951 Convention prohibits the repatriation of asylum seekers if their application is unsuccessful (Juss, 2013). Therefore, Italy-Albania's pact aims to bring successful applicants to Italy, and applicants unsuccessful are sent to their COO contravenes the 1951 Convention and violates asylum seekers' rights (Juss, 2013). This is expressed in Article 32 of the Convention. The article aims not to expose asylum seekers to external danger (Otieno, 2021). However, the Convention stipulates that a refugee considered a threat to national security can be expelled from the territory.

Italy's government deemed some nations as 'safe'
Italy's far-right government deemed 21 nations as ''safe. Regard authorities do not accept asylum applications from such purported safe nations (Hailbronner, 1993; Al Jazeera, 2024). Safe purported nations include: Bangladesh, Egypt, the Ivory Coast, and Tunisia, among others. Unknown to Meloni's government, other factors trigger violence, and display people homeless, which are not reported to the international community. For instance, the old age Bawku conflict in Ghana (ongoing) (Bukari, 2013). This conflict and other abnormal practices may not attract the international media's attention. Hence, one may declare Ghana as a safe nation through its democratic practices over 32 years.

Again, the word safe is subjective. A situation one may perceive to be safe may be dangerous to another person (Ajzen, 1988). This is explained by the Theory of Reasoned Action propounded by Ajzen (1988). The Theory of Reasoned Action explains the nexus between a person's attitude and behaviours within human action (Ajzen, 1988). This means that unsafe situations trigger migration to avoid any danger, whereas safe situations discourage migration (Ajzen, 1988). For an individual to undertake migration to seek asylum depends on the assessment of situations, which stems from upbringing (nurturing). Therefore. It is not only war and genocide that lead to public disorder to trigger people to seek asylum (Farmer, 2008). Article 26 of the 1951Convention stipulates that each Contracting State shall allow refugees lawful in their territory the right to choose the residence (Farmer, 2008). Article 26 emphasizes the asylum seeker's choice of destination among Contracting States of the 1951 Convention they consider to be safe. Italy-Albania's refugee camp pact on the outskirts of the EU to assess the asylum seekers' application contravenes the 1951 Convention, in which it was a signatory (Farmer, 2008).

Far right ideologies of non-discrimination and non-persecution in the absence of war and genocide
As stated earlier, the Italy-Albania pact, which deemed some 21 nations, including Bangladesh and Egypt, as safe nations, seems to contravene international law (Al Jazeera, 2024). Because Article 3 of the Convention states that refugees should not be discriminated against based on their COO but rather on the well-founded security concerns (Fermi, 2021). War and genocide are not the only factors that trigger people's peace and sanity. Internal conflicts, violence, family feuds, forced marriages, and incest could spark discrimination and persecution (Ganusah, 2000). For example, certain outdated cultural practices in some nations. This brings to mind the practices of atonement among the Ewe people in Ghana, which perhaps is against an individual's or a group of people's beliefs (Ganusah, 2000). Female genital mutilation (FGM) practices in Africa. Especially, in

Somalia and Kenya are other obnoxious practices that some females may be uninterested in. In that vein, it may force women to seek asylum elsewhere (Abusharaf, 2013). FGM is the practice that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia (Abusharaf, 2013). The chieftaincy issue is another area where people are persecuted and discriminated against in developing nations. The current lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) is another practice in Africa which some cultures frown upon (Nyanzi, 2013). An individual who engages in such practices, and society frowns upon it, will face people's wrath. Moreover, Italy's government consideration of Albania as a safe environment for asylum seekers who flee from dangerous situations to seek sanctuary in Italy entails human rights violations (The International Rescue Committee (IRC), 2024). How safe is Albania in protecting people who are fleeing from danger? The Italy-Albania pact seems to push asylum seekers, who are seeking safety, into more dangerous routes and human rights violations.

Refugees are the cause of problems in the Contracting States.

To recall, far-right ideologies are based on hierarchy, authority, nationalism, order, and dignity as opposed to socialism and equality (Hameleers, 2019). They are noted for expressing anti-immigration sentiments (Camenisch & Müller, 2017). They believe that social ills such as crime and prostitution are committed by refugees and migrants. Usually, the native population is replaced by refugees and migrants, which leads to unjust economic and multiculturalism issues (Camenisch & Müller, 2017). Far-right politicians attribute economic woes and inefficient service delivery to being caused by refugees and migrants. Due to 'pressure' they (refugees) exert on the nation's resources and infrastructure (Hameleers, 2019), but not the actions of greed and corrupt politicians (Vorvornator & Mdiniso, 2022).

Power changes across the EU elections in the summer of 2024 witnessed significant headway in the performance of far-right parties. This stems from the idea of harsher immigration stances 'blowing' across the continent. Meloni, as a far-right leader and the leader of the government in Italy, would like to 'please' the electorate about her promises to reduce immigration into the country (Fermi, 2021). In that regard, Meloni's government's contravention of the 1951 Convention through the Italy-Albania pact might not be a surprise. Because it is part of far-right ideologies.

Daniele Albertazzi, an Italian politics expert at the University of Surrey, describes the Italy-Albania pact as "But it's a way of showing the right-wing electorates that you (*far-right national government*) are doing something" (Italics is mine). On the latest ruling about Albania's 'unsafeness', and the 21 safe nations declared by the Italian government, Albertazzi stated in The Financial Times Limited (2024) that Meloni would probably employ the court's rejection to her advantage by portraying to the electorate that the courts are a highly politicised judicial system in Italy. In Albertazzi's words, "She *(Meloni*) can say, 'I'm doing my best but because the magistrates are left-wing, we have a battle on our hands'', (Italics are mine), he stated. Albetazzi continued that "It will allow her to play the part of the victim and say the usual elites are stopping the people from having what they want" (The Financial Times Limited, 2024). Therefore, far-right ideologies deem immigration as a problem and create a humanitarian crisis in the COD; they would not allow asylum seekers in Italy. Hence, the creation of the Italy-Albania pact, which contravenes human rights and the 1951 Convention.

Modern migration trends are a mixed bag rather than push and pull factors influencing them

Migration is triggered by push and pull factors (Lee, 2017). The push factors are considered as unfavourable conditions, such as unemployment, climatic conditions (drought, famine, and bush fires). Whereas pull factors are developed nations' amenities such as infrastructural development (roads, electricity, schools, hospitals, and a good communication system), and 'purported', available jobs that attract migrants (Lee, 2017). Mixed-bag migration consists of both push and pull factors (Simpson, 2021). This implies that a migrant may travel for unemployment reasons, and at the same time consider developed nations' infrastructural development before making a choice (Simpson, 2021). Mixed-bag migration occurs when an individual leaves their country through persecution, while s/he were unemployed, and s/he aim to be employed in COD. This implies that the persecution acts against the person qualify him as a refugee, and being unemployed qualifies him as an economic migrant (Korsi, 2022). Should an individual be treated as a refugee or an economic migrant?

An individual would consider where to get the sanctuary in terms of better infrastructural development before migration. This serves the purpose of pull factors; it makes the migration concept complicated (Vorvornator & Enaifoghe, 2024). Therefore, an individual's application is unsuccessful in Italy-Albania's refugee camp with

the reason that s/he is an economic migrant, and repatriation contravenes the non-refoulement principle (Farmer, 2008). The 1951 Convention prohibits the expulsion of asylum seekers, enshrined in Article 33 of the 1951 Convention. It is enshrined to protect asylum seekers from threats (Farmer, 2008). Article 33 continued that rather than contacting States should protect unsuccessful applicants to find another safe country to migrate into, if asylum would not be granted on humanitarian grounds (Farmer, 2008).

The Italian court ruled against the Italy-Albania deal for the first time. The court ordered 12 migrants to be brought from the Albanian refugee camp to Italy (The Financial Times Limited, 2024). On the second ruling, the Italian immigration judges revealed that in examining the Albanian refugee camp, which is outside the bloc of the EU, is unsafe for the asylum seekers who are running away from a dangerous situation to a sanctuary (The Financial Times Limited, 2024). Italian judges argued that the "criteria for designating a state as a safe country of origin are established by EU law'', The verdict continued that "always and concretely verify" whether decisions of Meloni's government are a 'correct application' of EU law (The Financial Times Limited, 2024). The judges called on the international court to interpret whether the Italy-Albania pact complies with international law (The Financial Times Limited, 2024).

In response, the deputy prime minister Matteo Salvini states that "Another political sentence, not against the government, but against Italians and their security''(The Financial Times Limited, 2024). Meloni, on a trip to Lebanon, indicated that she would convene a Cabinet meeting about the ruling. In Meloni's words, "We'll meet to approve some norms that will allow us to overcome this obstacle." Meloni continued that "I believe it's up to the government and not magistrates to establish which countries can be considered safe" (The Financial Times Limited, 2024). However, whether Italy's far-right national government will comply with the directives of the court is yet to be known, since the Italy-Albania pact ruling was made a few days before the article was submitted.
From the foregoing discussion, the study argues that due to modernity, which entails infrastructural development rating over humanitarian grounds, enticed the EU nations to ignore the solidarity that was extended to the EU descendant refugees. Hence, the decision for externalisation of refugees' applications in unsafe nations leads to refugees' rights abuse and Contravention of the 1951 Convention.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a literature review (LR) to explore Italy-Albania's refugee camp asylum processing to create knowledge and awareness about human rights abuse, and the 1951 Geneva Convention contravention, as well as the European nations' asylum paradox. Jackson (2020 et al., p. 21) explains that LR is ''the process of accessing published secondary data. The definition indicates two distinct characteristics. This indicates that the LR adopts only published information, not primary data. The published is broadly used, which comprises books, articles, journals, and organisational and non-organisational reports (Maxwell, 2021). The second characteristic identifies that the LR is employed 'in-house', not in the field (Jackson et al., 2020, p. 11).

Several search engines namely: Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, JSTOR, migration websites and journals namely, Journal for International Migration, and Integration and International Organization for Migration (IOM), and search terms such as 'asylum', 'asylum seekers', 'refugees', 'the 1951 Geneva Convention', 'far right', and 'refugee camps', were employed. The study acquired 1,296 ideal publications; 1,288 of these emerged from an electronic search, and eight were found through backward and forward search. Through an eligibility assessment conducted a total of 104 articles were selected, via the following eligibility criteria: a) the articles that concentrated on either or both factors associated with the asylum paradox and refugee camps; b) focused on Italy-Albania's refugee camps; c) published in 2014 or later; d) published in English (Creswell & Poth, 2016). And 2014 was considered because it was unprecedented and a phenomenon in the migration history (Arab Springs, Afghan and Syrian refugees migration to Europe, as well as Ukrainian refugees).

Templier and Paré (2015) reveal six steps in conducting LR, namely: a) indicating the objectives and research questions; b) finding the relevant articles; c) making an inclusion; d) assessing the quality of articles; e) extracting data, and f) analysing data. All articles considered irrelevant were excluded. After the eligibility check, I proceeded to the data extraction and analysis stage. Data extraction deals with coding ideal articles related to the study. I employed 'framework analysis', which deals with a methodological procedure for extracting and analyzing the existing literature, because it has a laid out guiding process that facilitates both

the extraction and analysis of important data. The process Ritchie and Spencer (2002) called "sifting, charting, and sorting materials according to key themes and issues". In specific terms, familiarisation is done to have in-depth knowledge about the articles' relevance, identification of the thematic framework, which reveals memos on the concepts, knowledge, and ideas that emerged from the existing literature review. Indexing is done through sifting the information related to the particular themes; charting the information was done to sort out relevant headings and sub-headings during the thematic framework stage (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Mapping and interpretation, which involves gathering all the criteria features of the dataset and performing a synthesis of information, were adopted.

Several articles selected employed a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Meta-analysis for quantitative information was carried out because the research methods did not share the same variables. Textual information was coded and mapped appropriately using a framework analysis approach. The theories and LR present broader pictures, basic and baseline information, and an understanding of the existing literature on the topic (Maxwell, 2021). LR helps to avoid duplication of existing works by scholars. However, the limitations could be that since not all academic search engines were used, there could be some existing literature that the literature might not cover.

4. Findings

The study's finding reveals that European nations are signatories to the 1951 Convention because of civil solidarity to protect European refugees' descent (Jørgensen & Agustín, 2015). The 1967 Protocol implementation, which extended refugees' civil solidarity and protection globally, led to the refugee floodgate. This requires much-needed resources and infrastructure (Sears, 2014; Hameleers, 2019). Refugees floodgate exerted much pressure on Contracting States, so despite European nations' solidarity to protect, due to the resources and infrastructure needed, Contracting States make it difficult for refugees to arrive in their country (Fermi, 2021). In other words, nowadays Contracting States rate infrastructural development over civil solidarity. This explains the European nations' asylum paradox; in theory, EU nations want to extend civil solidarity to refugees, but practically, they prioritize infrastructural development over refugees' needs due to modernity (Carling & Telleraas, 2016). Far-right politicians were (indirectly) part of the signatories to the Convention, but do not believe in automatic solidarity with refugees. On assumption of power, far-right ideology (solidarity is not automatic for refugees) was implemented. Hence, Italy-Albania's refugee camp pact. The pact aims to process asylum seekers from Albania instead of Italy's territory. This violates refugees' rights and contravenes the 1951 Convention, which stipulates that Contracting States should protect asylum seekers within their territory (Farmer, 2008).

The study's finding further reveals that far-right ideologies regard war and genocide as the only means that can cause public disorder, which leads to the declaration of some nations purported to be safe (Ganusah, 2000). The far right ideologies do not believe in internal conflicts, chieftaincy affairs, and cultural practices that can lead to persecution and discrimination of individuals and groups of people (Bukari, 2013). Hence, the establishment of the Albanian refugee camp may deny asylum seekers who face persecution and discrimination, not through holding direct views from the government, war, or genocide (Weissbrodt & De La Vega, 2007). This violates asylum seekers' rights and contravenes the 1951 Convention, which Italy signed to uphold in high esteem.

Moreover, considering a nation to be safe because of that asylum applications from purported safe nations are not processed contravenes the 1951 Convention, and violates asylum seekers' rights (Lerner, 2003). This contradicts Article 3 of the Convention, which states that refugees should not be discriminated against through their COO (Lerner, 2003). The study's finding identifies that Albania might not be safe because asylum seekers do not choose it as their COD. It therefore raises security concerns about the state of Albania (The International Rescue Committee (IRC), 2024). Since asylum seekers are being persecuted and fleeing from dangerous situations might lead them into more dangerous routes in Albania (IRC, 2024).

The finding further reveals that the current trends of migration comprise both push and pull factors known as a mixed bag (Korsi, 2022; Lee, 2017). This implies that the original idea of migration could be an economic issue. However, there can be hostile conditions (xenophobia, racism, and FGM) in the first COD, which may lead to persecution and discrimination likely to trigger secondary migration to a sanctuary. Or an individual can be

persecuted and at the same time unemployed in his COO, before seeking asylum in another country (Simpson, 2017). Therefore, to consider a nation as safe, regards asylum applications that are not processed violates rights and contravenes the 1951 Convention.

The Italy-Albania refugees camp pact, which indicates that unsuccessful applicants will be repatriated, contradicts the non-refoulement principle (U.N. Convention 1951). The non-refoulement principle states that any asylum seeker should not be returned to their COO but rather should be protected by the COD (Juss, 2013). However, they can return once the conditions in the COO are conducive. This means their permanent residency status and protection from COD cease (Juss, 2013). In contrast, asylum seekers with war criminal records can be repatriated. This means that Italy's far-right deal to repatriate unsuccessful applicants contravenes the 1951 Convention and violates asylum seekers' rights (Otieno, 2021).

The study further identifies that the first batch of asylum seekers found in Italy's territory was shipped to Albania's refugee camp violates their rights and contravenes the 1951 Convention (Durieux, 2014). This is pointed out in Article 31 of the 1951 Convention, which stipulates that the unlawful entry of a Contracting State's territory by refugees should not attract a penalty (Durieux, 2014). The Italian government's action of shipping refugees to Albania against their will violates their rights. Based on the findings presented, the paper argues that Italy's far-right ideologies influenced the decision to Albania the refugee camp in Albania to segregate asylum seekers. Because, currently, most refugees are non-European descendants, and Italy seems to prioritise infrastructural development over humanitarian rights, unlike in the 1950s, when refugees were EU descendants and humanitarian and civil solidarity were prioritised.

Overall, the study argues that Italy's far right's deeds of 'neglecting' humanitarian and civil solidarity, but rather infrastructural development admiration, informed Albanian refugees' camp establishment, which violates asylum seekers' rights, and contravenes the 1951 Geneva Convention. Below is a tabular summary of the selected articles from 2020-2025 along with the key findings.

Summary of selected articles on refugees under the 1951 Convention from 2020 to 2025

Articles	Summary of findings
Βελέντζα (2020). The interpretation of the 1951 Convention for the Protection of Refugees by Greece and Turkey after the Syrian refugee crisis.	. Βελέντζα (2020) research reveals that EU policies implemented in Turkey, which entail externalisation in third countries, lead to the dehumanisation of refugees and violate the refugees' rights
Maulana et al. (2022). Problems of implementation of international legal policies related to refugees: Ratification of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocols. *Legal Brief*, *11*(5), 2767-2774.	Maulana (2022) reveals that anyone who enters any Contracting member state, the law of non-penalisation should be extended to protect the person. Because the person is 'running away' from persecution and fears.
Haertel (2022). A Non-Refoulement Exception? An Analysis of Article 33 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in Light of the General Rule of Interpretation of Treaties. *Revista Direito UFMS*, *8*(1), 7-22.	This study reveals that States faced with an influx of refugees returned refugees to COO, which contradicts the non-refoulement principle (Haertel, 2022).
Paz, M. (2023). Toward a Taxonomy of Freedom of Movement Claims: Identifying Rights-Based Pathways for Today's Refugees beyond the 1951 Refugee Convention. *Harv. Int'l LJ*, *65*, 457.	Paz's (2023) research reveals that there is a conceptual mismatch between human rights and formal law and the tools that judicial courts and other quasi-judicial bodies adopt in the adjudication of asylum cases.
Gunawan et al. (2024). Indonesia's responsibility towards Rohingya refugees: analysis of the 1951 Refugee Convention. *Legality: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum*, *32*(2), 182-194.	Gunawan et al. (2024) research stipulates that Rohingya migrants' arrival in Indonesia does not legally bind the country to protect them. Since Indonesia has not ratified the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention.

Source: Personal construct (2025).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study explored Italy-Albania's refugee camp pact for processing asylum applications, launched to create knowledge and awareness about human rights abuse, and contravention of the 1951 Geneva Convention, as well as the European nations' asylum paradox. The study reveals that European nations, through civil solidarity, were signatories to the 1951 Convention that protected European refugees' descent. However, the 1967 Protocol, which extended refugee protection globally, led to refugees. Most refugees are non-European descendants. This made the European nations prioritise infrastructural development over humanitarian issues explains their asylum paradox. It was identified that far-right ideologies deemed the nation not on a war path to be safe, irrespective of internal conflicts, abnormal cultural practices, and LGBTQ issues. These practices are prohibited by some African cultures and tantamount to persecution and discrimination. Italy's far-right government overlooked that modern migration is no longer sparked by push and pull factors only, but rather it comprises a mixed bag. Based on that, some nations are considered safe, which means asylum applications from purported safe nations are not accepted. The study reveals that asylum seekers whose applications are unsuccessful would be repatriated, which violates their rights and contravenes the 1951 Convention Italy signed to uphold in high esteem. The study argues that, unlike in the 1950s, when humanitarian and civil solidarity were of concern to Contracting States, nowadays Contracting States prioritize infrastructural development over human rights. The study concludes that the far-right ideology's fan, Italy-Albania's refugee camp pact, violates asylum seekers' rights and contravenes the 1951 Geneva Convention. The paper therefore recommends the 1951 Convention to be re-examined to be abreast with time, since Contracting States nowadays value infrastructural development over human rights and civil solidarity. The study proposes that future research should explore decisions regarding detention and asylum claim processes in third countries on the EU asylum law.

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Fiscal Policy Variables and Industrial Growth in Uganda

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Abstract: This study examines the effect of government spending, taxation, and borrowing on the development of Uganda's manufacturing sector in both the short and long term based on the ARDL model. The study was focused on three main objectives: examining the role of government consumption expenditure, the effect of value-added tax (VAT), and the role of short-term debt on manufacturing value-added (MVA). The results show that government spending contributes slightly to MVA in the short term but supports growth in the long term. VAT contributes to MVA in the short term but reduces it in the long term, showing how excessive taxation can damage industrial competitiveness. Short-term debt reduces the growth of MVA in the short term but is positive in the long term, showing the need for careful management of debt. In general, the evidence suggests that firm government support, moderate taxation, and prudent borrowing are central to the development of Uganda's manufacturing. However, the study identifies a number of limitations, such as the reliance on secondary data, exclusion of possible determinants, and failure to fully establish causality. It recommends that future research take into account a wider range of variables and more disaggregated data in an effort to shed more light on the determinants of manufacturing growth.

Keywords: *Fiscal Policy, Industrial Growth, Uganda*

1. Background

Industrial growth has become a leading answer to economic self-reliance for developing countries because of its strong multiplier impacts on household earnings, jobs, and general welfare (Huang, Chen, Su, & Wu, 2020). World industrialization is still skewed towards big economies that benefit from high-value manufacturing goods. The majority of developing nations, including Uganda, have remained predominantly in agro-processing and have missed out on the benefits of economies of scale and better returns that come with advanced industrial production (Mazungunye, 2020).

Various reforms and policy measures have been tried in Uganda and the larger Sub-Saharan region to propel industrialization, but all this remains to be seen. These include lack of access to low-cost credit, poor infrastructure, high-cost electricity, and poor road networks (Ggoobi, 2017). Industrial development levels are also low compared to regional peers, as seen in Uganda's performance on exports (Wolff, 2020). The industry only contributes 19.8% of GDP (World Bank, 2018), with mining and quarrying at 2.0%, manufacturing at 15.4%, water at 2.3%, and construction at 6.6% (GoU, 2019). This is much lower than the 35% being targeted by countries seeking middle-income status (NPA, 2019; Olwor, 2023).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government reopened the import-substitution approach to strengthen domestic production and safeguard the economy from disruptions in international trade (Ggoobi, 2020). The approach, an expansionary fiscal policy, included financial assistance to domestic producers, encouraging domestic production of goods like PPEs, and implementing protective taxes on foreign products that could be produced locally. While such a plan has worked in economies like Singapore, Taiwan, and China, research shows it must be combined with robust and resolute fiscal policies (Adewale, 2017; Jackson & Jabbie, 2020; Sankaran, Kumar, Arjun, & Das, 2019). Expenditure on capital, taxation, and public debt are fiscal indicators that have an immediate impact on the rate and sustainability of industrial growth. But in Uganda, most studies link industrialization and economic development without the consideration of how the budget measures affect the sector.

This study, therefore, seeks to bridge the gap through an exploration of how government capital expenditure, taxation, and borrowing affect industrial growth in Uganda. Capital expenditure, for instance, as in investment in public infrastructure and works, is generally considered to be one of the underlying engines of industrial development. Taxes and tax incentives are determinants of business competitiveness and industrial

investment. Public debt, on the other hand, is either in support of industrial development when it is effectively used or suppressive when it is a source of debt sustainability concerns. Using the interrelation of the fiscal policy variables and industrial performance as a focus, the study aims to provide recommendations to policymakers on how to best design fiscal strategies that can sustain industrialization.

Industrialization is essential because it spurs job creation, generates exports, increases efficiency in the use of resources, and reduces poverty. The Ugandan government has put industrialization in its development strategy, as evident in the NDP III (2020/21–2024/25), which aims at increasing the contribution of the industrial sector to GDP to 31% by the year 2040, in addition to increasing the industrial workforce to 26% and manufactured exports to 50% of all exports. The same hopes are echoed in Vision 2040, which views industrialization as the core of building a competitive economy. The budget emphasis of recent decades has also put industrialization on top of employment creation and common prosperity (Lukwago, 2021).

However, despite three decades of fiscal expansionary policy, the country's industrial sector is still asleep, with its GDP share remaining constant at 19.8% (World Bank, 2018). This has restricted its capacity to substantially spur employment, government finance, and overall economic transformation (Bank, 2020). The post-COVID-19 initiative of the government toward import substitution indicates that there is a realization that fiscal policies should directly fund industrial development. It is thus necessary to determine the manner in which fiscal instruments—government expenditure, taxation, and public debt—are influencing the path of Uganda's industrialization and what reforms may enhance their influence.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Literature Review

The Endogenous Growth Theory

As discussed by Rubin (2025), endogenous growth theory explains that long-term economic growth is propelled by forces within the economy rather than from the outside. The theory explains that the rate of growth is determined internally, with a special focus on incentives and opportunities for triggering the creation of technological knowledge(Ye, Gao, Fang, Liu, & Chen, 2021). To that degree, per capita increases in the long run depend heavily on total factor productivity (TFP), and as also noted by Jones (2022), TFP is driven chiefly by technological change. The theory also points out that economic conditions directly influence the pace of technological advance, and since technology is the primary driver of productivity, these conditions ultimately establish long-run growth rates (Rubin, 2025). Growth, therefore, begins with innovation, either in the form of new products, markets, or processes, which emerge from the current economic activity (Akcigit & Ates, 2021). As these innovations become settled, they enable the development and diffusion of new technologies and knowledge, which emerge as the main source of long-run economic growth (Ye et al., 2021; Ghosh & Parab, 2021).

Overview of the Industrial Sector in Uganda

Ever since the early 1990s, Uganda has followed a path of economic liberalization, with the state's role in industrial enterprise decreasing incrementally over time (Behuria, 2021). This change introduced a more prudent and market-oriented method of industrial development (Olwor, 2023). The most remarkable achievement of these changes was the evolution of neoliberal-pushed institutions and policies (Esaku, 2021). A good case in point is the establishment of the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) through the Uganda Investment Code in 1991, later revised in 1994, as a one-stop focal point for the promotion and attraction of domestic and foreign investment (Buda & Ricz, 2023).

In a further effort to solidify its position in international investment mechanisms, Uganda became a member of the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) and enhanced its industrial policies into global liberal frameworks (Behuria, 2021). These actions put Uganda on the same level as international investment standards and marked the way for the orientation of subsequent national industrial plans, including the current policy scheme (Olwor, 2023; Esaku, 2021).

Notwithstanding these policy and institutional changes, Uganda's manufacturing industry continues to underperform, contributing only a small percentage to GDP (Sendi et al., 2022). Most of the industry is confined to last-stage assembly with minimal value addition, and there is low-capacity utilization at a rate of about 50 percent of installed capacity (Buda & Ricz, 2023). The country's export basket also comprises barely any manufactured products, which is contrary to its competitiveness in foreign markets (Olwor, 2023). Consequently, the current industrial policy up to 2030 has put great emphasis on import substitution as a response to the vulnerabilities exposed by global supply chain shocks such as those brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (Behuria, 2021).

Empirical Literature Review

Effect of Government Expenditure on Industrial Growth

Industrial growth is generally taken in most economic discourse to be a reflection of general economic growth, since both are linked with increases in output. A number of studies show that government spending promotes growth by building productive capacity and consolidating demand (Sedrakyan & Candamio, 2019; Devarajan et al., 1996; Liu et al., 2008; Ranjan & Sharma, 2008; Barro, 1990; Barro & Sala-i-Martin, 1992; Hansson & Henrekson, 1994; Afonso & Jalles, 2011; Patricia & Izuhukwu, 2013; Gisore et al., 2014). At the same time, there are other researchers who argue that a large government can actually retard growth by crowding out private sector activity and bringing about inefficiencies (Devarajan et al., 1996; Guesh, 1997; Gregoriou & Ghosh, 2009; Usman et al., 2011). There are even those who propose the relationship is not linear in character, with growth outcomes depending on the level of government intervention (Kim et al., 2018).

Evidence regarding causality is also mixed. Wu et al. (2010), with data for 182 nations for 1950–2004, found a bi-directional causality between government spending and growth. Hussain et al. (2012) showed that while defense spending and high taxation reduce growth in Asian economies, health and education spending and overall government spending enhance it. Case-study-specific research also reveals such distinctions. For instance, Ebaidalla (2013) found that government spending causes growth in Sudan, as espoused in the Keynesian hypothesis, while Roşoiu (2015) found bidirectional causality in Romania. Alex and Ebieri (2014), using ARDL analysis, depicted that capital and recurrent expenditure enhance growth, but debt and non-oil tax spending dampen growth. Gitana et al. (2018) observed contradictory findings within the EU, with some nations confirming Wagner's law and others holding up the Keynesian view. In West Africa, Udo et al. (2016) showed mixed results, which varied from no relationship to positive or negative effects. Sedrakyan and Candamio (2019) confirmed Keynesian theory in Armenia and Spain, and Amaghionyeodiwe (2019) proved that government spending on education spurs long-term rather than short-term economic growth in ECOWAS countries.

Cumulatively, the literature shows that government expenditure can stimulate, curtail, or have a neutral impact on growth, depending on the setting, approach, and time frame being considered. Nonetheless, for Uganda's case, research focusing particularly on how spending by the government is associated with industrial development is very rare. This gap calls for the advancement of a concrete research hypothesis to examine the relationship and complete the first study objective.

$\mathbf{H_{o1}}$: Government expenditure affects the level of industrial growth in Uganda

Effect of Tax Revenue on Industrial Growth

According to Tosun and Abizadeh (2019), a study on 24 OECD countries revealed that goods and services tax (GST) and payroll tax had a negative relationship with GDP per capita, but personal and property taxes were positively correlated with growth. During election periods, political parties make available diversified packages of taxes both at the national level and the state level in order to appeal to voters. Against that background, Poulson and Kaplan (2018) examined the influence of marginal income tax rates on United States economic growth, including regional impact and convergence in their model, and concluded that higher marginal income tax rates retard growth. Browning (1976) further contributed that the additional state income tax with federal impositions enhances the negative influence of marginal taxation. Similarly, Bonucchi et al. (2015) held the view that when tax affects the cost of capital vis-a-vis labor, it is involved in monetary policy and relative price adjustments and therefore influences the economy. For a panel model of 28 EU member states, Stoilova (2017) found that while tax designs matter, aggregate tax revenues are largely less harmful to growth. Goulder and

Summers (1987) showed the significance of priorities in capital policy, demonstrating with a general equilibrium model that corporate tax hikes decreased growth.

Evidence in developing economies replicates these findings. Decreasing taxes on retained earnings increased growth convergence to a steady state in Chile (Hsieh & Parker, 2007). Mendoza et al. (1997), based on Harberger's super neutrality hypothesis, demonstrated that tax rates are a determinant factor in investment decisions. The Laffer curve is also what illustrates how beyond a point, higher tax rates reduce total revenue collection. Academic research also points to an inverted-U relationship between taxation and growth, though corruption could complicate this association (Aghion et al., 2016). Lee and Gordon (2005), in a cross-sectional analysis, proved that higher marginal tax rates reduce compliance and reduce total growth, and lowering them may improve performance. At the firm level, Vartia (2008) observed that business tax is a disincentive to investment and productivity but R&D tax credits promote more productivity. In a panel data estimation of 24 EU countries from 1995 to 2010, Szarowska (2014) observed that consumption taxes were growth-stimulating while labor taxes were growth-disincentive.

Collectively, these studies all clearly show that taxation contributes greatly to the determination of industrial and economic performance, with most forms of taxation contributing negatively to growth. Following this evidence, the present research sought to test the hypothesis of whether Uganda's industrial development relies greatly on the country's tax rates, as outlined below.
H_{o2}: There is no significant effect of tax rate on the level of industrial growth in Uganda

Effect of Public Debt on Industrial Growth
There is extensive literature on the effect of public debt on economic growth, but most of it has been concentrated in developed economies, with very few studies examining developing countries (Opare, 2022). For example, Elbadawi et al. (2019), employing quadratic fixed and random effects specifications for data from 99 developing countries, reported that debt begins to interfere with growth at levels above 97% of GDP. Furthermore, Imbs and Ranciere (2015), using Kernel estimates for 87 emerging economies, detected debt overhang effects when debt was at 55–60% of GDP. Pattillo et al. (2011), using quadratic and spline models testing 93 emerging economies, detected that growth is negatively affected when debt is more than 160–170% of exports or 35–40% of GDP. Since the financial crisis in 2008, there has been much focus on the high-income economies, particularly the OECD countries. Exemplary among such studies are Checherita-Westphal and Rother (2012), Baum et al. (2013), Egert (2015a, 2015b), and Sokbae et al. (2017). For instance, Checherita-Westphal and Rother (2012), using quadratic specifications across 12 euro-area nations, found a non-linear one with a turning point between a debt-to-GDP ratio of 90% and 100%. Baum et al. (2013), using panel threshold regressions, found that debt up to 67% of GDP spurs growth but loses its positive impact and becomes detrimental when over 95%.

Egert (2015a), in 20 OECD economies using nonlinear threshold models, found that it was difficult to reliably identify a negative nonlinear effect of debt on growth because findings were extremely sensitive to data and methodology employed. Where these were present, they tended to occur at fairly low debt levels within the range 20% to 60% of GDP. Egert (2015b), in another paper, had sparse reliable evidence of a long-run relationship between growth and debt using non-dynamic panel threshold regressions. Sokbae et al. (2017), in examining developed economies, observed a threshold turning point of approximately 30%. Literature more broadly across countries indicates varying thresholds for developing and advanced economies. Caner et al. (2010), Kumar and Woo (2010), and Chudik et al. (2017) were some of the literature that did this. Caner et al. (2010), with threshold models of 101 countries, fixed the threshold at 77% of GDP for developed countries and 64% for emerging market economies, further stipulating that each percentage point above these thresholds reduces growth by 0.017 and 0.02 annually, respectively. Eberhardt and Presbitero (2015), using panel econometric methods across 118 countries, identified weak evidence of the debt-long-term growth negative correlation but no cross-country consistent threshold. Chudik et al. (2017) using a panel threshold ARDL model for 40 economies estimated the breakpoint to be in the 60% to 80% range of GDP.

Notwithstanding this large body of research, little has been done to specifically investigate the impact of public debt on **industrial development**. It is this gap in research that forms the foundation for the current study,

which aims to find out if public debt contributes to influencing Uganda's industrial development. In this regard, the following hypothesis is advanced for testing:
H_{o3} There is no significant effect of public debt on the level of industrial growth in Uganda.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The study used a longitudinal time series design and was correlational in design to investigate the relationships for the purposes of its objectives (Gasparrini, 2021). Through the use of time series analysis, trends, long-term trends, seasonal variation, cycles, and irregular fluctuations in the data were determined, and projections made based on past performance (Liang et al., 2024). It was a quantitative analysis because all the variables under study were quantified in terms of quantifiable numerical values (Gasparrini, 2021).

Data Type and Source

The research utilized secondary data from credible government and foreign agencies, including the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), and World Bank (Goel, 2023). From 1990 to 2020, time series data were utilized, consistent with the initiation of Uganda's industrial reform program (Goel, 2023). Using aggregated national-level data-maintained consistency and ensured that all variables in the research were readily available for analysis (Goel, 2023).

Operationalization of variables to be used

Table 1: Operationalization of Variables

Variables	Definition	Expected Sign	Source of data
Manufacturing Value Added output (Proxy for industrial growth)	Net output (in UGX) of the manufacturing sector after adding up all outputs and subtracting intermediate inputs.		Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) (1990-2020)
Government expenditure	General government final consumption expenditure refers to the current expenditures for purchases of goods and services.	Positive	World Bank (1990-2020)
VAT (Proxy for Tax Revenue)	Tax (in UGX) levied on the value added to goods and services at each stage of production or distribution.	Negative	Uganda Revenue Authority (1990-2020)
Short Term Debt (Proxy for Public debt)	All debt (in USD) with an original maturity of one year or less and interest in arrears on long-term debt	Positive	World Bank (1990-2020)
GDP per Capita	The average income of a country's population. Calculated by dividing the gross domestic product by the mid-year population	Positive	World Bank

Author's Compilation

Model Specification

The underlying theory and empirical studies on fiscal policy variables and industrial growth provide the foundation for building the manufacturing sector output growth function. This study closely followed the specified model by Mengistu (2022). However, the model for this study included fiscal policy variables that

characterize the Ugandan economy. In so doing, the model captured the objectives of the study as stated in Chapter One. The equation for the model is stated below;

$INDt = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GEXt + \beta_2 TRTt + \beta_3 PDTt + \beta_4 GDPt + \mu_t$ ……. (i)

From equation (i), *IND* is Industrial sector growth proxied by Manufacturing Value Added output, *GEX* is Government Expenditure proxied by Government final consumption expenditure, and *TRT* is Tax Revenue proxied by Value Added Tax. *PDT* is Public Debt stock proxied by Short Term Debt, and *GDP* is Gross Domestic Product per person. μ Represents the white noise in the model, t represents the current period, β_0 Is the intercept of the model while β_1 to β_4 These are parameters that represent the coefficients of the model. The model was transformed into natural logs because, in time series analysis, this transformation is often considered to stabilize the variance of a series.

Model Estimation

Unit Root Test

Stationarity must be tested when working with time series data to ensure that econometric model estimates are precise and not misleading (Nasir & Morgan, 2025). A variable is non-stationary if its mean or variance changes over time and skews influential statistics such as the significance of coefficients, R^2, and the Durbin-Watson statistic, which will ultimately cause misinterpretation when using regression analysis (Chen, Karavias, & Tzavalis, 2022). To confirm this, the study employed the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test, which is superior to the general Dickey-Fuller test, particularly for small samples and more complex models (Nasir & Morgan, 2025). The ADF test is employed to check for the presence of a unit root, basically whether past values of a variable influence its current variation (Chen et al., 2022). As a function of the model specification, perhaps including a constant, an intercept, or both trend and intercept, the test statistic is compared to critical values. In the event that the test statistic is sufficiently low, the null hypothesis of non-stationarity is rejected. This approach guarantees that the data used in the analysis have a constant variance, mean, and covariance over time which is necessary in arriving at reliable econometric results (Nasir & Morgan, 2025).

Co-Integration Test

Some of the variables in this case were non-stationary in their nature in their raw state but following first-differencing became stationary and therefore evidenced the potential existence of a long-run relationship between them (Turrisi, Cigada, & Zappa, 2022). This long-run relationship over time is also known as cointegration. As a means to analyze the possibility, the research carried out cointegration tests on the selected variables.

The method utilized was the bounds testing approach under the framework of the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model (Natsiopoulos & Tzeremes, 2022). The method begins with the null hypothesis that there exists no long-run relationship between the variables. The interpretation is as follows: if the estimated F-statistic value is higher than the upper and lower critical values at all levels of significance, then the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of cointegration. Conversely, if the F-statistic value is below the critical values, the null hypothesis is not rejected and there is no evidence for a long-run relationship between the variables (Turrisi et al., 2022; Natsiopoulos & Tzeremes, 2022).

Autocorrelation

In this study, the Breusch-Godfrey test was utilized to check for autocorrelation of the time series model. The test is utilized to check if residuals are correlated with the lagged value of their own. When significant, it means that the model could be mis-specified and may require some modifications, e.g., including additional lags or efforts in alternative model specifications.

Normality

The study employed the test for normality using Skewness and Kurtosis to determine whether the residuals of the model follow a normal distribution (Hatem, Zeidan, Goossens, & Moreira, 2022). In this test, the null hypothesis assumes that the residuals follow a normal distribution (Hatem et al., 2022). The null hypothesis is rejected when the chi-square statistic, the measures of skewness, and kurtosis are not statistically significant at 5% (Demir, 2022). But if the values are higher than the 5% level, then the null hypothesis is rejected, i.e., residuals are not normally distributed (Demir, 2022).

Ho: The error term is normally distributed.

Multicollinearity Check

Multicollinearity is encountered when two or more independent variables of a model are highly correlated (Bayman & Dexter, 2021). Correlation coefficients of 0.7 and higher are typically considered problematic, while coefficients above 0.8 are likely to result in multicollinearity (Chan et al., 2022). In this current study, multicollinearity was tested using pairwise correlation coefficients and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (Ahmad, Balakrishnan, & Jha, 2021). The VIF demonstrates the extent to which the variance of a regression coefficient is inflated by collinearity, and any value higher than 10 indicates excessive multicollinearity (Bayman & Dexter, 2021).

Moreover, Tolerance values were examined as a proxy (Chan et al., 2022). Tolerance is calculated as 1 minus the R^2 of each independent variable and represents the amount of variance in a variable that other variables in the model cannot explain (Ahmad et al., 2021). A Tolerance of below 0.10 shows high correlation with other predictors and warns of potential multicollinearity issues (Bayman & Dexter, 2021).

4. Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

Descriptive Evidence of the Study

Information used in this study covered a period with no missing observations. Descriptive statistics were determined to provide an open picture of the features of the data as well as to ensure that it was suitable for analysis since using unsuitable data can lead to misleading findings. Specifically, the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation of the variables were approximated. All data processing as well as analyses were conducted using STATA 14.

Summary Statistics of Study Variables

The summary statistics of the study variables are presented in Table 2 below, outlining the mean, maximum values, minimum values, and the standard deviations.

Table 2: Summary of study variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Man. Value Added	2,330,000,000	2,330,000,000	166,000,000	6,660,000,000
Govt Consumption	1,630,000,000	1,110,000,000	276,000,000	4,290,000,000
Value Added Tax	2,020,000,000,000	5,460,000,000,000	28.25	18,500,000,000,000
Short Term Debt	20.22	22.52008	0.52	87.97
GDP per capita	496.2586	282.7526	151.977	897.51

Observations = 32 (1990 – 2021). Source: Researcher's computation using secondary data

The descriptive analysis was charged with deciding the quality of data observed in representing the study and to extract patterns and variations across variables. Manufacturing Value Added (MVA) had an average of 2.33 billion USD, varying from 166 million USD to 6.66 billion USD, with considerable variation among observations. This means that although an average manufacturing output is approximately 2.33 billion USD, some industries contribute noticeably more and others noticeably less. The standard deviation of roughly 2.33 billion USD also captures the great fluctuations in output during production over the course of the dataset.

Government Consumption Expenditure lacked such a mean of 1.63 billion USD but also exhibited great variation, ranging from 276 million to 4.29 billion USD. Its standard deviation of roughly 1.11 billion USD captures the fact that government spending varies widely over the period covered. Value Added Tax (VAT) in Ugandan shillings also exhibited the highest variation among the variables. It had a mean value of 2.02 trillion UGX and a standard deviation of 5.46 trillion UGX, with its collection falling between 28.25 billion and 18.5 trillion UGX, suggesting differences in taxation policies and economic activity in Uganda.

Short-Term Debt as a percentage of exports had an average of 20.22% and a standard deviation of 22.52%, which signifies wide fluctuations in debt levels across observations. Some organizations had extremely low levels of short-term debt (0.52%), suggesting better financial health, while some had high levels of debt

(87.97%). GDP per capita had an average of 496.26 USD with a standard deviation of 282.75 USD, indicating a moderate range in individual prosperity. The minimum of 151.98 USD and the maximum of 897.51 USD reveal variances in income among the population.

Generally, the dataset reveals significant heterogeneity between principal economic indicators, indicative of varying economic conditions and trends. This heterogeneity is pertinent to be known to enable informed decisions and policy formulation. Due to the extensive variations in values ranging from millions to trillions, the research converted the variables to a logarithmic scale to stabilize distributions, eliminate extreme value effects, and enhance interpretability and comparability of growth rates in the passage of time.

Pre-Estimation Diagnostic Tests

Pre-estimation diagnostics are statistical tests carried out before model estimation to ensure that the selected variables are fit to be included in the model to be estimated.

The Test For Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is a regression analysis issue that arises when an independent variable is highly correlated with one or more of the other model independent variables. If it exists, it will lower the statistical significance of the involved variables such that it becomes harder to explain their actual effects. Multicollinearity was examined at two levels within this study. First, the correlation analysis was conducted to identify the type and degree of association among the variables. Second, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was conducted on all the independent variables to see to what level each variable's variance is being inflated with correlation with other variables. The findings are presented below.

Pairwise Correlation Analysis Results

	1	2	3	4	5
Man. Value Added (1)	1.0000				
Govt. Consumption (2)	0.9363*	1.0000			
Value Added Tax (3)	0.7031*	0.6746*	1.0000		
Short Term Debt (4)	-0.5287*	-0.5940*	0.0071	1.0000	
GDP per capita (5)	0.9908*	0.9239*	0.6556*	-0.5530*	1.0000

* Indicates significance at the 0.05 level. All variables are logged. Source: Researcher's computation using secondary data

In a correlation matrix, values near 1 indicate a strong positive relationship, values near -1 indicate a strong negative relationship, and values near 0 indicate little or no linear relationship. Asterisks (*) are generally used to report statistical significance levels.

The results reveal some intriguing correlations. Government spending is found to have a highly positive correlation (0.9363) with manufacturing value added, which suggests that with rises in manufacturing output, government spending does the same. Similarly, a very high positive correlation (0.9908) of GDP per capita with manufacturing value added is found, which suggests that the more efficient the industries are in a place, the higher the per capita income.

Government expenditure also has a strong positive relationship with GDP per capita (0.9239) and a moderate relationship with value-added tax (0.6746), such that areas of higher government expenditure are more likely to have higher tax revenues and greater economic development. Value-added tax has a positive relationship with manufacturing value added (0.7031) and a moderate relationship with government consumption (0.6746), meaning industrial output and public spending both generate taxes.

Short-term debt, however, shows a very weak positive correlation with value-added tax (0.0071), reflecting a weak relationship. It also reflects a negative correlation with manufacturing value added and government consumption, which implies that higher short-term debt is anticipated with lower industrial output and lower government expenditure. Furthermore, GDP per capita and short-term debt reflect a weak negative correlation of -0.5530, which implies that higher debt nations will have lower incomes.

In brief, these results reveal positive strong correlations among manufacturing production, government expenditure, GDP per capita, and tax revenue, whereas short-term debt operates in the opposite direction.

Table 3: VIF Results

Variables	VIF	1/VIF
Log Govt. Consumption	9.79	0.102130
Log GDP per capita	7.04	0.142143
Log Value Added Tax	3.58	0.279477
Log Short Term Debt	2.97	0.336238
Mean VIF	5.84	

Source: Researcher's computation using secondary data

Values presented in Table 3 show the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of each variable, which is utilized to assess multicollinearity within regression models. Multicollinearity is experienced where independent variables are most likely to be highly related to one another, and thereby individual contributions of each to the dependent variable become difficult to discern.

For Log Government Consumption, VIF is 9.79, which is very high. Its 1/VIF value of 0.102130 suggests that around 10% of the variance in this variable is explained by its correlation with the other independent variables. This could be a sign of multicollinearity since Log Government Consumption could be very highly correlated with some of the other variables in the model. The VIF of 7.04 shows that log GDP per capita is moderately multicollinear. Its 1/VIF of 0.142143 shows that it shares about 14% of its variation with the other independent variables. While this percentage is apparent, it is not typically considered to be problematic.

Log Value Added Tax has 3.58 VIF, which represents moderate multicollinearity. With 1/VIF = 0.279477, about 28% of its variance is shared with other variables, which means a mild relationship but nothing over the top. Likewise, Log Short Term Debt has a VIF of 2.97, the lowest on the table, with 1/VIF = 0.336238. This also shows that about 33% of its variance is shared with other variables, which is a moderate and not so terrible correlation.

As posited by Suleiman (2019), VIFs below 10 are generally considered not to have severe multicollinearity. In this study, all variables have VIFs below 10 with a mean VIF of 5.84, indicating that multicollinearity does not pose a serious issue. This allowed the study to proceed with model estimation without fear.

Stationarity Tests on the Model Variables

The research also carried out stationarity tests of the model variables using the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test, which is widely used in academic literature to test for stationarity. The ADF test tests for the presence of a unit root by testing the null hypothesis that a time series contains a unit root. If the ADF test statistic (t-statistic) is below the critical value at the 5% significance level, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, indicating non-stationarity. The study tested for unit roots at the level of the variables and also after differencing first, and the results are given in Table 4.

Table 4: ADF Test Results

ADF			
Variables	**Levels**	**First difference**	**Integration**
Log Man. Value Added	0.743	-5.493***	I(1)
Govt. Consumption	-1.051	-4.464***	I(1)
Value Added Tax	-1.059	-2.991**	I(1)
Short Term Debt	-2.935**	-	I(0)
GDP per capita	-3.032***	-	I(0)

Source: Researcher's computation using secondary data

The results of the unit root tests in Table 4.4 above indicate that all the variables with the exception of Debt and GDP per capita are not stationary at levels but become stationary when differenced once. GDP per capita is, however, stationary at levels without differencing. The results thus indicate that the variables to be included in the model have mixed levels of stationarity.

Cointegration Test

One of the variables in this study was found to be unstable at its levels but stabilized following first differencing, reflecting the presence of a long-run relationship, as termed cointegration. In an effort to confirm this, the study performed the cointegration bounds test through the use of the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) framework. The test is employed to test the null hypothesis of no cointegration among the variables. If the calculated F-statistic is greater than the upper and lower critical values at all levels of significance, then the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a long-run relationship. The result of the test appears in Table 4.6.

Table 5: ARDL bounds test results

Wald F-statistic = 13.723*	**t = -7.343**	**k = 3, n = 28**
	Critical Value: Narayan (2005)	
Level of Significance	**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**
1%	4.29	5.61
5%	3.23	4.35
10%	2.72	3.77

Source: Researcher's computation using secondary data

The results in Table 5 show that the F-statistic (13.723) is greater than the upper bound critical value of 5.61 at a level of significance of 1%. The study thus rejected the bounds test null hypothesis of no cointegration. These results, therefore, verify the existence of a long-run relationship among the research variables.

Post Estimation Diagnostic Tests

After running the estimated model above, the study proceeded to carry out further diagnostic tests on the model to conclude that there are no common econometric problems.

Serial Correlation Test

The Breusch-Godfrey LM test was employed in the research to check for serial correlation in the model. The null hypothesis is that there is no serial correlation. A 5% significant chi-square value would not reject the null hypothesis; otherwise, it would be rejected. The chi-square value was 0.462, and it was not significant at 5%. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was not rejected and it shows that the model is free from serial correlation. The results are presented in Table 6.

Heteroskedasticity Test

The Breusch-Pagan test was used to determine whether heteroskedasticity in the model. The null hypothesis of this test is no heteroskedasticity. For the null to hold, the chi-square value must not be significant at 5%. The chi-square value for this test was 0.00 and not significant at 5% level. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that the model is heteroskedasticity-free. The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Serial Correlation and Heteroskedasticity Test Results

Test	lags(p)	Chi (2)	df	Prob.
B-Godfrey test	1	0.462	1	0.4966
Breusch-Pagan		0.00		0.9708

Test For Normality of Residuals

The study employed the Skewness & Kurtosis test for Normality to examine the normal distribution of residuals in the model. Normality is the null hypothesis of the test. It cannot be ruled out that the null hypothesis is

rejected if the chi-square value, and the skewness and the kurtosis values are not significant at the 5% significance level. The results are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Skewness & Kurtosis tests for Normality results

Variable	Obs	Pr(Skewness)	Pr(Kurtosis)	adj chi2(2)	Prob>chi2
Residuals	28	0.0015	0.0091	13.06	0.0015

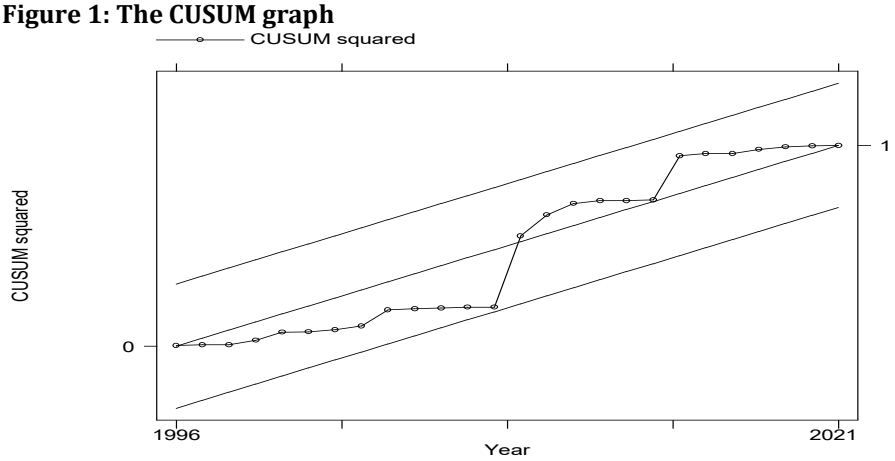
Ho: Normality. Source: Researcher's computation using secondary data

Table 8 presents the results of the skewness and kurtosis test for the model's residuals. The test confirms that the residuals, or the deviations between predicted and actual values, are normally distributed, a requirement of most statistical techniques. From the results, it is evident that the chi-square statistic and the skewness and kurtosis measures are significant at the 1% level, which is lower than 5%. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis of normality, and the residuals are not normally distributed. This is a common phenomenon that happens in small sample analyses like this one, and the smaller number of observations can account for non-normality. However, as contested by Maydeu (2017), non-normal residuals do not invalidate estimates of model reliability given that other such problems as heteroskedasticity do not occur. The model did not therefore, experience any such issues, so the research concluded that the observed non-normality did not invalidate the findings.

Test For Model Stability

The study performed a stability test on the model fitted by the Cumulative Sum (CUSUM) test. This entails testing recursive residuals and drawing them against potential break points of the model, employing 5% critical boundaries as the standard. The model is valid if the line of CUSUM lies within these critical boundaries. The results of this stability test are in Figure 2 below.

Figure 1: The CUSUM graph



Model Estimation

Owing to the mixture of Stationarity of the model variables and the short time series utilized within this study, the ARDL model was found to be the most suitable estimation technique because it is extremely common in cases of small samples where data is characteristic of order mixtures of integration. The biggest merit of the ARDL approach, as stated by Enkoro (2016), is that, if properly supplemented, it evades serial correlation and endogeneity problems. Hence, for the ARDL model, industrial development was regressed against government spending, tax revenue, and public debt. The most appropriate lag length for the model was 3 lags for all the variables in the model. This was ascertained via the ARDL model as a first step in obtaining the error correction version of the final ARDL model. The results of the ARDL model in error correction form are shown below in Table 8.

Table 8: Results Of The Estimated ARDL Model

Dependent Variable: D(Log of Manufacturing Value Added)			
Independent Variables	Coefficient.	Std. Error	P>|t|
ADJ Log Man. Value Added $_{L1}$	-1.114794	0.2825689	0.003
Long Run			
Log Govt. Consumption	0.6115281***	0.1732858	0.006
Log Value Added Tax	-0.0262704**	0.0111637	0.043
Log Short Term Debt	0.3005434**	0.1062143	0.020
Log GDP per capita	2.109499***	0.2028893	0.000
Short run			
Log Manufacturing Value Added $_{t-1}$	0.6991852**	0.2928703	0.041
Log Manufacturing Value Added$_{t-2}$	0.22261	0.2195815	0.337
D(Log Govt. Consumption)	0.0852731	0.2262928	0.715
Log Govt. Consumption$_{t-1}$	-0.023523	0.1727819	0.895
Log Govt. Consumption$_{t-2}$	0.3739117*	0.1728283	0.059
D(Log Value Added Tax)	0.0328177**	0.0139154	0.043
Log Value Added Tax$_{t-1}$	0.0084017	0.0103189	0.437
Log Value Added Tax$_{t-2}$	-0.0012962	0.0093431	0.893
D(Log Short Term Debt)	-0.219274**	0.0859405	0.031
Log Short Term Debt $_{t-1}$	-0.087349	0.072996	0.262
Log Short Term Debt-2	-0.2232965**	0.0719915	0.013
D(Log GDP per capita)	-1.333935	0.7364722	0.104
Log GDP per capita$_{t-1}$	-0.7411823	0.4291039	0.118
Log GDP per capita$_{t-2}$	-1.438493**	0.5101669	0.020
Constant	-5.782707	3.81797	0.164

Notes: D = First difference in variable. ***, **, * Indicate significance at 1%, 5% and 10% levels respectively. ARDL regression (3, 3, 3, 3, 3). Source: Researcher's ARDL computation using secondary data

In the brief run, public consumption expenditures do not play a strong or impactful role in manufacturing value added (MVA). Only after about two years does it play a weakly positive role, meaning that long-term increases in government consumption over time can support manufacturing output more and more. Government consumption in the long term, however, clearly has a significant and positive effect on MVA, reflecting the significance of steady government spending in maintaining long-term industrial growth. Moreover, lagged values of government consumption reflect that its own past levels remain strongly significant in explaining manufacturing production at short as well as long horizons.

Value-added tax (VAT) has a positive effect on MVA in the short run, in that an increase of one percent in VAT has a corresponding 0.033 percent increase in manufacturing production. This is, however, a temporary occurrence; in the long run, VAT has a highly negative effect whereby an increase of one percent leads to a drop in MVA by 0.0263 percent. This indicates that while VAT reforms may appear to be favorable at first, as time passes, higher taxation discourages manufacturing growth.

Relative debt over exports has a large negative effect on MVA in the short run and the rise of one percent in debt lowers output by 0.22 percent. The effect is most pronounced for debt levels two years ago, and the effect last year is less. Contrary to expectations, in the long run, short-term debt is a positive driver of MVA, and one percent higher debt has a 0.30 percent higher manufacturing output, which means that access to finance favors industry and investment.

GDP per capita has a very weak, negative, but statistically insignificant effect on MVA in the short run. A year later, the negative impact remains slight, but two years later, a one percent rise in GDP per capita equals a 1.44 percent decline in manufacturing output. On the other hand, in the long run, GDP per capita is beneficial to MVA, and a one percent increase in GDP per capita equals a 2.11 percent increase in manufacturing value added, indicating that overall economic growth eventually encourages industrial growth.

The adjustment error term, or the speed at which deviations from the long-run equilibrium are being returned towards it, has a coefficient of -1.114794. This suggests that the adjustment process is moderate and that when manufacturing value added lies off the level of equilibrium, the system is restored towards equilibrium at a moderate rate. The minus sign indicates that every positive deviation in the earlier period will reduce the adjusted logarithm of MVA in this period, reflecting the tendency of the system to restore equilibrium.

Model Characteristics

Model properties are different statistical measures that tell us how well a model performs, how reliable the model is, and how well the model explains relationships among variables. Model properties allow us to determine the quality and usability of the model in explaining and predicting outcomes. R-squared is a statistic expressing the proportion of variation in the dependent variable, in this case, manufacturing value added (MVA), explained by the independent variables. The R-squared of 0.9637 means the model explains about 96.37% of the variability in MVA, an exceedingly good fit and suggests that the predictors chosen explain most of the variability in manufacturing output.

Adjusted R-squared adjusts for the number of variables in the model and penalizes for excessive complexity. The adjusted R-squared of 0.8870 shows that after adjusting for the number of predictors, the model still explains about 88.70% of the variance in MVA. This is a positive indication that the explanatory power of the model is strong and is not artificially high due to the inclusion of too many variables. Log likelihood measures how well the model fits the data, with higher values showing a better fit. The log likelihood value of 45.7275 shows that the model provides a good description of the observed data.

Root mean square error (RMSE measures the average difference between predicted and observed values. With an RMSE of 0.0898, the model predictions are very close to actual values, demonstrating good forecasting ability. Collectively, these measures in total suggest the model is robust and reliable and effective for analyzing the dynamics of manufacturing. The R-squared values being high confirm that the independent variables account for most of the variation in MVA, and the low RMSE confirms the predictions are accurate. These attributes give confidence in using the model for interpreting and understanding the effects that government spending, tax policies, debt, and other determinants have on manufacturing value added.

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Discussion

This study sought to achieve three ultimate objectives which were to be realized through hypothesis testing of three hypotheses. The objectives of the study were to examine the separate effects of government expenditure, taxation, and cost of public debt on the manufacturing growth in Uganda. The hypotheses would be verified through the inspection of the corresponding parameter estimate-related p-values as specified in the empirical model in equation 1 of Chapter Three. The results of the study are presented below:

Effect of Government Expenditure on Manufacturing and Industrial Growth in Uganda

Objective two in this study was to examine the effect of government consumption on industrial growth in Uganda. The hypothesis for this objective was that government consumption heavily determines industrial growth. The ARDL model indicated both short-run and long-run impacts:

In the short term, the expenditure on government consumption does not appear to influence the manufacturing value-added (MVA). While a small positive effect is observed in the second lag, it is marginally significant. This indicates that short-run changes in government consumption have no direct impact or have a very small impact on manufacturing output. This may be because manufacturing has long procurement, production, and distribution lead times. Therefore, it takes time for changes in government spending to trickle through as higher demand and production.

On the contrary, the long-term perspective paints a completely different picture. Government consumption expenditure has a significantly positive and positive impact on MVA in the long run. Higher government spending raises aggregate demand, which leads manufacturing firms to raise production and investment. In addition, government expenditure can directly fund specified industries, fund investment in infrastructure,

induce innovation and research, and enable technological advances. These long-term effects accentuate the necessity of ongoing and sustained government policies and assistance to ensure steady growth and development in the manufacturing sector.

Effect of Tax on Industrial Growth in Uganda

Objective two of this study was to establish the contribution of tax towards industrial growth in Uganda, and the corresponding hypothesis was that there is a considerable effect of tax on industrial growth in Uganda. By means of the ARDL model, it was established that value-added tax has a positive and significant effect on manufacturing value-added output in the short run, and by this, it follows that the current ups and downs in value-added taxation do not minimize manufacturing production. This can be attributed to the marginal direct effect of value-added taxation on manufacturing operations. The effect is best captured by a number of variables that capture the ability of firms to pass on the cost of taxation to consumers or modify their production process to mitigate the impact of taxation. In the long term, VAT has a negative and significant contribution to manufacturing output, such that higher value-added taxation contributes to a fall in manufacturing output.

This is attributed to the adverse effects of taxation on the competitiveness and profitability of manufacturing. Higher value-added taxes increase production costs, which can lead to reduced investment, reduced innovation, and reduced competitiveness of domestic manufacturing companies in international and local markets. These long-run effects emphasize the need for careful consideration of tax policies to facilitate manufacturing growth and competitiveness.

Effect of Debt on Industrial Growth in Uganda

Objective three of the research aimed at examining the effect of debt on industrial growth in Uganda, and the hypothesis was that debt has a significant effect on industrial growth. The ARDL model yielded various effects in the short and long runs. Short-term debt in the short run negatively affects manufacturing output. Increasing debt relative to exports leads to manufacturing activity declining, meaning that excess borrowing by the government can crowd out funds that otherwise would fund the manufacturing sector. This is particularly vital in Uganda, where government borrowing from domestically is frequent.

In the long run, though, debt's effect is positive and significant. Cumulative debt appears to raise manufacturing value-added output since, most likely, borrowed money goes to sectors that enhance production, such as infrastructure and other industrial-supporting investments. This means that, while short-term borrowing may put pressure on resources, prudent use of debt can support industrial progress in the long run.

Conclusion

The results of the study can be summarized and explained as follows:

The strong positive correlation between government consumption and the output of the manufacturing sector in the long run is expected, but the insignificant short-run effect is surprising. It implies that short-run changes in government spending have no direct effect on manufacturing activity in the short run. It indicates the need for long-term and consistent government support for stimulating sustainable growth in the sector. The strong negative long-run impact of the value-added tax on manufacturing is a source of concern. Excessive taxation can stifle the activities of manufacturing, reducing competitiveness and profitability. Policy makers should consider the effects of tax policies on the sector and how best to ease the tax burden to spur industrial development.

Short-term debt positively affects manufacturing in the short term, which is expected as it provides immediate relief in terms of finance. The long-term effects, however, are a cause for concern. Overutilization of debt will undermine long-term stability, and thus manufacturers must control debt effectively to ensure sustainable growth. The lack of a significant relationship between GDP per capita and manufacturing in the short term was unexpected, suggesting that income changes in the short term do not have an immediate impact on manufacturing. The significant positive long-term relationship indicates the importance of sustained economic development and rising living standards in stimulating long-run growth in manufacturing. This suggests the need for a long-term policy to entrench industrial capability.

Cumulatively, these findings defy some common presumptions and offer essential conclusions. They point to the need for long-term government commitment, prudent tax policy, careful debt management, and long-term planning in order to build a strong and successful manufacturing sector. These conclusions should be applied by policymakers, investors, and stakeholders in order to make informed choices and strategies towards sustainable industrial development in Uganda.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the effects of each variable on manufacturing, the following policy recommendations can be made from the study.

As there is a positive long-run relationship between government consumption and manufacturing production, it is incumbent on the part of policymakers to provide sustained and regular government support to the manufacturing sector. This can be achieved by making targeted investments in infrastructure development, research and development activities, and capacity-building initiatives. Policy also needs to be formulated to tackle bureaucratic bottlenecks, reduce red tape, and provide an enabling business environment for manufacturers to perform efficiently.

Strong negative long-run correlation between value-added tax (VAT) and manufacturing production suggests that policymakers have to carefully craft tax policies. The policymakers should estimate the impact of VAT rates on the manufacturing sector and attempt to mitigate the burden. This can involve giving tax exemptions or tax rebates for particular manufacturing activities or products, implementing VAT rebates to exporters, or conducting regular reviews to ensure VAT rates are conducive to the growth of the manufacturing industry.

While short-term debt might provide a boost to manufacturing in the near term, policymakers need to encourage prudent debt management. This includes instituting mechanisms to monitor and regulate borrowing by manufacturers, enabling access to long-term financing options, and providing access to financial literacy programs to allow manufacturers to make fully informed choices about debt management. Encouraging diversification of funding sources and promoting equity financing can also reduce over-reliance on short-term debt.

The positive long-run relationship between GDP per capita and manufacturing production underscores the importance of overall economic development. Policy makers have to prioritize policies that lead to inclusive economic growth, such as education and skill development spending, infrastructural growth, and technology absorption. Policies for the reduction in income inequality, improvement in access to finance for small and medium enterprises, and innovation and entrepreneurship development have to be taken up as well, since these result in long-run manufacturing growth.

Limitations and Areas For Further Study

The results of the research, as outlined in the analysis, are a product of correlation analysis and regression techniques. However, correlation does not necessarily imply causation. The research does not provide a causal relationship between the manufacturing output and the independent variables. Other unseen products or variables that are outside the scope of the analysis may influence the manufacturing activities. Therefore, one has to exercise caution when concluding causal relationships solely based on the research findings.

The research conclusions are derived from secondary sources of data. The quality and consistency of the data used may impair the validity of the findings. Data limitations to note include measurement errors, missing information, and variability in the quality of data between various sources. Additionally, sample size and study time period may limit the generalizability of the findings to other settings or time periods. Future studies would be advised to use more comprehensive and precise sources of data.

There is the possibility of omitted variable bias because the research is centered on a narrow number of variables. Technological progress, trade policy, market forces, and political stability are among the variables that could influence manufacturing output, but are not included. Omitting these variables could result in a partial explanation for the determinants of manufacturing. Future studies can incorporate a larger set of variables to account for a broader range of factors that will affect manufacturing outcomes.

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Rebuilding The Foundation To Mitigate Moral Decadence in Contemporary Society: An Integration of Ethical Leadership in Parenting (ELIP)

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Abstract: Parents are children's first compass in the journey of life. Moral decadence in contemporary society is alarming even among teenagers, thus demanding a home-based approach to mitigate crimes, and incivility. This explorative study engaged a descriptive design to assess the integration of ethical leadership experienced at home, including parenting climate's influence on morals and students' character development. The multistage sampling technique resulted in 292 sample size drawn from Agbado/Oke-Odo, Zone 2, Education District 1, Alimosho, Lagos State. A 26-item questionnaire was used for data collection with content analysis of Ethical Leadership Theory. The findings showed parents often displayed ethical characteristics while the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development was very good. Similarly, there is a significant relationship between the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development and the decision-making process engaged by secondary school students. However, 6% respondents reported sexual abuse at home. The study conceptualised five ethical leadership tasks in parenting (ELIP) which demand parents to Model, Teach, Create, Practice and Encourage (MTCPE), to mitigate moral decadence in society. The study recommended that sexually abused students should report to the school authority for professional help. Parents are advised to adopt especially positive discipline to sustain good behaviours in children rather than negative discipline of physical beatings and emotional abuse.

Keywords: *Contemporary society, ethical leadership, moral decadence, parenting, values education*

1. Introduction

Moral values are foundational principles to a peaceful and well-bonded society for national development. Parents consciously promoting values education from home will make it easier for the school's task of transforming children into responsible citizens. However, many children are abandoned to themselves either uncared for, lack parental active involvement or are without loving guidance which results in dysfunctional behaviours among young people. Economic pressures on parents for survival including the negative influence of social media seem overwhelming to many parents. Parenting in the modern era shows many parents neglect intentional influence as role models in raising their children. Nigeria is filled with young people who display challenging behaviours such as a lack of accountability, an entitlement attitude, promiscuity, substance abuse, disrespect, and incivility resulting in social unrest and an increase in crime waves (Emmanuel, Daniel & Oluchukwu, 2024; p.124). Without promotion of values through strategic leadership in parenting, the spate of moral decadence due to inconsistent standards and absence of role models at home might result in blurred lines of morality, increasing lawlessness, irresponsible, and dishonest citizens in Nigeria.

Moral Decadence in Contemporary Nigeria and Values Education

There is a moral crisis in contemporary society across many societies (Frýdková, 2013, p. 2308). Similarly, Adedini and Folaranmi (2025) posited that Nigeria needs moral regeneration due to the level of moral decadence. Alvi, Saleemi and Asad (2022) described moral decadence as moral corruption or depravity which occurs with the degradation of morals. Moral decadence refers to deviation from and deterioration of the societal values system. There is a widespread prevalence of social vices among many Nigerian youths due to materialistic trends and a lack of perseverance to actualize goals. The increase in moral vices includes gangster lifestyle, examination malpractices, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, kidnapping for ransom and ritual killings, cultism, and internet fraud (Omosehin, Haruna, & Odeyemi, 2022a, pp. 46-47). Alvi et al. (2022) stated that moral decadence in a society reduces the quality of human life because morality is the foundation of every human society. Similarly, it negatively affects the academic performance of students hence, hindering the attainment of national educational goals (Nnadi, Uzoekwe, Ofojebe & Chigbu 2022). The rot of morality among Nigerian youths was reported as a social concern (Omosehin, et al. 2022a, & 2023b; Nnadi et al., 2022; Adedini & Folaranmi, 2025). Moreover, a nation's level of moral integrity is a predictor of national growth and development (Adedini & Folaranmi, 2025).

Values are foundational tools to shape the behaviors of individuals on what is right and what is wrong. Values serve as a moral compass to choices, perception, decision-making, and coping skills to life's complexity (Hazra & Mittal, 2018). Values education is character education (Koç & Yayla, 2022, p. 21); hence, Omosehin, Haruna, & Odeyemi (2023b, p.2) argued that character is the societal foundation for building a strong community. Despite the Nigeria's government efforts at promoting values through harmonised National Values Education [NVE] and Civic Education school curricula, yet moral decline and crimes across communities indicates gap in students' academic exposure and social reality (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2012; Koç & Yayla, 2022, p. 21; Emmanuel, et al., 2024; p. 126). Although, causes of crimes are multifaceted coming from home, peer influence, urbanization, governance issues; and injustice (FME, 2012; pp.108; Emmanuel, et al., 2024; p.129). The high level of moral decadence in the 21st century was attributed to the falling standard of parenting in (Omosehin et al., 2022a & 2023b, p.3). Parents through parenting tasks occupy a fundamental, strategic position in the values development of children. Parents are expected to bond with children for emotional support engaging the right parenting style while rules are set to guide children's decision-making and actions (Prabhu, Sasikal, & Devi, 2023, Omosehin, et al., 2023). Citing Meng, Alvi et al. (2022, p.2 & 4) affirmed morality as the heart of leadership because the essence of the human soul is in compassion, empathy and kindness it displays. The home environment was responsible for degradation in morals among the young people due to poor parenting (Alvi, et al., 2022; Nnadi et al. 2022).

Ethical Leadership Theory (ELT): Nature and Impacts

Leading by influence is essential to the management of a group (Theriono & Lianto, 2024). Ethical leadership, introduced by Trevino et al. in 2000 evolves with time as different scholars' contributed to the understanding and dimensions of the concept (Bajpal, Dabral, Singh & Purohit, 2024). Ethical leadership (EL) is a combination of behaviour and leadership style with such leaders being principled decision-makers. EL was a response to scandals happening among political and corporate organization leadership (Theriono & Lianto, 2024). Langlois et al., cited in Stavropoulou, Ooms, Rovithis and Straoumpouki (2024; p. 2228) described ethical leadership as a social practice that enables leaders to make expert judgment with the capacity to act acceptably and responsibly. Bajpal et al. (2024, p. 316), and Theriono and Lianto (2024, p.87) cited Brown et al., definition of EL as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate behaviour through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making." Ethics is concerned about "character" and "customs" regarding what should be done and what people should be. Therefore, ethics is at the heart of good leadership (Kings et al., 2023).

Ethical leadership focuses on modeling behaviours through influence during interpersonal relationships (Freeman & Stewart, 2006; p.2; King et al., 2023; Theriono & Lianto, 2024). The outcomes of EL influence are: perception of a leader as a credible role-model, communication of ethical standards and upholding accountability through the use of reinforcement and punishment to ensure rules are followed (King et al., 2023; Theriono & Lianto, 2024, p.91). Ethical leadership is necessary to transform a corrupt and discriminatory society into a functional, just, and socially responsible one. Ethical principles include respect, justice, honesty and building community/teamwork with others. Hence, ethical leaders promote trust, unity, the group's image, commitment to actions, and happiness of group members (Ndedi & Nisabwe, 2021; Bajpai et al., 2024, p.315; Stavropoulou et al., 2024; p. 2229). The central goal of ethical leadership is service to others based on compassion but people fail by not following the morals demanded from others (Monahan, 2012, p.63). Hence, the value of ethical leadership in the social environment promotes the components of moral excellence which are fundamental to interpersonal relationships including open communication (Stavropoulou et al., 2024; p. 2228 & 2230; Bajpal et al., 2024, p.316, Theriono & Lianto, 2024). Despite the broad research works on EL, Kings et al. (2023) however, observed that ethical leadership is yet to be fully explored.

2. Parenting: A Multi-dimensional Task

Parents are persons who "provide primary care to a child" (Hassanah, Zamroni, Dardiri, Indartono, & Supardi, 2018) either biological, adoptive or extended family members who nurture and protect a child. Ultimately, parents are the first teachers of children (Hazra & Mittal, 2018; Prabhu, et al., 2023). Parents are primarily responsible for children's value orientation while the school plays a complementary role (Frýdková, 2013, p.2307-2308). Parenting as stated by Kretchmar-Hendricks cited in Omosehin et al. (2023, p. 2) is the process of raising children with adequate provision and care to ensure children's healthy development into adulthood.

The tasks of parenting, according to Adewale (2009), are very demanding involving joint efforts of both parents with investment of time, consistency, and prayers, as a call to service which cannot be delegated to other persons. The parents' roles were categorised into four by Salau (2019) namely teaching, coaching, mentoring, and cheerleading. However, Ahmad (2013), Kurt (2023) and Omosehin et al. (2023) noted that modernization, technology and digitization influence make parenting in contemporary society a very complex task. The 21st-century digital world has shifted family dynamics including perspectives on parents' roles, social expectations and considerations for children. Children once considered generational blessings resulting in large family size, are now economically expensive leading urban parents in Nigeria to prefer small family size (Ahmad, 2013). Therefore, parenting impact is not limited to the individual child alone rather it affects society's economic, political and cultural activities (Omosehin et al., 2023, p.3). In addition, parenting is influenced by factors such as age, gender, pattern of engagement and quality time spent with children. Sequel to the above, it can be concluded that parenting is a dynamic, actionable and complex process aimed at a child's proper development (Ahmad, 2013). Home/parent is the foundation, and primary environment for values acquisition and character development (Koç & Yayla, 2022, p. 21). The parenting climate is influenced by the interaction between parents and the child. Similarly, fathers are required to engage (interact), be available (attentive), and responsibly supply resources (Ahmad, 2013; Hassanah et al., 2018; Hazra & Mittal, 2018; Candelanza et al., 2021; Omosehin, et al., 2023). Therefore, Ahmad (2013) concludes that parenting is an important social role.

Concerns with Parenting

Frýdková (2013, p.2308) identified the issue of discrepancy of value orientation from family, school and the media thereby demanding the challenge should be addressed. The discrepancy is attributed to the alteration and disappearance of traditional values. Ahmad (2013, p.660) pointed out that anti-social behaviours in Nigeria are connected with child abuse including neglect that children go through. Starvrinides and Nikiforou (2013), and Hassanah et al. (2023) reported the absence of parents and use of extreme disciplinary measures, leading to a call for attention on how parents engage with children (Ahmad, 2013; Hassanah et al., 2018; Kurt, 2023). Furthermore, Ergin and Karataş (2014) reported found conflicting values were taught by family and school. Equally, scholars stated that many parents struggled to effectively promote moral values (Ahmad, 2013; Hazra & Mittal, 2018). Aggressive behaviour and emotional problems indicate abusive parenting from extreme punishment or inadequate care for a child (Starvrinides & Nikiforou, 2013; Hazra & Mittal, 2018). Furthermore, Diana Blumberg Baumrind on the Pillar Theory associated children's behaviours to parenting styles. Parenting styles influence on pattern of socialization, responsiveness, and moral development (Candelanza, Queenilyn, Buot, & Merin, 2021). Notably, parents are responsible for children's ethical competence (Baumrind, 2012; Hassanah, et al., 2018; Cowan, Cowan, Weinstein & Owens, 2020). Omosehin et al. (2023, p.8) pointed at several issues limiting effective parenting in Nigeria amongst which are inadequate parenting skills, women's pursuit of career/business goal, lack of parental attention, father's absenteeism, lack of parent-child bonding, poor parenting styles, growing number of single parents tagged as baby mama or baby daddy and children's uncontrolled dependency on information technology devices. Meanwhile, Lewis (2022) emphasised that the lack of parents acting as role models to children is a critical cause of character deficiency. Equally, on the way forward, Omosehin et al. (2023) proposed that parents need to become role models, build relationships, be flexible in parenting style, keep gathering useful information, and uphold the God-factor without giving up as they continue in child raising. Therefore, Kayiran and Bağçeci (2018) in Koç and Yayla (2022, p. 21) suggested finding family models that can be engaged for values acquisition to reduce crimes and strained relationships in organizations. The literature showed that previous studies looked into parenting styles and effects on students' academic performance including behaviors. Also, ethical leadership studies have concentrated on private and public organizations to assess the influence on employees' performance outcomes. This study hereby, contributes to the unique application of ethical leadership in the parent-child social context providing a conceptual outlook of expected parents' responsibility to the children.

Research Purpose

This study investigated ethical characteristics experienced by parents through students while proposing a strategy to mitigate moral decadence in Nigeria. The specific objectives sought to:

- Find out the extent of ethical leadership characteristics students witnessed in their parents at home.
- Investigate the quality of influence parenting has on students' moral development.
- Develop a conceptual framework for ethical leadership in parenting to mitigate moral decadence.

Research Questions

- What is the extent of ethical leadership characteristics that students experienced from parents at home?
- What is the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development?
- How is ethical leadership conceptualized in parenting to mitigate moral decadence?

Hypotheses

HO_1: The quality of parenting influence on moral development has no significant correlation on decision - making process engaged by students.

HO_2: The ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents have no significant relationship with the prevailing nature of child abuse that students experienced at home.

3. Methodology

The study employed an explorative, descriptive design to determine the extent of ethical characteristics parents displayed to develop moral values in children. The observed outcome guided the ELiP conceptual model to address moral decadence. A mixed-method data collection approach was engaged using a 26-item questionnaire with content analysis. The instrument had content validity while the reliability range was determined through the test-retest method resulting in a 0.72 Cronbach Alpha internal consistency.

The study area was Alimosho Local Government Area (LGA), a suburb, the north-end part of Lagos State. The target population was Zone 2 of Education District 1, in Agbado/Oke-Odo Local Council Development Area (LCDA). Alimosho LGA is commercially active accommodating both middle and low-income dwellers. However, congestion, crimes and noise pollution are concerns in the area (Guardian Nigeria News, 2018; Akaninyene & Ogunbanwo, 2023). There are eight senior secondary schools within Agbado/Oke-Odo from which 292 sample size was randomly selected in a multi-stage sampling technique. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis while data were presented through tables, figures and text narration. The "means" was based on a 0.8 interval range for a 5-point Likert scale (Benhima, 2023).

4. Results and Findings

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Participants Class	Gender	Age Group	Cultural Background	Parents Education Level	Parents' Number of Children	Family Members Lived with
S.S.1 =158 (54.1%)	Male = 140 (47.95%)	13-15 = 210 (71.9%)	Yoruba = 204 (69.9%)	Illiterates = **12 (4.1%)**	1-2 = 55 (18.8%)	Both Parents = 239 (81.9%)
S.S.2 = 134 (45.9%)	Female = 152 (52.05%)	16-19 = 82 (28.1%)	Igbo = 70 (23.97%)	Primary Sch. Cert. =66 (22.6%)	3-4 = 177 (60.6%)	Single Parent = 45 (15.4%)
			Hausa/Fulani = 6 (2.1%)	Secondary Sch. Cert. =0 (0%)	5-6 = 56 (19.2%)	Step-Parent = 8 (2.7%)
			Niger-Delta = 12 (4.1%)	NCE/ National Diploma 62 (21.2%)	7.8= 4 (1.4%)	
				University degree = 152 (52.1%)		

Total: 292	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**

Table 1 revealed that the study's sample of 292 had more mid-teenage (13-15 years) respondents at 71.9% (210). There were more Yoruba participants at 69.9% (204) reflecting ethnic concentration in the area of study. Also, very few respondents at 4.1% were from an illiterate home. The study showed that large families of 7-8 children are very few (1.4%). Furthermore, family composition showed 81.9% (239) of students lived with both parents.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of ethical leadership characteristics that students experienced from parents at home?

Table 2: Extent of ethical leadership characteristics students experienced in Parenting

S/N	Statement	A (5)	O (4)	S (3)	R (2)	N (1)	Total %	Av. Mean	Remarks
1	My parents are always honest when speaking	222 76.0%	42 14.4%	28 9.6%	0 0%	0 0%	1362 93.2%	4.66	Always
2	I see my parents act in kindness to other people	239 81.8%	35 12.0%	5 11.7%	13 4.5%	- 0%	1376 94.3%	4.71	Always
3	My parents do apologize to me when they make mistakes	80 27.4%	64 21.9%	105 36.0%	31 10.6%	12 4.1%	1045 71.6%	3.58	Often
4	We discuss justice in my family	117 40.1%	47 16.1%	64 21.9%	35 12.0%	29 9.9%	1064 72.9%	3.64	Often
5	I learn about compassion from my parents	206 70.5%	51 17.5%	18 6.2%	17 5.8%	- 0%	1322 90.6%	4.53	Always
6	My parents tell me about the consequences of my actions	210 71.9%	42 14.4%	40 13.7%	- 0%	- 0%	1338 91.6%	4.58	Always
7	I interact safely with my parents	211 72.3%	29 9.9%	22 7.5%	18 6.2%	12 4.1%	1280 87.7%	4.38	Always
8	I am comfortable expressing my feelings to my parents	181 62.0%	35 12.0%	64 21.9%	- 0%	12 4.1%	1249 85.6%	4,28	Always
9	My parents permit me to try new things	158 54.1%	64 21.9%	58 19.9%	12 4.1%	- 0%	1244 85.2%	4.26	Always
10	I get rewards for my good behavior	140 47.9%	88 30.1%	35 12%	24 8.2%	5 1.7%	1210 82.9%	4.14	Often
11	I am told the reasons behind the rules set by my parents	134 45.9%	82 28.0%	64 21.9%	6 2.1%	6 2.1%	1208 82.7%	4.13	Often
12	My parents make me think about my actions for improvement	175 59.9%	76 26.0%	23 7.9%	18 6.2%	0 0%	1284 88.0%	4.40	Always
13	I joined my parent to do community service (volunteering)	35 12.0%	54 18.5%	68 23.3%	47 16.1%	88 30.1%	777 53.2%	2.66	Sometimes
14	My parents discuss societal problems at home with me	88 30.1%	82 28.1%	58 19.9%	35 12.1%	29 9.9%	1041 71.3%	3.57	Often
15	I am encouraged to consider other people's opinions on issues	117 40.1%	76 26.0%	64 21.9%	12 4.1%	23 7.9%	1107 75.8%	3.79	Often
	Total: 292X15= 4380	**2313 52.8%**	**867 19.8%**	**716 16.4%**	**268 6.1%**	**216 4.9%**	**81.8%**	**4.09 Std. Dev.= 0.55**	**Often**

Key to the Options: Always (A), Often (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N)

Table 2 showed parents' display of ethical characteristics with 52.8% and 19.8% stating always and often respectively. However, 4.9% indicated their parents never showed ethical characteristics. The result's central mean is 4.09 representing 81.8%. Respondents' opinions moderately spread away from the mean. Hence, Table 2 findings showed parents often displayed ethical characteristics through parenting.

Research Question 2: What is the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development?

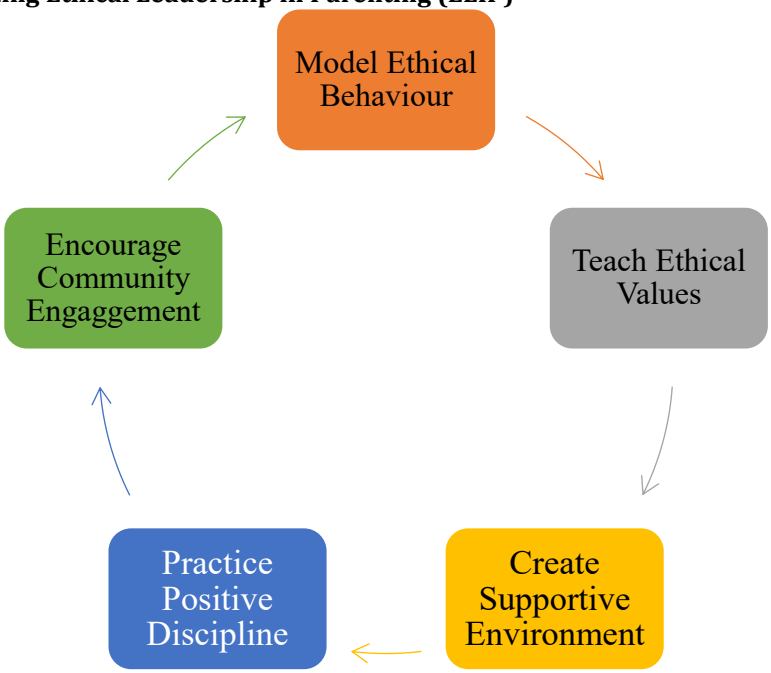
Table 3: Quality of parental influence on students' moral development.

S/N	Statement My parents' actions:	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	Very Good 4	Excellent 5	Total %	Av. Mean	Remarks
16	Gives me self-confidence	6 2.1%	6 2.1%	64 21.9%	58 19.9%	158 54.1%	1232 84.4%	4.21	Excellent
17	Reduces negative behaviours from me	7 2.4%	12 4.1%	35 12.0%	57 19.5%	181 62.0%	1269 86.9%	4.40	Excellent
18	Makes me think deeper about issues I confront daily	5 1.7%	8 2.7%	42 14.4%	129 44.2%	108 37.0%	1203 82.4%	4.12	Very Good
19	Makes me have compassion towards other people	0 0%	3 1.0%	79 27.1%	101 34.6%	109 37.3%	1192 81.6%	4.10	Very Good
20	Inspire me to be accountable for my actions	0 0%	17 5.8%	59 20.2%	87 29.8%	129 44.2%	1204 82.5%	4.12	Very Good
21	Develop moral principles in me to make decisions	0 0%	5 1.7%	36 12.3%	105 36.0%	146 50.0%	1268 86.9%	4.34	Excellent
22	Influence my views about life	0 0%	6 2.1%	88 30.1%	64 21.9%	134 45.9%	1202 82.3%	4.11	Very Good
	Total: 292x7 = 2,044	**18 0.9%**	**57 2.8%**	**403 19.7%**	**601 29.4%**	**965 47.2%**	**83.9%**	**4.2 Std.Dev.= 0.12**	**Very Good**

Keys to the Responses: Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good and Excellent

Research Question 3: How is ethical leadership conceptualised in parenting to mitigate moral decadence?

Figure 1: Conceptualizing Ethical Leadership in Parenting (ELIP)



Source: Author (2025), Ethical Leadership in Parenting (ELIP).

Ethical leadership is conceptualized as a five-step cyclical process to mitigate moral decadence. ELIP shows parents as models influencing students' morals through intentional, participatory actions taken to mould children. ELIP will benefit children from 0 to 18 years. Thus, relevant to train children in preschools (0-4years), elementary (Basic 1-6), Junior high school (Basic 7-9) and senior high school (S.S 1-3). ELIP builds children to be leaders with life skills of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and a supportive social responsibility mindset.

Table 3 reveals quality of parental influence on students' moral development was rated 83.9% while 47.2% students reported excellent influence, 0.9% stated poor parental influence on moral development. The aggregate central mean showed 4.20 while the responses were closely cluttered around central mean at 0.12 standard deviation. Table 3 findings therefore, indicated **a very good** quality of parental influence on students' moral development

Hypotheses

HO_1: The quality of parenting influence on moral development has no significant correlation with the decision-making process engaged by students.

Table 4: Relationship between the quality of Parenting Influence and the decision-making process of students

Variables	Mean	Std	N	R	Sig
Parenting Influence	18.52	2.26	292	0.68	.003
Quality of the decision-making process	28.31	3.73	292		

The result in Table 4 shows the relationship between parenting influence on students' moral development and the quality of the decision-making process engaged by students. Table 4 shows an 18.52 mean score for parenting influence with a 2.26 standard deviation and a 28.31 mean score for the decision-making process with a 3.73 standard deviation. Furthermore, the result shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between parenting influence and students' decision-making process ($r = 0.68$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that there is a significant relationship between the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development and the decision-making process engaged by secondary school students.

HO_2: The ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents have no significant relationship with the prevailing nature of child abuse that students experience at home.

Table 5: Relationship between ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents and the nature of Child abuse

Variables	Mean	Std	N	R	Sig
Child Abuse	17.32	3.38	292	0.54	.012
Parent Ethical Leadership	22.01	2.96	292		

Table 5 shows the relationship between ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents and the nature of child abuse students experienced at home. The table showed a 17.32 mean score for child abuse experienced with a 3.38 standard deviation and a 22.01 mean score for ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents with a 2.96 standard deviation. In addition, the table shows a negative and statistically non-significant relationship between the nature of child abuse students experienced and ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents ($r = 0.54$, $P < 0.05$). This implied that there is no significant relationship between the nature of child abuse students experienced and the ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents.

Discussion

The study's findings showed parents often displayed ethical characteristics. This finding supported Hazra and Mittal (2018) on the use of values (foundational tools) by parents (moral compass) to shape students' behaviours in dealing with life's complexity. In essence, the students acquired moral values from home as described by Koç and Yayla (2022, p. 21). In contrast, the finding does not reflect Ergin and Karataş (2014)

view which found conflicting values taught by family and school. Hence, moral decline is beyond home as the result supported multifaceted ideas pointed by FME (2012; pp.108) and Emmanuel et al. (2024; p.129).

Similarly, the study found that parents have a very good influence on students' moral development. The outcome aligned with Prabhu et al. (2023) that the home through parenting is fundamental in promoting values as parents' bonding and setting rules will create support for children. Similarly, the finding tallied with associating a child's behaviors with to influence of parenting styles through the pattern of socialization, responsiveness, and moral development. Hence, parents are responsible for a child's ethical competence (Baumrind, 2012; Hassanah, et al., 2018; Cowan, et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings showed all forms of abuse are encountered by students at home with beating, harsh words and sexual abuse happening. The confirmation of varying degrees of abuse aligned with concerns on extreme disciplinary measures raised by Stavrinides and Nikiforou, (2013) and Hassanah, et al. (2023). Parents who abused children in contrast do not meet up to Hassanah et al (2018) quality description of parents in terms of protection. Thus supporting Ahmad (2013), and Hazra and Mittal (2018), that some parents still struggle to promote moral values in children. Similarly, the finding admitted to aggressive behaviours in children as an indicator of abusive parenting due to extreme punishment or inadequate care (Stavrinides & Nikiforou, 2013; Hazra & Mittal, 2018).

In line with Ahmad (2013), Hassanah et al. (2018) and Kurt (2023), attention should be focused on how parents engage with children. Similarly, Kayiran and Bağçeci (2018) cited in Koç & Yayla (2022, p. 21) advocated for families to have learning models to acquire morals. Scholars suggested parents model expected values to the children (Lewis, 2022, Omosehin et al., 2023) which is related to ethical leadership demands that leaders act as role models while engaging in effective communication and upholding standards through the use of reinforcement or punishment (Freeman & Stewart, 2006; p.2; King et al., 2023; Theriono & Lianto, 2024). In ELIP, parents' ethical roles are to: **model, teach, create, practice and encourage (MTCPE)** students to follow their footsteps**.** The cyclical process is learning by observing parents' actions through encouragement. Parents modeling ethical behaviour is the foundation for children to cultivate values.

Therefore, the proposed ELIP model to engage with children for moral values requires parental tasks to include: **Model:** demonstrate ethical behaviours by treating others with kindness (respect) and apologize/admit to mistakes made for children to emulate. **Teach:** through discussion of moral issues with real-world situations as a practical way to understand values. **Create:** provide a supportive, safe and welcoming home environment where each child can express his/her thoughts/feelings. The home should encourage flexibility and discovery for learning. **Positive discipline:** Reinforce good behaviors by communicating reasons behind set rules with consequences of breaking such rules. Clarification promotes obedience while errors committed should be reflected on to improve behaviour. **Community engagement:** encouraging children to volunteer or serve in the community. Social issues and solutions should be discussed for the inclusion of diverse perspectives.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study found that parents often display ethical leadership characteristics at home with the quality of parenting influencing students' moral development. Although, physical abuse (beating) is common at home with few reported sexual abuse, the findings revealed that the prevailing nature of child abuse at home has no significant relationship with ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents. The study contributes to the ELIP model to enhance parents' role-modeling responsibility. Therefore, these findings differ from other researches that state that moral decadence was caused by parenting because parents in the Agbado/Oke-Odo community often display ethical characteristics which influence students' moral development.

Regarding beating the children, the study recommends that parents be enlightened (through school counseling and workshops) on other forms of reinforcement and punishment such as withdrawal of benefits, having deep conversation to understand reasons for actions, extra activities or chores for disobedience, et c. Similarly, parents need to be intentional in making time out to emotionally bond with their children to reduce the feelings of neglect through involvement in children's school activities, family vacation, and daily conversation on how

the day is being spent. Schools should provide accessible and trustworthy counseling services to support students who have suffered abuse especially incest for timely reporting and professional assistance for justice.

Further Research

Further studies should be carried out on other causes of moral decadence in the community. Also, an experimental study is encouraged to assess the impact of the ELIP model on students' civic engagement and moral behaviours.

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Vocationalizing Secondary and Higher Education Curricula in Ethiopia: Advancing Educational Relevance, Skill-Based Pedagogy and Employability

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Abstract: This study critically investigates Ethiopia's ongoing efforts to vocationalize secondary and higher education curricula as a strategy to enhance relevance, employability, and socio-economic transformation. Unlike prior research that treats Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in isolation, the study conceptualizes vocationalization as a system-wide integration of competency-based pedagogy. Employing a *policy-to-practice analytical framework*, it reviews national policy documents and comparative international experiences to evaluate implementation progress and challenges. The findings reveal persistent gaps, including inadequate work-based learning opportunities, shortages of qualified educators, fragmented governance structures, and cultural stigmas that limit student participation. Comparative insights from countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Singapore, South Korea, China, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana, and South Africa demonstrate promising design options, including modular curricula, employer-led assessment, recognition of prior learning, and sustainable financing models. The analysis shows that Ethiopia's reforms remain fragmented, with limited employer engagement and poor alignment with national industrialization priorities. The study contributes to the literature by offering a context-sensitive reform pathway, emphasizing sequenced strategies that integrate vocationalization as a transformative driver rather than a technical add-on. It argues that embedding adaptive competencies in education is vital for inclusive growth and industrial transformation in Ethiopia.

Keywords: *Employability, industry linkage, skills-based pedagogy, TVET integration, vocationalization.*

1. Introduction

The pressures of globalization, industrialization, and technological change increasingly require young people to leave school not only with academic knowledge, but also with the technical skills, problem-solving abilities, and entrepreneurial capacities necessary to thrive in dynamic labor markets. In this context, Ethiopia stands at a critical juncture where demographic, economic, and policy imperatives converge to challenge its education system more sharply than ever before. While global debates on vocationalization often stress the balance between academic and practical knowledge, Ethiopia's case is fundamentally different: the country faces one of Africa's fastest-growing youth populations, chronic underemployment, and limited formal job creation. Nearly two million youth enter the labor market each year, yet formal job growth lags, leaving secondary and college graduates— estimated at around 20% nationally and reaching over 25% among urban youth —among those most affected by joblessness and underemployment (World Bank, 2022; ILO, 2021; CSA, 2021).

This study departs from existing scholarship in three ways. First, unlike prior studies (e.g., Amarech et al., 2024; Shewangizaw, 2024; World Bank, 2024; Abie, 2023; Genene et al., 2023; Samson et al., 2023; Mitiku et al., 2021; Alemu, 2020; Likisa, 2018; Demissew & Mutendwahothe, 2015) that have mostly examined technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a siloed sub-sector, this study emphasizes the broader vocationalization of curricula across secondary and tertiary education—a system-wide transformation essential to bridging the gap between academic output and labor market needs**.** Second, unlike descriptive reviews that catalog challenges, this study employs a *policy-to-practice analytical framework* to systematically explore how ambitious policy intentions such as *the 2008 TVET strategy*, *TVET Proclamation No. 954/2016, the 2018–2030 Education Development Roadmap*, and *the 2021/22 curriculum reforms* fail to translate into effective pedagogy, authentic skills acquisition, and employability outcomes. Third, the analysis situates Ethiopia's experience within *comparative international lessons*, but argues for a *contextually adapted* model rather than simple policy borrowing, highlighting Ethiopia's unique structural constraints: weak industry linkages, high informality, cultural stigma against vocational routes, and uneven institutional capacity.

The prevailing problem is thus not only the shortage of jobs, but also the mismatch between the knowledge-oriented state of curricula and the competency-oriented needs of Ethiopia's transforming economy. Unless Ethiopia fundamentally reimagines its education system by vocationalizing curricula at both secondary and

tertiary levels, the country risks perpetuating a cycle of frustrated youth, low productivity, and stalled industrialization.

Central to this inquiry is the question: *What would it take to vocationalize Ethiopia's curricula in ways that are genuinely skills-based and capable of producing adaptive, employable graduates who can drive the country's socio-economic transformation?*

2. Conceptual and Analytical Framework

Novel Integration and Analytical Depth

The novelty of this study lies in its *integrated approach*. Existing domestic studies tend to treat vocationalization as a narrow TVET adjunct, overlooking the fact that secondary schools and universities remain predominantly academic, with little emphasis on applied competencies. This study argues that vocationalization must be *system-wide*—embedding skill-based pedagogy across the whole continuum of education. Moreover, it adds a *comparative perspective*, extracting lessons not only from established dual systems like Germany and Switzerland but also from African peers like Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana that are experimenting with competency-based models under similar resource constraints.

Key Concepts

The study clarifies three interconnected concepts—*vocationalization, skills-based pedagogy*, and *employability*—framing them as ***strategic levers*** for aligning education with Ethiopia's labor-market realities.

Vocationalization of Curriculum

Vocationalization of the curriculum refers to the intentional integration of work-relevant competencies, modular learning outcomes, and work-based learning (WBL) experiences into education programs at secondary, college, or higher education levels. The goal is to equip learners with practical, employable skills while retaining essential foundational literacies (reading, numeracy, science) and broader 21st-century capabilities, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability (MOE, 2008; ILO, 2020a).

Vocationalization can take multiple forms, including: (i) standalone vocational tracks embedded within secondary and/or higher education curricula; (ii) modular competency-based programs that allow stacking of micro-credentials toward larger qualifications; and (iii) integrated work-study models, such as *dual apprenticeships*, which alternate classroom instruction with company-based learning (Euler, 2017; Bonoli & Wilson, 2021). International evidence demonstrates that countries with strong dual-track systems—Germany, Switzerland, and Singapore—achieve both high employability and pathways to higher education, indicating that vocationalization need not compromise academic progression (SERI, 2023; SkillsFuture Singapore, 2023).

Skills-Based Pedagogy

Skills-based pedagogy is an instructional approach organized around explicit, measurable competencies, both occupational (e.g., welding, carpentry, ICT) and transversal (e.g., communication, teamwork, digital literacy, environmental awareness). Instruction, learning activities, and assessments are performance-oriented, with learners demonstrating mastery through authentic tasks that mirror workplace challenges (ILO, 2020a; ILO, 2020b).

Key elements include:
Competency clarity: Well-defined learning outcomes that articulate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes or values learners must acquire.
Authentic performance tasks: Simulated or real workplace tasks that replicate job requirements.
Competency-based assessment: Formative and summative evaluations that measure observable skills, rather than rote knowledge alone.

Evidence from TVET systems in Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa shows that skills-based pedagogy improves labor-market relevance, strengthens employer confidence in graduates, and promotes lifelong learning habits (KNQA, 2023; UNESCO, 2020; DHET, 2022).

Employability

Employability is a dynamic combination of technical, core, and social skills, coupled with work experience and labor market signaling, that enables individuals to access decent employment or entrepreneurship opportunities (Cedefop, 2017; ILO, 2010/2020). Employability is multidimensional, encompassing:

Technical and occupational competencies: Job-specific skills acquired through training and practice.

Core and transferable skills: Communication, problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, digital literacy, and green skills.

Work experience: Exposure to real-world work contexts, including internships, apprenticeships, or project-based learning.

Certification and signaling: Credentials that demonstrate competency and enhance credibility in the labor market.

Developing employability requires the alignment of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and industry engagement, ensuring that graduates can successfully navigate school-to-work transitions, pursue lifelong learning, and contribute to national productivity and innovation (ILO, 2020a; Cedefop, 2017).

Analytical Lens: Policy-to-Practice Framework

The study applies a *policy-to-practice framework*, dissecting reforms across five structured dimensions:

Policy intent: The strategic vision, legislative framework, and sectoral priorities that articulate the purpose of vocationalization and skills-based reforms (MoE, 2020 and 2018).

Curricular and assessment design: The structure, content, and competency orientation of programs, including learning outcomes, modules, assessment rubrics, and RPL frameworks (TVETA Kenya, 2023; BIBB, 2023).

Delivery capacity: Availability and quality of teachers, facilities, laboratories, and enterprise partnerships to implement work-based, competency-focused learning effectively (Likisa, 2018; ILO, 2021).

Quality assurance: Mechanisms for accreditation, certification, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure fidelity, relevance, and continuous improvement of TVET and vocationalized curricula (COTVET Ghana, 2021; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2021).

Outcomes: Tangible results in terms of placement, productivity, progression, and employer satisfaction, which demonstrate the labor-market value of vocationalized education and training (World Bank, 2022; ILO, 2022a).

Table 1: A Summary of Policy-to-Practice Analytical Lens for Vocationalization

Dimension	Focus/Description	Key Considerations	Link to Employability & Skills-Based Pedagogy
1. Policy Intent	Strategic vision, legislative framework, sector priorities	TVET and general education policies; vocationalization mandates; alignment with national development plans	Provides overarching direction; ensures curriculum relevance and labor-market alignment (MOE, 2018 & 2020)
2. Curricular & Assessment Design	Program structure, content, learning outcomes, competency units, assessment rubrics, RPL frameworks	Modular learning, work-based learning integration, measurable competencies	Directly shapes learners' technical and transversal skills; enables competency demonstration and certification (ILO, 2020a; TVETA Kenya, 2023)
3. Delivery Capacity	Teachers, facilities, laboratories, and enterprise partnerships	Instructor quality, industry attachments, infrastructure adequacy, dual-track programs	Ensures effective skills acquisition through authentic, workplace-relevant experiences (Likisa, 2018; ILO, 2021)
4. Quality Assurance	Accreditation, certification, monitoring, evaluation	Standards compliance, program audits, assessment integrity	Safeguards skill relevance, maintains credibility of qualifications, enhances employability signaling (BIBB, 2023; COTVET Ghana, 2021)

5. Outcomes	Graduate performance, placement, productivity, progression	Job placement rates, earnings, entrepreneurship success, and further education pathways	Measures labor-market impact of vocationalization and success of skills-based pedagogy; informs policy and program improvements (World Bank, 2022; ILO, 2022a)

This framework allows for a systematic assessment of how policy intentions translate into learning experiences, graduate competencies, and ultimately, employability outcomes. It also provides a comparative lens for examining global best practices in vocationalization and skills-based pedagogy, which can inform Ethiopia's ongoing reforms.

3. Ethiopia's Vocationalization Challenge: Problem Analysis

Despite progressive policy frameworks—including the 2008 National TVET Strategy, the TVET Proclamation No. 954/2016, the 2018–2030 Education Development Roadmap, and the 2021/22 curriculum overhaul—Ethiopia continues to face deep systemic barriers to vocationalization.

Policy–practice disjuncture and weak realization of work-based learning (WBL): While policies emphasize workplace learning, enterprises rarely provide sufficient placements, resulting in limited exposure to authentic learning environments. ILO (2021) and Mitiku et al. (2021) confirm that weak TVET–industry partnerships reduce opportunities for students to acquire employability skills. Demessew and Mutendwahothe (2015) also describe this as a persistent 'missing link' undermining graduate readiness.

Educators and infrastructure constraints: Chronic shortages of qualified TVET teachers, combined with outdated facilities, restrict effective delivery. Abie (2023) highlights low motivation and limited pedagogical preparation among instructors, while Amarech and Amare (2024) point to systemic weaknesses in teacher education programs. Recent World Bank (2024) findings on digital skills also reveal a significant competency gap.

***Poor curriculum–standards alignment*:** Curricula and assessments often lack coherence with occupational standards. Likisa (2018) documents uneven implementation of outcome-based approaches, while Samson et al. (2023) note inconsistencies in the validity and reliability of competency assessments. Genene et al. (2023) further identify weak institutional mechanisms for quality assurance.

Weak industry engagement and limited incentives: Employers remain reluctant to engage in co-training and assessment due to costs and unclear benefits. Amarech et al. (2024) emphasize that without shared responsibility and incentive structures, industry collaboration is tokenistic. Earlier evidence (Demessew & Mutendwahothe, 2015) similarly found fragile trust between TVET institutions and enterprises.

Information failures and labor-market mismatch: TVET provision remains largely supply-driven, with weak labor-market intelligence (LMI). MoE (2021a) and ILO (2020a) note that data fragmentation hinders evidence-based program design. The World Bank (2022) stresses that limited LMI contributes to Ethiopia's high youth unemployment, as training does not align with emerging job sectors.

Social stigma, weak pathways, and academic bias: Vocational education continues to carry a lower social status compared to academic tracks. MoE (2018) identifies cultural preferences for university degrees, while Abie (2023) shows that societal stigma reduces TVET's attractiveness. Alemu (2020) adds that inadequate soft-skills training further disadvantages graduates in the labor market. Flexible progression mechanisms such as recognition of prior learning (RPL) or credit transfer remain underdeveloped.
To consolidate these findings, Table 2 summarizes the challenges, supporting evidence from local literature, and their broader implications.

Table 2: Challenges of TVET and Vocationalization in Ethiopia: Evidence from Local Studies and Implications

Challenge	Evidence from Local Studies	Implications
Policy–practice disjuncture & weak WBL	Mitiku et al. (2021) report weak TVET–industry partnerships limiting employability skills; Demessew & Mutendwahothe (2015) highlight the "missing link" in industry collaboration; ILO (2021) confirms a shortfall in authentic workplace exposure.	Students graduate with limited hands-on competencies, reducing employability and weakening policy credibility.
Educator & infrastructure constraints	Abie (2023) notes low teacher motivation and inadequate pedagogical preparation; Amarech & Amare (2024) identify weak teacher education structures; World Bank (2024) shows major gaps in digital competencies among TVET teachers.	Constrains the delivery of modern, practice-oriented training and perpetuates reliance on theory-heavy teaching.
Poor curriculum–standards alignment	Likisa (2018) finds uneven adoption of outcome-based approaches; Samson et al. (2023) document inconsistent assessment validity and reliability; Genene et al. (2023) highlight weak quality assurance.	Misalignment leads to skill gaps and unreliable certification, undermining both employer trust and graduate competitiveness.
Weak industry engagement & incentives	Amarech et al. (2024) show employers' reluctance due to unclear benefits and cost-sharing burdens; Demessew & Mutendwahothe (2015) report fragile trust between colleges and enterprises.	Minimal co-training and co-assessment reduce workplace relevance, reinforcing the graduate–labor market mismatch.
Information failures & labor-market mismatch	MoE (2021a) and ILO (2020a) highlight fragmented labor-market information; World Bank (2022) links poor LMI to high youth unemployment and misaligned training.	Supply-driven programs continue to dominate, with limited diversification into emerging job sectors (e.g., digital economy, green skills).
Social stigma, weak pathways & academic bias	Abie (2023) identifies negative perceptions of TVET; Alemu (2020) emphasizes soft-skills deficits limiting graduate employability; MoE (2018) underscores societal preference for academic degrees.	Stigma deters enrollment, while limited pathways (RPL, credit transfer) restrict mobility, reinforcing vocational–academic hierarchy.

The evidence highlights that Ethiopia's TVET and vocationalization reforms remain fragmented and constrained by systemic weaknesses across policy, practice, and perception. These barriers limit the capacity of vocational pathways to serve as engines of employability and industrial transformation. Addressing them requires not only policy refinement but also stronger industry partnerships, investments in teacher preparation, improved labor-market intelligence, and cultural revalorization of vocational education. This analysis provides a foundation for identifying comparative international lessons and charting a context-sensitive reform pathway.

International Frameworks and Models (ILO and others)

- *ILO Recommendation No. 195 (2004)* calls for coherent national skills policies; recognition and certification of skills (including RPL); social partner engagement; and lifelong learning pathways (ILO, 2004/2012).
- *Competency-Based Training (CBT)* emphasizes learning outcomes, modularization, authentic assessment, and close employer engagement (ILO, 2020a).
- *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* improves mobility and inclusion by certifying informally acquired skills against standards (ILO, 2018/2020b; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2024).
- *Skills anticipation and Labor Market Information/LMI*: The ILO/G20 training strategy underscores forecasting, employer surveys, and tracer studies to align provision with demand (ILO/Cedefop, 2017; ILO, 2010).

Comparative International Practices and Lessons in Vocationalization

Germany & Switzerland: Employer-Co-Regulation & Status Parity
Germany's dual system, anchored in co-design and assessment by business, vocational chambers, and national bodies, yields high employability and low youth unemployment. Switzerland achieves similar outcomes through flexible pathways and high societal esteem for vocational education (Bonoli & Wilson, 2021; Deissinger, 2015).
Implication for Ethiopia: Formalize Sector Skills Councils with employer authority over occupational standards, training contracts, and assessments.

Singapore: System Integration & Lifelong Learning
Singapore's *SkillsFuture* model positions TVET as aspiration-worthy, and embedded employer partnerships and lifelong learning incentives (polytechnics, ITE, upskilling credits) drive strong outcomes (SkillsFuture Singapore, 2019 & 2023).
Implication for Ethiopia: Rebrand vocational education with progression mapping, adult upskilling credits, and institutional prestige-building.

China*:* Competency-based pedagogy & public–private partnerships
In China, vocational education has been positioned as a central pillar of the country's human capital development strategy, closely tied to industrial upgrading and economic transformation (OECD, 2020; Li, 2021). The system emphasizes strong industry–education partnerships, with enterprises engaged in curriculum co-design, apprenticeship programs, and dual training systems that ensure graduates are work-ready (Zhao & Lu, 2019).
Lessons for others: Align TVET with industrial policies, strengthen public–private collaboration, and promote vocational education as an equally prestigious pathway.

South Korea*:* Linking vocational pathways to national development goals
South Korea has tightly linked vocational education to its export-oriented industrialization strategy, producing a highly skilled workforce that supported the country's rapid economic growth (Kim, 2019). Pedagogically, South Korea emphasizes problem-solving, project-based learning, and workplace immersion, moving beyond theoretical instruction to practical, competency-based approaches (Cho & Kang, 2018). Importantly, South Korea invested heavily in reshaping the cultural perception of vocational education, using public campaigns and incentives to reduce stigma and elevate the prestige of technical and skills-based careers (Jung, 2020).
Lessons for others*:* Link vocational pathways to national development goals, create sector-specific institutions, and raise the social prestige of skills-based education through incentives and communication.
Shared Best Practices*:* Taken together, both China and South Korea highlight the importance of strong state commitment, large-scale investment, and close alignment between education and labor market needs. Their shared practices—competency-based pedagogy, public–private partnerships, modern infrastructure, and permeability of vocational tracks into higher education—demonstrate that vocational education can be both a driver of economic growth and a respected pathway for lifelong learning (OECD, 2020; Kim, 2019; Li, 2021).

Kenya & Rwanda: CBET and RPL in Action
Kenya's CBET standards (TVETS 01:2023) and RPL mechanisms offer formal recognition for informal skills, improving employer-readiness. Rwanda shows that without parallel investments in trainers and facilities, system-wide CBET remains aspirational (Honeyman, 2020).
Implication for Ethiopia: Develop national assessment packs, upgrade instructor capacity, and allocate budgets for WBL infrastructure.

Ghana & South Africa: Governance and Financing
Ghana's consolidation of TVET governance and regular reporting fosters accountability. South Africa's levy-grant system incentivizes employer involvement through refundable training levies (DHET, 2022).
Implication for Ethiopia: Pilot a training levy or tax credit system and introduce annual TVET scorecards with placement and employer satisfaction metrics.

Shared Best Practices across Systems

- *Employer co-regulation and partnerships* ensure curriculum relevance and credibility.
- *Competency-based pedagogy* supports work-readiness.
- *Integrated pathways* allow progression between vocational and academic tracks.
- *Stable financing and governance frameworks* provide sustainability and accountability.
- *Cultural rebranding* reduces stigma and elevates vocational education's status.

Table 3*:* A Summary of Comparative International Practices in Vocationalization (with Ethiopia's Status)

Country/Region	Governance & Employer Role	Pedagogy & Curriculum	Financing & Incentives	Pathways & Progression	Cultural Perception & Prestige	Key Lessons for Ethiopia	Ethiopia's Current Status
Germany & Switzerland	Employer chambers co-regulate standards, contracts, and assessments.	Dual system: work + school; competency-based.	Public–private cost-sharing.	Flexible progression to higher education.	High esteem; parity with academic pathways.	Formalize Sector Skills Councils; raise parity of esteem.	Weak employer involvement; fragmented governance; TVET seen as second-tier.
Singapore	Employer partnerships institutionalized (SkillsFuture)	Industry-linked polytechnics/ ITE; lifelong learning pedagogy.	Upskilling credits + strong state support.	Seamless pathways, lifelong learning embedded.	High prestige, aspiration-worthy.	Rebrand vocational education; build prestige; introduce upskilling credits.	Limited adult learning systems; weak TVET prestige; no lifelong learning credits.
China	Enterprises co-design curricula and deliver dual training.	Competency-based pedagogy; industry-driven.	Public + private investment	Linked to industrial upgrading.	Promoted as prestigious, central to development.	Align TVET with industrial policy; promote prestige.	Partial alignment with industrial needs; private sector engagement is low.
South Korea	State-led, linked to national industrialization.	Project-based, problem-solving, workplace immersion.	Large state investment	Vertical mobility via sector-specific institutions	Strong stigma reduction campaigns	Integrate TVET with the national development strategy; cultural rebranding.	Weak integration with industrial strategy; stigma is high; limited work-based learning.
Kenya	CBET standards and RPL mechanisms are nationally defined.	CBET with recognition of prior learning.	State-driven, underfunded infrastructure.	RPL enhances inclusivity.	Mixed, gradually improving perception.	Develop national assessment packs; invest in trainers and WBL.	CBET policy adopted but poorly resourced; RPL absent; trainers underprepared.
Rwanda	Adopted CBET, but	Aspirational CBET, with	Limited resources.	Weak pathways	Low prestige; systemic	Invest in trainer capacity	Similar to Rwanda: CBET is

	implementation is weak.	few qualified trainers.			challenges.	and infrastructure alongside CBET.	largely policy-level, with weak implementation.
Ghana	Consolidated TVET governance; annual reporting.	Competency-based orientation.	State + donor support.	Alignment with the labor market is improving.	Growing recognition.	Strengthen governance and accountability frameworks.	Fragmented governance; reporting is inconsistent; accountability is weak.
South Africa	Employer levy-grant system incentivizes participation	Competency-based with workplace training.	Sustainable financing via levy-grant.	Some higher education progression opportunities.	Improving prestige.	Pilot levy/tax credit; adopt scorecards	No levy system; TVET underfunded; employer participation limited.

Overall Implication for Ethiopia: Vocationalization should not be treated as a technical add-on but as a system-wide transformation. Drawing from these models, Ethiopia must prioritize employer co-regulation, competency-based pedagogy, cultural rebranding, sustainable financing, and lifelong learning pathways, aligned with its industrialization and socio-economic goals.

4. Results

The review of Ethiopia's efforts to vocationalize secondary and higher education curricula reveals a complex landscape of policies, reforms, and partial implementation outcomes. Key findings indicate that while the country has adopted robust frameworks, including the 2008 National TVET Strategy, the TVET Proclamation No. 954/2016, the 2018–2030 Education Development Roadmap, and the 2021/22 curriculum revision, these reforms have not consistently translated into effective classroom or workplace practices.

Policy and Implementation Outcomes*:* Ethiopia's TVET reforms emphasize competency-based pedagogy and work-based learning. However, studies indicate that workplace learning remains limited, curriculum alignment with occupational standards is uneven, and industry engagement is weak (Mitiku et al., 2021; Likisa, 2018; Amarech & Amare, 2024). Teacher shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and digital skills gaps further constrain the quality of vocational instruction (Abie, 2023; World Bank, 2024). Moreover, societal stigma against vocational tracks continues to limit enrollment and progression pathways (MoE, 2018; Alemu, 2020).

Lack of Systematic Synthesis and Comparative Insights: Current studies largely focus on isolated aspects of TVET—such as employability skills, teacher preparedness, or institutional challenges—without systematically synthesizing evidence across sectors or regions. Comparative analyses with high-performing vocational systems in Germany, Switzerland, Singapore, and South Korea highlight several gaps in the Ethiopian context, including weak modular curricula, insufficient labor-market intelligence, limited employer-led assessment, and underdeveloped recognition of prior learning mechanisms. These comparisons indicate that Ethiopia's reforms are fragmented and do not yet fully leverage international best practices to enhance employability or industrial alignment.

Identification of Research Gaps

Based on the synthesis of available literature and international comparisons, several research gaps emerge:
System-wide integration of competency-based pedagogy: Few studies examine how secondary and higher education curricula interact to produce consistent vocational outcomes.
Industry partnership models: Evidence on scalable models for co-training, co-assessment, and sustained employer engagement is limited.
Labor-market responsiveness: Research on the effectiveness of labor-market intelligence systems in guiding curriculum design is sparse.

Graduate outcomes and employability: Few longitudinal studies track the transition of graduates from vocational programs to employment, limiting evidence on program effectiveness.

Overall, the results highlight a critical need for **holistic, comparative, and system-level research** to inform future reforms and ensure that vocationalization becomes a transformative driver for skills development, employability, and socio-economic growth in Ethiopia.

5. Strategic Recommendations for Ethiopia

Legal Apprenticeship Anchoring: Mandate WBL contracts, hours, and trainer accreditation with auditing.
Sector TVET–Industry Compacts: Require co-designed tasks, placement quotas, and co-assessment.
Modular, Competency-Mapped Curricula: Publish occupational maps and align assessments to learning outcomes.
Instructor Upskilling Pathways: Combine industry attachments, pedagogy micro-credentials, and hiring incentives.
Expand RPL and Pathway Flexibility: Implement RPL rubrics and credit-transfer agreements across institutions.
Performance-Based Financing: Link funds to verified WBL weeks and graduate outcomes; pilot supply-side levies.
Modernize Infrastructure: Rolling equipment upgrading with private partnerships and shared centers.
Strengthen LMI Systems: Launch sector observatories, big-data forecasting, and dashboards to guide planning.
Benchmarking & Global Partnerships: Foster bilateral knowledge exchange, curriculum sharing, and centers of excellence.

Conclusion

By reframing vocationalization as curriculum-wide and transformative, this study advances beyond technical fixes to offer a ***strategic roadmap*** anchored in relevance, adaptability, and institutional coherence. Ethiopia's unique challenges demand ***sequenced, context-sensitive reform***—integrating employer ownership, quality assurance, infrastructure investment, and labor-market intelligence. This integrated approach, informed by global exemplars yet tailored to local capacity, offers a viable path toward empowering Ethiopia's youth and catalyzing inclusive, skills-led development.

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Sex Trafficking and Emerging Clandestine Sex Work among the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: A Sociological Study

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Abstract: This study explores the deeply rooted issue of sex trafficking and clandestine sex work among Rohingya refugee women in Bangladesh. Taking a 100-sample size and drawing on mixed methods, including structured interviews, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and case studies, the study examines the socio-economic and structural vulnerabilities that contribute to the exploitation of Rohingya women. Findings reveal that gender-based violence, dowry practices, poverty, statelessness, and lack of employment are major drivers of trafficking. The research also uncovers the roles of brokers, local complicity, and transnational networks in perpetuating this crisis. With trafficking occurring both within and beyond the refugee camps, and victims often lured through deception, coercion, or fake marriages, the need for urgent intervention is evident. Four interrelated theories (1. Intersectionality Theory, 2. Social Disorganization, 3. Rational Choice Theory, and 4. Demand Theory) have upheld the situations of Rohingya women's trafficking and clandestine sex work at the Bangladeshi refugee camps. The study recommends a multi-tiered response, including legal reforms, economic empowerment, community surveillance, and international resettlement initiatives to ensure safety, dignity and justice for Rohingya women.

Keywords: *Rohingya Refugee, Rohingya Women, Trafficking, Sex-Trafficking, Clandestine Sex-work, Rohingya Camp, Ukhiya, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*

1. Introduction

Among the biggest humanitarian disasters of the twenty-first century caused by human activity is the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis. With more than a million people seeking asylum, mostly in the overcrowded camps of Kutupalong and Nayapara in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh has become the largest host of displaced Rohingya refugees since August 2017 (IOM, 2018c). Triggered by the Myanmar military's extensive campaign of persecution and cruelty, the crisis has been distinguished by the mass rape, torture, and murder of Rohingya civilians, particularly targeting women and girls. While these women sought safety across the border, many instead confronted a new set of risks, most notably, sex trafficking and involuntary involvement in covert sex work (Aronowitz and Koning, 2014). According to many reports, Bangladeshi officials detain up to 60 Rohingya women and girls every day as they try to escape the camps. About two-thirds of them are victims of human trafficking, mostly for forced labor or sexual exploitation (IOM, 2018a). Due to a lack of legal protection, poverty, and statelessness, trafficking continues to occur in the shadowy areas of refugee life (IOM, 2018b; Refugees International, 2023). The post-exodus rise in displaced persons, especially unaccompanied women and children, significantly increased their vulnerability to exploitation, even though Rohingya trafficking was already a problem before 2017 (IOM, 2018c).

In the context of sex trafficking and clandestine sex work, this study examines how socioeconomic, political, and gender-related vulnerabilities connect to increase the risks that Rohingya women and girls confront. The application of four interconnected theories: Intersectionality Theory, Social Disorganization Theory, Rational Choice Theory, and Demand Theory, to the dynamics of trafficking in the Rohingya refugee camps is what makes this study significant. These frameworks aid in our comprehension of the ways that economic survival tactics, the dissolution of social institutions, overlapping social identities, and outside demands all contribute to the continuation of exploitation.

According to Intersectionality Theory, Rohingya women are especially vulnerable because of overlapping identities including gender, ethnicity, and statelessness, as each layer of marginalization increases their chance of being trafficked (Carastathis, 2014). Social Disorganization Theory highlights the disintegration of social institutions in refugee camps, where women are increasingly isolated and vulnerable to trafficking networks

due to the lack of official law enforcement and community support systems. According to rational choice theory, women may turn to sex labor as a last-ditch survival tactic when faced with severe financial difficulties and few other options. Lastly, Demand Theory clarifies how local and international trafficking networks target Rohingya women due to external demand for cheap labor and sexual exploitation (McKenzie, 2017).

Rohingya women endure layers of vulnerability stemming from patriarchal norms, loss of male guardians, absence of employment opportunities, and displacement trauma. Many are widows or have had their spouses and sons killed or lost during migration, leaving them as sole providers under harsh circumstances (Tayeb, 2022). These social and economic pressures push many women into the sex industry, either through coercion or as a desperate survival strategy (ABS-CBN News, 2017).

More Rohingya women and girls are trafficked than men and boys, indicating a disproportionately high demand for Rohingya women as domestic workers and sex workers (Human Trafficking Case Data Analysis, 2019). Regional and transnational trafficking networks that reach into Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, and India are the main source of this demand (Amnesty International, n.d., 2020; Commonwealth, n.d., 2023). These women are tricked by traffickers by promises of marriage or work, only to be sexually exploited in private houses or covert brothels (Iqbal, 2017; Akter, 2022). There is still a culture of dread and silence inside the camps. Women are not given enough support by justice systems, which prioritize control over rehabilitation and are frequently mediated by local mosque committees or camp officials (Refugees International, 2023). Even though there are many allegations of sexual assault and human trafficking, survivors hardly ever get justice, and few of the offenders are brought to justice. Despite the magnitude of the crisis, international agencies have observed that law enforcement actions are still inadequate and disorganized (US Department of State, 2020; Relief Web, 2023).

Cox's Bazar, a popular tourist destination, now faces the grim reality of having brothels within and around refugee camps, where hundreds of women are forced into sex work under the guise of employment (Tayeb, 2022). The trafficking of Rohingya women is no longer limited to local exploitation; many are smuggled across borders using forged documents and illicit networks to India, Malaysia, and the Middle East (Chowdhury, 2020). Adolescents, especially girls, are prime targets due to their vulnerability, with brokers exploiting their desperation for profit (London College of Legal Studies, n.d.; Khan, 2022).

The problem has not received enough attention despite its size. The subject's gender sensitivity and the covert nature of sex labor both contribute to the paucity of information and public discussion. Most of the information that is currently available comes from media stories, grey literature, or is included in larger trafficking research. Therefore, comprehensive academic research that focuses exclusively on sex trafficking and covert sex work among Rohingya refugee women in Bangladesh is desperately needed. By providing evidence-based insights into one of the most important human rights issues resulting from the Rohingya crisis, this study seeks to close that gap. The study also intends to add to larger discussions on trafficking, refugee vulnerability, and the relationship between migration and exploitation by utilizing important theoretical frameworks.

Objectives of The Study

To examine the causes and conditions that lead Rohingya refugee women in Bangladesh into sex trafficking and clandestine sex work.

2. Literature Review

The convergence of gender-based exploitation, statelessness, and socioeconomic vulnerability in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, is highlighted by research on sex trafficking among Rohingya refugee women. Rohingya women are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and the illegal sex trade because of these conditions. Prior research reveals a complicated network of structural flaws and socioeconomic circumstances, which traffickers take advantage of by making fictitious promises of employment, marriage, and a better life.

Types of Trafficking Faced by Rohingya Women and Girls

There are two types of trafficking in the Rohingya refugee community: labor trafficking and sexual exploitation, with the former being more common. The main types of violence Rohingya women and children experience are

sexual exploitation and trafficking for forced labor, according to the US State Department (2023). Furthermore, Barua (2021) talks about the wider definition of trafficking, which encompasses forced labor and organ trafficking, both of which put many Rohingya refugees in a terrible circle of exploitation.

Age and Vulnerability to Trafficking

Younger girls and women are especially susceptible to human trafficking. Teenage females, especially those between the ages of 15 and 19, are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, according to studies like Tayeb (2022) and Akter (2022). Many young girls, some as young as 10, are trafficked into prostitution in the camps, according to the BBC (2018). Furthermore, according to the IOM (2018), Rohingya girls are frequently targeted because of their ignorance, loneliness, and desperate need for financial support.

Clandestine Sex Work and Social Stigma

Trafficked women and girls are frequently kept out of the public eye because of societal stigma, and clandestine sex work takes place in secret within the camps. According to the Thomson Reuters Foundation (2017), there are covert brothels in and around the camps where women are coerced into performing sex work under false pretences or coercion. The Rohingya community's stigma around sex work makes it more difficult to recognize and manage the problem, since women are frequently compelled to work covertly to prevent social rejection (Tayeb, 2022).

Socio-economic Drivers and Lack of Livelihood Opportunities

One of the main causes of trafficking is the financial hardship that Rohingya families endure. According to research by Palma (2021) and Khan (2022), the majority of Rohingya women are unemployed and have little access to possibilities for education or employment. Due to a lack of possibilities for earning money, many women resort to dangerous jobs, which are frequently made possible by traffickers who take advantage of their precarious situation. Without other options, many women are lured into being trafficked for sex or labor after being promised jobs outside of the camps, according to IOM (2018c).

Statelessness and Legal Vulnerability

The statelessness of Rohingya women increases their susceptibility to human trafficking. According to Sattar (2021), Rohingyas lack legal protection and recognition due to their statelessness, which makes it simpler for traffickers to take advantage of them. Due to their lack of legal status, many Rohingya women are unable to obtain legitimate employment, healthcare, or education, which forces them to fall into the hands of traffickers who offer them a route out of their unstable living conditions (Global Citizen, 2017).

Social and Family Structures Contributing to Vulnerability

Family breakdowns, particularly the loss of male protectors, leave Rohingya women more exposed to exploitation. Tayeb (2022) reports that many women in the camps have lost husbands, fathers, or sons due to the violence in Myanmar or migration, leaving them without economic support or protection. This lack of male guardianship, combined with a patriarchal society, increases their susceptibility to trafficking. Additionally, Human Trafficking Case Data Analysis (2019) highlights that many trafficked women and girls come from female-headed households or those where men are unable to provide due to illness or unemployment, making these women more vulnerable.

The Role of Family Dynamics in Trafficking

Family relationships frequently have an impact on Rohingya women's experiences of human trafficking. Extremely poor families or those under social pressure might be more likely to send their daughters abroad in search of employment, unintentionally putting them at risk of human trafficking. According to Tayeb (2022) and Human Trafficking Case Data Analysis (2019), traffickers usually take advantage of families' despair by promising young girls marriage or employment, only to use them for sex.

Barriers to Reporting and Legal Challenges

The fear of humiliation and the social stigma associated with sex work keep many women from disclosing their experiences of trafficking. According to IOM (2019) and Tayeb (2022), victims of human trafficking frequently keep quiet out of concern for societal rejection or family consequences. Furthermore, women in the refugee camps have limited alternatives for pursuing justice due to the absence of legal procedures. The lack of law

enforcement and inadequate security measures in the camps further exacerbate this obstacle to reporting (Tayeb, 2022).

Poverty and Limited Resources

One major element that continues to push women into sex trafficking is poverty. According to IOM (2018b) and Akter (2022), Rohingya women are especially susceptible to human trafficking because of the dearth of economic options in the camps. Many are lured into exploitative situations after being promised false promises of better lifestyles or jobs. According to Glinski (2017), forced sex work is frequently the result of trafficking, which frequently starts with the promise of employment in hotels or restaurants.

3. Methodology

Research Design and Approach

This study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. This design was chosen to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the sensitive and complex issue of sex trafficking and clandestine sex work among Rohingya refugee women. Using both types of data facilitated triangulation and strengthened the validity of the findings.

Study Area and Population

The research was conducted between June 2023 and September 2023 in registered Rohingya refugee camps located in Teknaf and Ukhiya sub-districts of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The specific camps included Camp Nos. 2, 5, 1W, 2W, and 27. The study population comprised Rohingya women and girls, community leaders (Majhis), and relevant stakeholders such as NGO staff, local villagers, and host community members.

Sample Size

A total of 100 individuals participated in the study, distributed as follows:

- 50 Structured Interviews (with both men and women),
- 25 In-Depth Interviews,
- 15 Key Informant Interviews,
- 10 Case Study Interviews involving Rohingya women and girls affected by trafficking or clandestine sex work.

Sampling Techniques

This study utilized three distinct sampling methods to ensure a comprehensive representation of Rohingya women's experiences with trafficking and clandestine sex work.

- Cluster Random Sampling was employed to select participants from the Rohingya refugee camps. This method ensured that diverse groups from different camp sections were represented, capturing the broad spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds and experiences of exploitation.
- Purposive Sampling was applied to identify key informants and participants for in-depth interviews (IDIs) and case studies. This method targeted individuals with direct experiences of trafficking or involvement in NGO interventions, ensuring the inclusion of experts and survivors whose insights are critical to understanding the problem.
- Snowball Sampling was utilized for recruiting hard-to-reach participants, particularly those involved in clandestine sex work or trafficked women, who are often reluctant to speak out. This method proved effective in uncovering hidden networks of trafficking and providing insights into less visible forms of exploitation.

Data Collection Tools

The study utilized four main instruments:

- Structured Questionnaire for quantitative interviews.
- Checklist for Key Informant Interviews (KII).
- Guideline for In-Depth Interviews (IDI).
- Case Study Template for Collecting Personal Narratives.

The structured questionnaire included 20 questions organized into three segments: demographic profile, socio-economic background, and issues related to trafficking and sex work.

Data Sources

Primary Data: Collected directly from the field through interviews, discussions, and observations.
Secondary Data: Reviewed from existing literature, news articles, policy papers, and reports to provide context and support interpretation of field data.

Data Analysis Techniques

- Quantitative Data from structured interviews were coded and analyzed using SPSS, producing descriptive statistics and trends.
- Qualitative Data from IDIs, KIIs, and Case Studies were transcribed, translated, and thematically analyzed. A narrative approach was applied to preserve the integrity of individual experiences. Case study data were categorized by type of experience and analyzed thematically to draw insights.

Ethical Considerations
Ethical protocols were strictly followed. Participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and procedures and were given the option to provide written or verbal consent. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was assured. Personal identifiers were removed or replaced with pseudonyms. The study was approved by relevant academic oversight bodies, and all activities were conducted by international ethical standards for research involving human subjects.

4. Results

This section presents the empirical findings derived from structured interviews, case studies, in-depth interviews (IDIs), and key informant interviews (KIIs), organized around key demographic variables and thematic dimensions of trafficking and clandestine sex work among Rohingya women.

Demographic Characteristics
Among the 50 respondents, the majority (60%) were aged 18–25, highlighting the heightened vulnerability of young adult women to trafficking and exploitation. Educational levels were low, with 56% having no formal education and only 12% completing primary school, limiting awareness and economic mobility. Just 18% of women reported any income-generating activity, mostly through informal or NGO-supported work, while 82% remained economically inactive.

Gender dynamics were also stark: 80% of households were male-headed, and 74% of women reported limited or no decision-making power. These patterns underscore structural gender inequality and economic deprivation, key drivers of vulnerability to sex trafficking and clandestine sex work in the camps.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 50)

Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–25 years	30	60%
	26–35 years	11	22%
	36+ years	9	18%
Educational Attainment	No formal education	28	56%
	Primary education	6	12%
	Secondary or higher	16	32%
Income-Generating Activity	Yes	9	18%
	No	41	82%
Household Headship	Male-headed	40	80%
	Female-headed	10	20%
Decision-Making Power	Limited or none	37	74%
	Moderate to full	13	26%

Awareness and Nature of Trafficking

While 68% of respondents were aware of trafficking, many lacked a detailed understanding of its types and mechanisms, with 32% completely unaware, indicating gaps in outreach efforts. Gender-based violence (GBV) was widespread: emotional abuse was most common (72%), followed by physical violence (48%) and marital rape (22%).

Respondents identified labor smuggling (38%), sex trafficking (34%), and forced marriage abroad (28%) as the main trafficking types. These are often facilitated by brokers or Majhis through deception and coercion. Weak camp security, poor grievance systems, and social stigma further reinforce vulnerability and silence.

Table 2: Awareness and Nature of Trafficking among Respondents (N = 50)

Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Awareness of Trafficking	Aware	34	68%
	Unaware	16	32%
Types of Gender-Based Violence	Emotional abuse	36	72%
	Physical violence	24	48%
	Marital rape	11	22%
Types of Trafficking Identified	Labor smuggling	19	38%
	Sex trafficking	17	34%
	Forced marriage abroad	14	28%

To illustrate these patterns more vividly, several participants shared personal experiences and observations:
"I was too afraid to report what happened. Even if I tried, who would believe me?"
— Young woman, Nayapara Rohingya Camp

Social and Economic Conditions Enabling Exploitation

The findings from Figure 1 clearly illustrate that poverty (84%), statelessness (76%), and lack of employment opportunities (70%) are the most dominant push factors for sex trafficking and clandestine sex work. Respondents repeatedly emphasized that the inability to legally work, compounded by their stateless status and exclusion from Bangladesh's formal economy, created a precarious survival environment. The burden of dowry and exploitative marriage practices was reported by over half (56%) of the respondents, further intensifying the pressure on women and girls to seek unsanctioned or high-risk avenues for income.

Figure 1: Primary Drivers of Sex Trafficking and Clandestine Sex Work

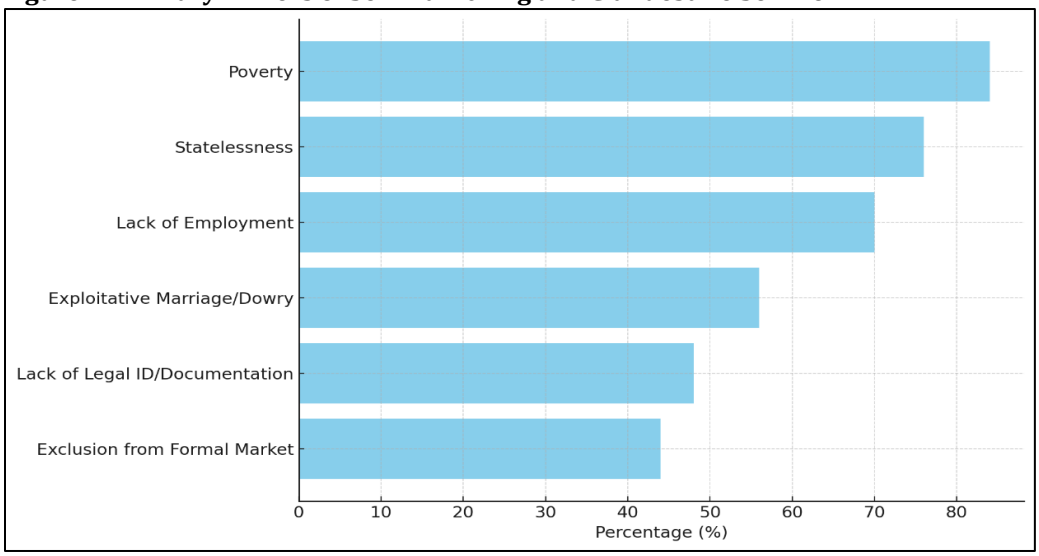
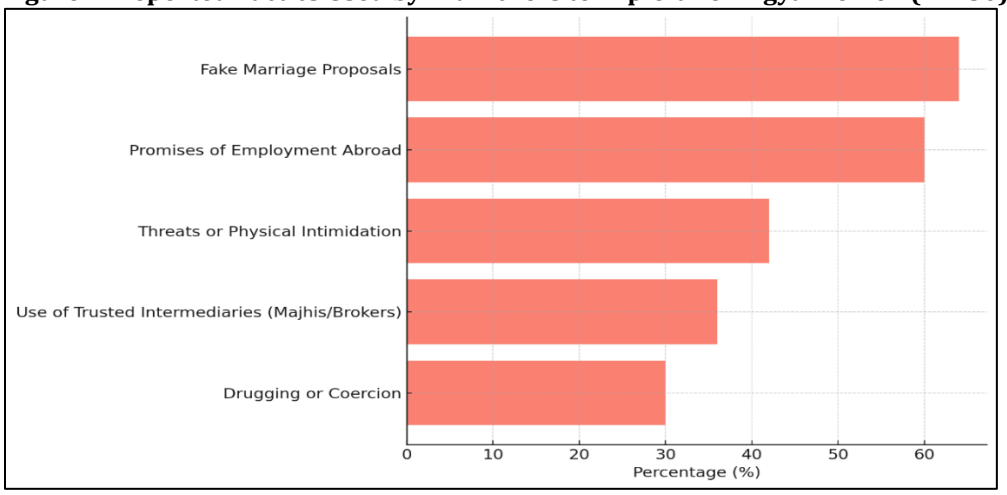


Figure 2 illustrates how traffickers exploit these vulnerabilities through deception and coercion. The most frequently reported tactic was fake marriage proposals (64%), often presented as a way to secure a better life

abroad. Promises of employment (60%) were also common lures, especially to countries like Malaysia or the Middle East. A significant number of participants reported intimidation or threats (42%), as well as manipulative involvement by camp brokers or Majhis (36%), who use their social position to recruit or coerce victims. Notably, drugging and physical coercion (30%) were also cited, indicating a violent dimension to many trafficking operations.

Figure 2: Reported Tactics Used by Traffickers to Exploit Rohingya Women (N = 50)



Drivers of Trafficking and Sex Work

Table 3 shows that extreme poverty (46.67%) is the leading economic driver of sex trafficking and clandestine sex work among Rohingya women. Limited income opportunities (20%), lack of cash (20%), and inadequate aid targeting women (13.33%) further compound their vulnerability. These factors reflect a harsh economic reality that forces many into risky survival strategies.

Table 3: Economic Reasons of Rohingya women's sex trafficking and clandestine Sex work

Economic Reason of Rohingya women Sex trafficking and clandestine Sex-working	Percentage
Extreme Poverty	46.67%
No work opportunity for income generation inside the camp	20%
No cash in hand	20%
Not enough aid support and an economic safety net targeted for women	13.33%
Total	**100%**

The structural economic hardships Rohingya women face were echoed in qualitative accounts:
"My father couldn't pay the dowry, so he agreed to send me abroad with a broker. But I never reached the promised groom." —17-year-old girl, Camp 2W

Social and Economic Conditions Enabling Exploitation

Figure 3 shows that 33% of trafficking and clandestine sex work occurs within the refugee camps, often unnoticed by authorities. Cox's Bazar follows at 23%, driven by tourism and trafficker mobility. Other key locations include Chattogram (13%), and Teknaf, Dhaka, and Sylhet (10% each), revealing that trafficking extends beyond camps to major urban and transit hubs. This spread highlights the need for coordinated monitoring across multiple regions.

Figure 3: Common places in Bangladesh where Rohingya women are trafficked for sex or involved in clandestine sex work

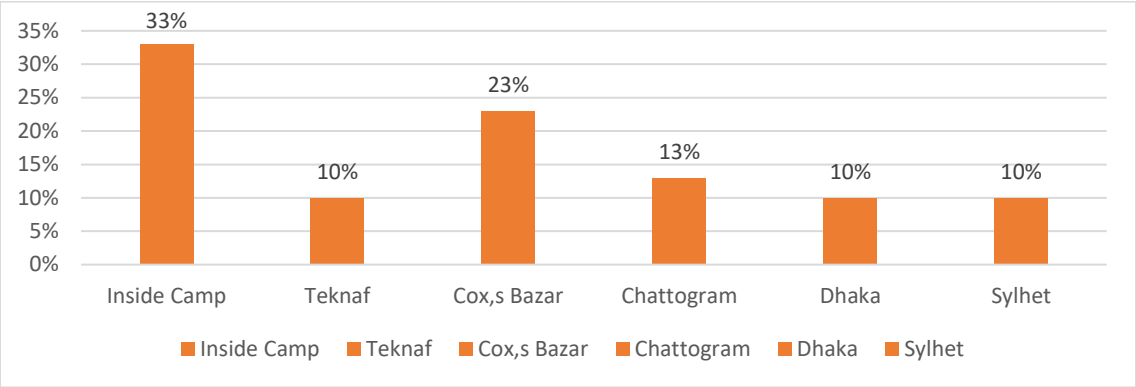
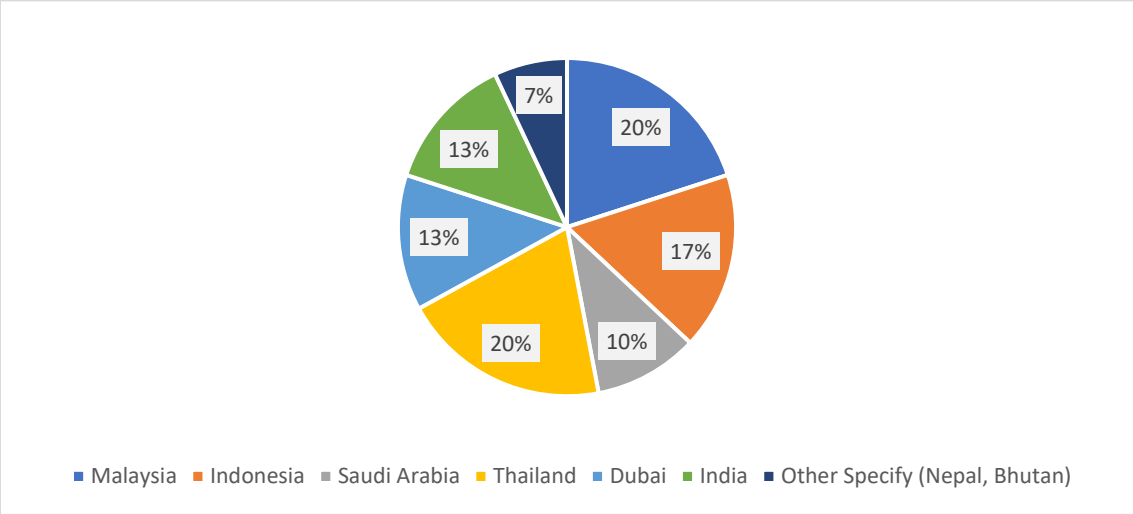


Figure 4 shows Malaysia and Thailand (each 20%) as the top trafficking destinations, followed by Indonesia (17%), India and Dubai (13% each), Saudi Arabia (10%), and Nepal/Bhutan/others (7%). These routes reflect regional trafficking patterns and the exploitation of religious and cultural ties. Thailand often acts as a transit hub, highlighting the organized and transnational nature of networks targeting stateless Rohingya women.

Figure 4: Common countries where Rohingya women are trafficked and sold for sex



The normalization of trafficking within the camps and nearby towns was expressed by several respondents: "Everyone knows who arranges the girls' escape from the camp, but no one talks — even some Majhis are involved."— Local NGO worker, Ukhiya

Volume and Modalities of Trafficking

Table 4 presents community estimates indicating that 400–500 Rohingya women and girls are trafficked annually (57%), with the majority trapped in sex trafficking (62%) or involved in clandestine sex work (60%). Although exact numbers are hard to verify due to secrecy, these figures underscore the widespread and ongoing nature of the crisis.

Table 4: Number of Rohingya women and girls generally trafficked each year

Number of Rohingya Women and Girls Generally Trafficked Each Year	Percentage	Trap in Sex trafficking	Percentage	Clandestine Sex Work	Percentage	p-value
400-500	57%	100-200	62%	500-600	60%	0.340
501-600	20%	201-300	25%	601-800	20%	
601-700	14%	301-400	10%	801-1000	14%	
801-900	6%	401-500	3%	1000-1200	6%	
More than 900	3%	More than 500	0.00%	1201-above	0.00	
Total	**100%**	**Total**	**100%**	**Total**	**100%**	

Note: Chi-Square test p-value not significant

Participants described how traffickers exploit hope and desperation:
"They promised marriage and work in Malaysia, but I was instead taken to a locked room in Chattogram and told to obey." — Rohingya woman, 21, Camp 5

Figure 5 illustrates key push factors behind trafficking among Rohingya women. The leading cause (33%) is the pressure of dowry and the desire for freedom outside the camps. Another 17% cited hopelessness about repatriation and poverty linked to marriage. Additional factors (each 3%) include lack of education, job scarcity, polygamy, insecurity, and harassment. These combined vulnerabilities drive many toward risky migration or sex work.

Figure 5: Push Factors of Rohingya Women Trafficking

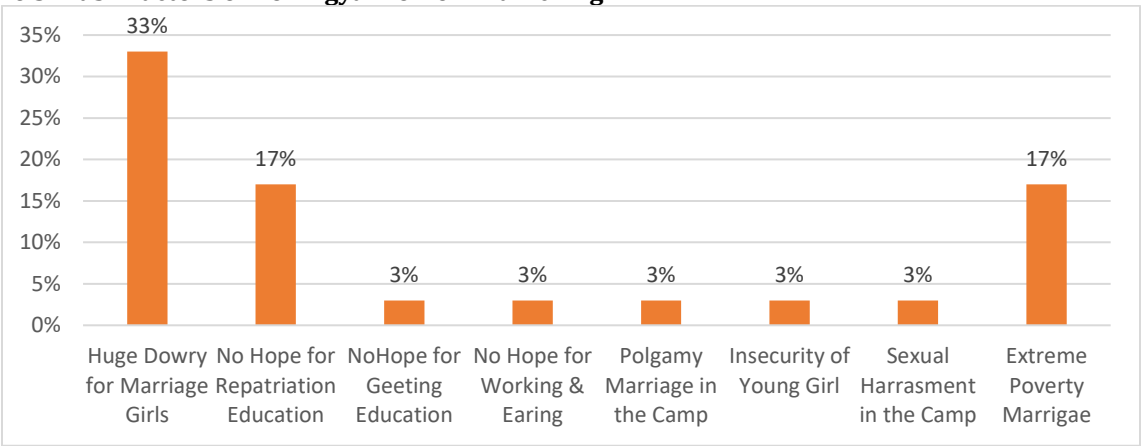
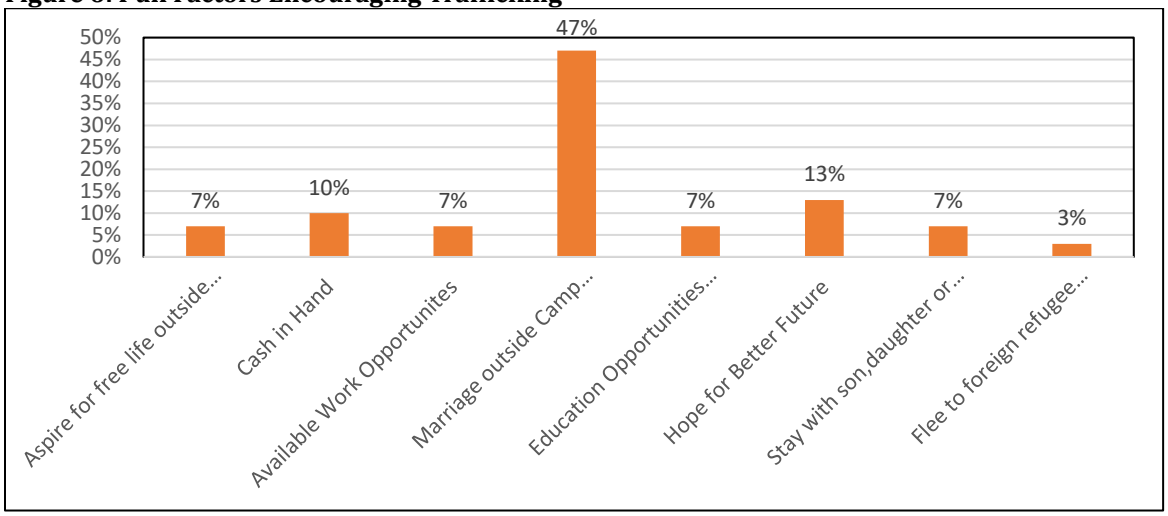


Figure 6 illustrates that the strongest pull factor behind Rohingya women's trafficking is the desire to marry Rohingya men living abroad, reported by 47% of respondents. Other key motivators include better educational opportunities for children, work and cash needs (17% combined), and aspirations for freedom, family reunification, or improved living conditions abroad (31% collectively). These factors reflect a preference for perceived stability outside the camp over dependence on aid and restricted camp life.

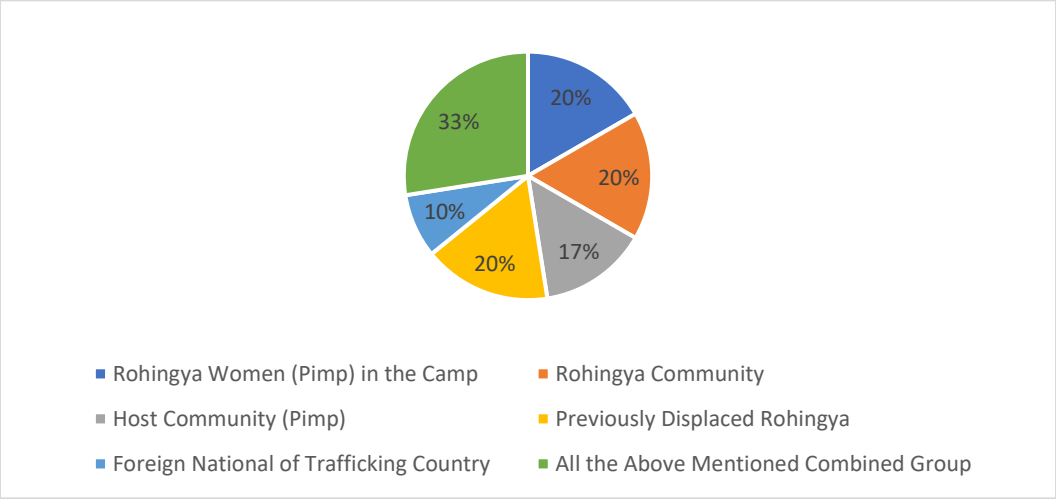
Figure 6: Pull Factors Encouraging Trafficking



Role of Brokers and Media

A chain of a mixed category of people are involved in trafficking of Rohingya women 33% people answered that women trafficking is a coordinated effort of (Rohingya pimp in the camp 20%, previously displaced Rohingya community 20%, Rohingya men in the camp 20%, host community 17%, foreign national of trafficking country 10%) altogether they cover 67% according to the answer of the participant.

Figure 7: Types of Brokers Engaged in Rohingya women trafficking and clandestine sex work



In Figure 8, we found that the most popular social media that traffickers use for trafficking/smuggling of women is IMO, with 33% responding and another 33% replying about using at least three media/social media at a time (In-person communication in the camp, IMO, Facebook Messenger/Phone call). Facebook Messenger is used lowest in percentage of use only 7% people replying in this regard.

Figure 8: Types of media & social sites used for trafficking of Rohingya women

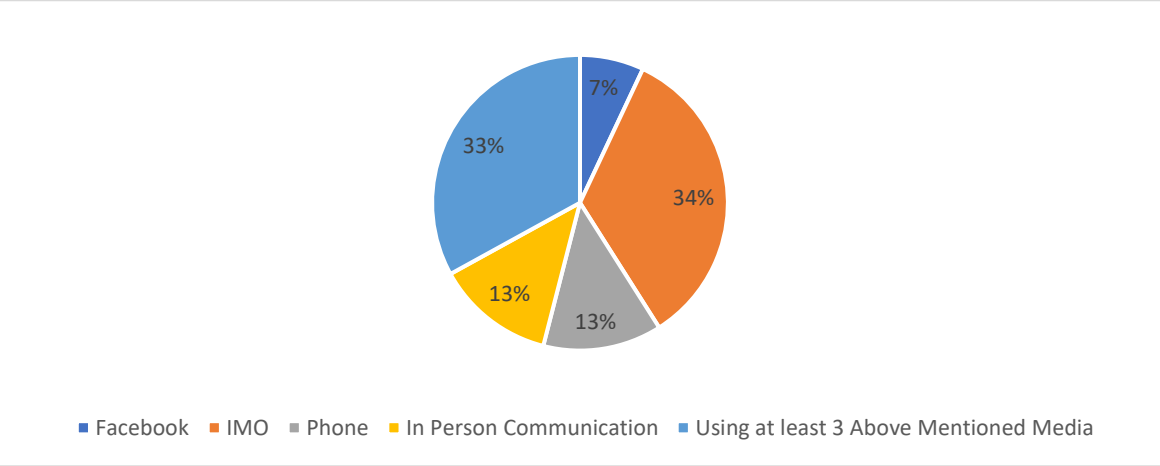


Table 5: Age-wise Awareness of sex trafficking pairwise t-test and ANOVA Results

Test / Comparison	t-statistic / SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Pairwise t-tests					
18–25 vs 26–35	-0.37	—	—	—	0.719
18–25 vs 36+	0.00	—	—	—	1.000
26–35 vs 36+	0.28	—	—	—	0.785
One-Way ANOVA					
Between Groups	0.020	2	0.010	0.068	0.934
Within Groups (Error)	6.990	47	0.149	—	—
Total	7.010	49	—	—	—

Note: Both the t-test and the ANOVA p-value were not significant

Discussion

This study reveals that sex trafficking and clandestine sex work among Rohingya women in Bangladesh's refugee camps are deeply rooted in intersecting vulnerabilities, gender-based marginalization, statelessness, economic deprivation, and systemic neglect. These phenomena are not isolated but are enabled by long-standing socio-political fragilities and regional trafficking networks.

Gendered Vulnerabilities and Statelessness

Study that vulnerability by gender, statelessness and lack of guardianship that makes them easy targets of being prey of trafficking for sex and clandestine sex-working. Rohingya women, often arriving in Bangladesh without male family members due to killings or forced displacement, face heightened risks in the absence of protection and support. Within the patriarchal refugee community, women's roles as sole providers increase their susceptibility to exploitation, as they navigate survival in overcrowded camps with limited resources and no legal status (Akter, 2024a; Refugees International, 2023). Their stateless condition deprives them of rights, leaving them invisible to protective legal frameworks (London College of Legal Studies, n.d.).

Economic Desperation and Survival Sex

The study's findings, there is no specific economic safety net for Rohingya women, and funding cuts are also a compelling factor in the cash generated by clandestine sex work and the trafficking of those involved in the sex industry. That a very minimal aid support $11 per month per person has left women vulnerable to coercive economic survival strategies (Akter, 2024b). In the absence of employment, some Rohingya women turn to sex work as a last resort, a pattern consistent with the theory of rational choice under constrained conditions (Khan, 2022). Many women interviewed reported choosing clandestine sex work to feed their children or repay trafficking debts (Setara Begum, Case Study with Rohingya Women, Nayapara Refugee Camp, Bangladesh-2023).

Dowry, Marriage, and Exploitation

Social practices like dowry emerged as a critical driver of trafficking, Sex-trafficking and clandestine sex-work of Rohingya women in Bangladeshi camps. The economic burden of marrying daughters within camps leads some families to accept offers for overseas marriages, unknowingly placing their daughters in exploitative situations (Ahmed, 2019). These "marriages" are often facilitated by traffickers through online platforms and false documentation, luring victims with promises of jobs or reunification with family abroad (Chowdhury, 2020; Commonwealth, n.d., 2023).

Organized Trafficking and Local Collusion

A well-structured trafficking network involving brokers, transport operators, and even local officials operates in Cox's Bazar. These networks smuggle women and girls across borders into India, Nepal, Malaysia, and beyond, often for forced sex work or domestic servitude (US Department of State, 2020; Alam et al., 2023a). The widespread use of communication apps like IMO and complicity of some authorities facilitate these operations (Refugee International, 2023; Rahman, 2024).

Hidden Economies and Tourist Demand

The Tourist-heavy areas such as Cox's Bazar and Teknaf have become epicenters of the clandestine sex trade. Driven by demand from local and foreign clients, a hidden economy has developed, often with the complicity of hotel staff, restaurant workers, and community insiders (The Daily Star, 2018; ABS-CBN News, 2017). The sex trade's commodification of human bodies aligns with global trends, where trafficking for sexual exploitation is among the most lucrative forms of trafficking, generating an estimated $99 billion annually (Aronowitz & Koning, 2014; Woode et al., 2014).

Stigma, Silence, and Policy Gaps

The challenge of Rohingya women being trafficked and sex-trafficked is exacerbated by social stigma hurdles, taboo in the camps, insecurity, and highly limited mobility, as well as by lack of education, ability to speak up, information and legal initiative by authorities. Social stigma deters victims from reporting abuse, while grievance mechanisms within the camps are male-dominated and unresponsive to the needs of women (Amnesty International, 2020; ReliefWeb, 2023). Despite existing interventions by humanitarian actors, efforts remain fragmented. Bangladesh's failure to ratify international refugee and statelessness conventions further compounds the problem, as Rohingyas lack legal recognition and access to justice (London College of Legal Studies, n.d.; USDS, 2023).

Alignment of Study Results with Prior Research

Table 5: Findings from prior study

Themes	Evidence from Prior Studies	References
Gender inequality and a lack of decision-making increase vulnerability to trafficking	Previous studies note that patriarchal structures in refugee communities exacerbate women's dependency and make them more susceptible to sexual exploitation.	Hossain & Korban (2021); Ullah (2016)
Poverty, dowry pressures, and lack of livelihoods are key drivers of trafficking and clandestine sex work	Research highlights poverty, economic exclusion, and harmful marriage practices as major push factors behind the trafficking of stateless and displaced women.	Zimmerman et al. (2011); Karim (2020)
Limited education reduces awareness of trafficking risks	Studies show that low literacy and lack of access to formal education restrict women's ability to recognize or resist trafficking.	Farzana (2017); UNHCR (2020)
Traffickers exploit vulnerabilities using fake marriage and job offers	Similar patterns of deceptive marriage proposals and false employment abroad have been reported in South Asia and Southeast Asia.	Sidhu & Christie (2022); Rahman (2019)

Clandestine sex work and trafficking extend beyond camps to urban hubs	Previous research confirms that Cox's Bazar, Chattogram, and Dhaka serve as transit and destination points for trafficking networks.	Mohajan (2019); IOM (2021)
Social stigma and gender-based violence silence victims	Prior studies also emphasize how stigma, fear of disbelief, and normalized violence prevent Rohingya women from reporting abuse.	Human Rights Watch (2019); Yousafzai & Hossain (2022)
Use of digital media (IMO, Facebook Messenger) by traffickers	Other studies note the rising role of digital platforms in facilitating trafficking and recruitment in refugee populations.	Latonero (2019); IOM (2020)
Transnational trafficking routes to Malaysia, Thailand, and the Gulf	Regional trafficking research identifies Malaysia, Thailand, and Gulf countries as key destinations for Rohingya women.	Mahmood et al. (2017); Ehsan (2021)

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Recommendations

The study highlights multiple overlapping challenges faced by Rohingya women that make them vulnerable to sex trafficking and clandestine sex work. Deep-rooted gender inequality limits women's autonomy and decision-making, while poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities leave them economically dependent and exposed to exploitation. Limited education and awareness further weaken their ability to recognize and resist trafficking risks. Social stigma and widespread gender-based violence silence victims, preventing them from reporting abuse or seeking help. In addition, trafficking is facilitated by local brokers, community leaders, and transnational networks, exploiting both the absence of strong protective mechanisms and the desperation caused by statelessness and camp restrictions.

Strengthen education and empowerment: Expand literacy, skills training, and income-generating programs targeting young women to reduce economic dependence.

Improve awareness and reporting systems: Launch culturally appropriate campaigns in the Rohingya language, enhance GBV reporting mechanisms, and ensure confidential grievance redress.

Economic safety nets: Introduce women-focused cash transfers, small business grants, and vocational opportunities to address immediate financial precarity and dowry-related pressures.

Regulate marriage and migration processes: Establish stricter oversight on marriage brokers and provide safe migration information to prevent exploitation through fake proposals and job offers.

Enhance multi-level monitoring: Strengthen surveillance in camps, urban hotspots, and border routes; develop cross-border rescue and repatriation frameworks with regional partners.

Disrupt trafficking networks: Hold complicit Majhis and pimps accountable, increase community-based monitoring, and implement digital literacy and online safety workshops.

Support survivors: Provide safe shelters, psychosocial counseling, legal aid, and reintegration opportunities to reduce stigma and foster resilience among trafficked women.

Practical Contribution of the Study

This study provides an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic and structural factors that fuel sex trafficking and clandestine sex work among Rohingya refugees. It contributes practically by identifying the specific vulnerabilities, exploitation methods, and trafficking routes, offering concrete evidence-based for designing interventions. The insights can guide policymakers, humanitarian actors, and international agencies in developing gender-sensitive livelihood initiatives, strengthening anti-trafficking monitoring, and establishing survivor-centered protection frameworks. Ultimately, the study bridges the gap between empirical evidence and actionable policy measures to safeguard Rohingya women from exploitation.

Conclusion

The complicated vulnerabilities that Rohingya women and children in Bangladesh suffer from sex trafficking and clandestine sex work are grave human rights abuses. They are particularly susceptible to exploitation because of their gender inequity, economic suffering, lack of legal protection, and statelessness. The patterns of supply and demand in the sex trade, which occurs both domestically and abroad, exacerbate this problem. A multifaceted strategy is necessary to address this, with an emphasis on bolstering community-based protective

systems, increasing educational and economic prospects, and fortifying legal frameworks. Since Bangladesh cannot handle this situation on its own, international cooperation is required to develop long-term solutions, such as repatriation with full human rights or reintegration into a third country. To lessen the continued exploitation of Rohingya women and children, this study highlights the necessity of thorough, coordinated measures.

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