

Original Article

# Socio-Religious Implications of Japa Syndrome among Igbo Youth

Godswill Okechukwu Nwokedi<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Achi<sup>2</sup>, Chukwuebuka Adimorah<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Department of Religion and Human Relations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State Nigeria University

Received Date: 11 August 2025

Revised Date: 13 September 2025

Accepted Date: 16 October 2025

**Abstract:** The Japa syndrome, which describes the increasing migration of Nigerian youths in search of better opportunities abroad, has become a major concern with social and religious consequences, especially among Igbo youths. This study examines the background and reasons behind this movement, focusing on how it affects religion, cultural values, and social life. The aim of the research is to show how the Japa trend shapes young people's views on faith, moral duty, and community life, as well as its effects on families, local development, and participation in religious practices. The research adopts a qualitative methodology through the review of existing studies, supported by interviews and field observation. The study identifies the role of poor governance, economic struggles, and different religious teachings that either support or criticise migration. The findings reveal that while many see migration as a way of survival and success, it also creates moral and spiritual questions, weakens family and community ties, and challenges religious teachings on destiny, divine care, and duty to one's homeland. The study discusses both the risks and possible benefits of the trend, suggesting that religious leaders and institutions need to respond with moral guidance, youth empowerment, and social action. This work adds to research on migration and religion by providing a socio-religious view of the Japa syndrome, with useful lessons for policy makers, the Church, and the wider Igbo society.

**Keywords:** Japa Syndrome, Igbo, Youth, Socio-Religious, Implications.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Japa syndrome which is the recent high rate of emigration of Nigerian citizens to foreign countries in search of greener pastures has become a cause for serious deliberation. Olayinka (2023) describes "Japa" as a term recently integrated into Nigeria's socio-economic and political vernacular, means the emigration of Nigerians without intentions of imminent return. Oludotun (2023) notes that the impetus driving the Igbo youths towards emigration lies in their disillusionment of the socio-economic problems caused by unmet governmental commitments and deficient leadership which is characterized by a dearth of transparency and accountability. This state of affairs has precipitated stagnation in development which results in the misallocation of scarce resources that could have helped in building infrastructure, it now impede educational advancement and compromise public health, thereby increasing the plight of the impoverished masses. Consequently, this has eroded the trust of the youth in both the nation and its governance structures. This sentiment is succinctly encapsulated by Olumoyo and Abiri (2024) who states that:

Many who are fixed up in the 'japa' syndrome say they have lost confidence in Nigeria and trust that the country practically has no promises for them. While many have chosen the education and employment route to 'japa', others chose more exceptionally dangerous trips, either crossing the Mediterranean Sea. The belief, therefore, is that immigrating to other parts of the world would afford them better education, better career opportunities, better paying jobs, and of course, a safer and more secure future for their children. These benefits, they believe are quite vague in Nigeria at the moment (p. 92)

The prevailing circumstances have engendered a scenario wherein individuals exhibit a willingness to undertake any means necessary to depart the country, irrespective of the associated hazards. According to Afunugo (2023), most migrants are confronted with dire risks, including: murder, torture, rape, persecution and exploitation by traffickers, militias and certain state authorities within the purported "countries of their dream. It is further documented that approximately 15 per cent of migrants, particularly those travelling without official documentation, confront heightened susceptibility to exploitation and trafficking, either en route or upon reaching their destination (Afunugo, 2023).

Consequently, japa syndrome among Igbo youths has serious effects on the society and religion. As more young people leave in search of better opportunities abroad, their connection to their culture and religious practices weakens. Many communities are losing skilled individuals, and family structures are being disrupted. Churches and traditional religious



institutions are also seeing a decline in active participation as young people migrate in large numbers. The motivation for this research stems from the growing concern over the impact of mass migration on Igbo society. With increasing numbers of young people leaving, there is a need to understand how this trend affects cultural identity, religious values, and community stability. And this can only be done by examining the socio-religious implications of Japa syndrome. Therefore this study aims to highlight both the benefits and challenges of migration. It also seeks to explore possible ways to address these issues and find sustainable solutions that will help retain talent while allowing young people to pursue their aspirations. Therefore instead of seeing migration as the only solution, a balanced approach is needed in which one allows for personal growth while preserving the values that hold Igbo society together.

#### **A. Conceptual Clarification**

##### *a) Japa*

Iremeka (2022) defines “Japa as the mass exit from Nigeria” (p. 1). However, according to Dayo (2022), Japa is a Yoruba language meaning to run, flee, or escape. The word according to him takes firm root in the aspiration that young Nigerians have to leave the country for good. To run, flee, escape or travel out to foreign countries in search of greener pastures is colloquially known in Nigeria as Japa.

##### *b) Syndrome*

Calvo, Karras, Phillips, Kimball and Wolf (2003), defines syndrome as “a recognizable complex of symptoms and physical findings, which indicate a specific condition for which a direct cause is not necessarily understood” (p. 2). Afungo (2023) states that syndrome pertinent to this work is a set of actions, behaviours/attitudes or even events and conditions that occur together and suggest the presence of abnormalities. It represents problems and difficulties that create anomalies.

##### *c) Meaning of Japa Syndrome*

Japa means to run, flee or escape. It is a Yoruba word which takes its root in the aspiration that young Nigerians have to leave the nation for good. According to Olumoyo and Abiri (2023), it means the emigration of Nigerians in mass usually for greater economic opportunities. Relocation is a natural human experience as there are various reasons for relocation which includes: Medical, Education, Visitation, and Tourism among others. However, in Nigeria, it's a serious situation mostly caused by economic hardship. Olumoyo and Abiri (2023) states that the Japa movement is also seen beyond the desire for a better life as many Nigerians are fleeing the country in response to the failure and corruption of the public institutions that should serve them. Japa is a continuous mass exodus of the citizens to other countries of economic benefits to Nigerians. For instance, Nigeria's economic downturn has been observed to be the key reasons that drove many Nigerians out of the country to survive. The health sector crisis which includes (unpaid wages, endless strike, and poor infrastructural facilities) is observed as reasons for brain-drain in the health sector.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study adopts Push-Pull Migration Theory which was propounded by Lee in 1966. This explains why people move from one place to another. According to the theory, people are pushed to leave their home because of problems such as unemployment, poverty, insecurity, or lack of opportunities. At the same time, they are pulled to a new place by the hope of better education, jobs, living conditions, and social recognition. The theory helps to understand the Japa syndrome among Igbo youths, showing why many young people feel forced to leave Nigeria for better chances abroad. It also connects to religious and moral issues, such as duties to family, religious beliefs, and community expectations, which can encourage or discourage migration. However, the theory has a limitation: it mostly focuses on economic and social reasons for moving and does not fully explain personal, cultural, or religious reasons. Despite this, it is useful for this study because it helps analyse the main reasons why youths migrate, while also considering how religion, morals, and community values influence their decisions. This makes it easier to understand the social and religious effects of the Japa syndrome.

#### **A. Causes of Japa Syndrome Among Igbo Youths**

##### *a) Bad Governance and Corruption in Nigeria*

Bad governance has become a norm in Nigeria and in the other hand, corruption is seen as a sophisticated and dangerous game that people who are into it do not fear any prosecution (Maduegbuna, 2012). In Nigeria, corruption is celebrated. It really saddens one to admit that corruption has unconsciously become a policy thrust of both past and present governments in spite of all the wars against corruption. As a matter of fact, the Nigerian political class has turned the Nigeria's democracy into money making ventures as this is now the motivating factor for politics in Nigerian. The governmental structures are poor and so are holders of political offices who are no more accountable to the masses. According to D. Abalogu (Personal Communication, 27<sup>th</sup>

January, 2025) vying candidates could do anything humanly possible (including murder) just to win election and perhaps become rich overnight. As it stands, it is crystal clear that the absence of the right leadership with the right characters, and the right backbone has facilitated the spread of corrupt practices in Nigeria which has led to many young people migrating to a country with a better economy. The adoration of fraudulent wealth acquisition has made corruption eat deep into all segments of the Nigerian society. As a result of this menace, D. Abalogu (Personal Communication, 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2025) also the Nigerian society has consistently been producing a large population of individuals whose sources of wealth are never questioned or scrutinized. Even if sources are known to be corrupt and rotten more than the slim at the bottom of garbage dump, they are still being showcased arrogantly to attract some ovations. The economic wealth is heavily concentrated in the hands of the few rich people. In the light of this, the need for ethical reorientation and upholding of our value system is of utmost importance. Many of these according to Chukwu (2016) are said to have been washed ashore in the sands of irrelevance to the extent that greater part of Nigerians can no longer put their footprints on the sands of history such that, in departing, the living may entertain beautiful reminiscences of their sublime achievements.

#### *b) Lack of Employment Opportunities*

Unemployment increases crime rate in the society. Some of the known crimes includes: robbery, kidnapping, prostitution, cultism, drug trafficking, online fraud and so on. According to S. Achi (Personal communication, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2025) online fraud popularly called *Yahoo Yahoo* is the most crime which is a vogue for youths now, as many youths see it as a short-cut to quick wealth and many unemployed youths in Nigeria is involved in it. Some unemployed youths involve in these crimes as a means to earn a living. While others who do not want to join these high rated crimes involve in malpractice and gambling. These teach the younger generation negative options available for survival and create insecurity of lives and properties in the society, thereby causing many to Japa.

#### *c) Economic Hardship*

It could be observed that as far as unemployment affects the individual, the most economic effect is loss of income and that unemployment is in the first place a problem of poverty. Dayomi (1992) states that the economic effect of unemployment includes; fall in national output, increase rural-urban migration, waste of human resources, high rate of dependency ratio, poverty among others. The reduction in employment has left many youths in Nigeria without purchasing power as some of them who have lost their jobs. Furthermore, according to O. Omaka (Personal Communication, 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2025) the inability to earn a sustainable income leads to reduced consumer spending, which negatively affects businesses and slows down economic growth. O. Omaka (Personal Communication, 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2025) further reveals that when purchasing power declines, companies experience lower sales, which may force them to close down, further leading to unemployment crisis. This effect of job losses and economic downturn creates an unstable financial environment that makes it difficult for the economy to recover. The persistent economic hardship also leads to an increased rate of youth migration, both internally and internationally.

#### *d) Insecurity*

One of the problems of insecurity has been the incessant killings of innocent persons which have continued to breed inexplicable fear into the psyche of the people despite the country attempt to bring peace (Chukwu, 2013). As a consequence, the South-East has been plagued with insecurity over the past few months as gunmen with unknown identities have been clashing with security agencies leading to several deaths. The menace of insecurity, terrorism and insurgency is currently a burning issue in south east. The daily reoccurrence of insecurity in Igboland has made many persons helpless with no place to run to for safety. Ngwoke and Akabike (2022) records that, this daily reoccurrence of insecurity in various forms such as kidnapping, armed robbery and banditry is witnessed at people's homes, schools, churches, business places, market places. Even the police stations where people usually run for safety are burnt down in some cases. This social malady which has crept into Igboland is being perpetuated by a seemingly faceless group of people popularly labeled as "Unknown Gunmen". Hassan-Wuyo (2022) identifies them as bandits or terrorists whose identity seem hidden. Many security agents seem to be reluctant in providing the true identity of these culprits or apprehending them. Hence the onslaughts have continued unabated and the perpetrators of this crime most often escape without capture. Ujumadu (2022) asserts that, many of these criminals are known but perhaps due to political factors some of them are not served adequate punishment for fear of being attacked or killed. Under these circumstances, many youths flee in order to have an assured security.

#### e) *Social Pressure*

In Igbo society, success is often equated with material wealth and societal recognition, which are frequently showcased during public events such as weddings and festivals. These cultural expectations create an environment where migration is perceived as a direct path to achieving financial independence and status. According to Okeke (2022), the pressure to meet these benchmarks pushes individuals to seek opportunities abroad, even when the risks involved are considerable. In relating to family obligations Igbo families, migration is seen as an investment that promises financial returns in the form of remittances. C. Adimorah (Personal communication, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025) states that this perception places a heavy burden on individuals, as families often provide resources to facilitate migration with the expectation of future support. Eze (2023) notes that these family pressures can lead individuals to prioritize migration over local opportunities, driven by a sense of duty to uplift their households economically.

#### f) *Medical Purpose*

The inadequacy of healthcare facilities in Nigeria is a critical issue. Many hospitals lack essential equipment, modern technology, and adequately trained personnel to address medical conditions. Okeke (2022) observes that patients with chronic illnesses or conditions requiring advanced surgical interventions often have no choice but to seek treatment abroad, where healthcare systems are better equipped to handle such cases. The absence of accessible diagnostic tools and the prevalence of medical errors further lead to the situation, which fosters mistrust among healthcare services. A shortage of skilled medical professionals also drives medical-related migration. According to E. Achi (Personal communication, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2025) many highly trained doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists and other medical experts have themselves emigrated in search of better working conditions, leaving behind a void in expertise within the Nigerian healthcare system. According to Nwankwo (2021), this "brain drain" has left the local population with limited options for specialized care, prompting individuals to travel to countries with more advanced and reliable medical systems. For many families, migration for medical purposes is a collective decision influenced by the dire need to save lives. Eze (2023) explains that individuals with financial means often migrate temporarily to access healthcare for themselves or their loved ones. However S. Achi (Personal communication, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2025) states that for some, the experience of better health services abroad may lead to a permanent stay, further fueling the *Japa Syndrome*. The rising cost of medical care in Nigeria makes it more economical for some individuals to seek affordable yet high-quality treatments in countries with efficient healthcare systems. Medical tourism has thus become an attractive option, with countries like India, the UK, and the US being preferred destinations. This trend is compounded by the lack of government investment in health infrastructure and the inefficiencies in public healthcare delivery. The quest for better maternal and child healthcare also contributes to migration. Women seeking safer delivery options and families aiming for better pediatric care often opt to migrate to countries with advanced obstetric and neonatal facilities. Okafor (2023) highlights that the high maternal and infant mortality rates in Nigeria serve as a push factor for migration, as families prioritize the safety and well-being of their loved ones.

### **B. Socio Religious Implications of Japa Syndrome Among Igbo Youth**

Many Igbo youth who are fixed up in the 'japa' syndrome say they have lost confidence in Nigeria which shows that the country practically has no promises for them. While many have chosen the education and employment route to 'japa', others chose more exceptionally dangerous trips, either crossing the Mediterranean Sea. The belief therefore, is that migrating to other parts of the world would afford them better education, better career opportunities, better paying jobs, and of course, a safer and more secure future for their children. These benefits, they believe are quite vague in Nigeria at the moment. Whatever the so-called benefits may be, the truth is that the migration of qualified professionals has a far more damaging impact on Igbo youth. However, some of the socio-religious implications include:

#### a) *Brain Drain*

This massive exodus of skilled workers from Igboland has resulted in a brain drain which deprives local industries, institutions, and communities of valuable expertise. The healthcare sector, in particular, has been hit hard, as a significant number of doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals relocate to countries with better working conditions and higher salaries. This has led to a shortage of qualified personnel in hospitals and clinics, reducing the quality of healthcare services available to those who remain in Nigeria. Patients now experience longer wait times, inadequate medical attention, and, in some cases, have to travel long distances to access specialist care.

The banking and financial sectors are also feeling the impact of Japa syndrome, as experienced professionals, including financial analysts, investment bankers, and accountants, are leaving for better-paying jobs abroad. This has created a talent gap, forcing local institutions to recruit and train new employees frequently, leading to reduced efficiency and slower economic

growth. In academia, universities and research institutions are suffering from the loss of professors, lecturers, and researchers who migrate due to poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, and unfavorable working conditions. This has weakened the quality of education, as students are left with a declining number of qualified mentors and researchers to guide them in their academic pursuits. The technical and industrial sectors are not exempt from the effects of migration. Skilled artisans, engineers, and IT professionals who are crucial for technological advancements and industrial growth are leaving Nigeria for opportunities in more developed economies. This loss of talent has stunted local innovation and industrial expansion, as businesses struggle to find competent professionals to sustain their operations.

Another major consequence of this talent drain is the loss of entrepreneurial potential. Many young, innovative, and highly skilled individuals who could have contributed to the economic development of Igboland by establishing businesses and creating jobs are instead building careers abroad. The absence of these talents means fewer job opportunities for those left behind, further leading to unemployment and economic hardship in Igboland.

#### b) *Devaluation of Naira*

As a result of the surge in the number of Nigerians who need dollars for travel, the United States currency has become scarce, thereby forcing it to exchange for as much as ₦1,500 for a dollar in the parallel market. Rising dollar demand has put tremendous pressure on the naira and unfortunately, none of the policies introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria to save the naira from a continuous fall seems to be working. The alarming exchange rate between the naira and the dollar has caused a rise in almost every imported commodity in Nigeria.

#### c) *Decline of Youth Participation of Church Activities*

Churches play a role in Igbo society and this serves not just as places of worship but also as a center where social, cultural, and spiritual matters are addressed. The mass exodus of young people from Igboland has led to dwindling congregations, particularly in local parishes. According to C. Ofor (Personal communication, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 20205) many Catholic, Anglican, and Pentecostal churches report reduced attendance at Sunday services, decreased financial contributions, and a shortage of young people to take up leadership roles in the church. This trend is causing concerns among religious leaders, who fear a weakening of communal faith practices. This trend is causing concerns among religious leaders, who fear a weakening of communal faith practices and a decline in the vibrancy of church activities. The absence of young people in congregations not only affects attendance but also impacts the growth and sustainability of religious institutions. C. Obi (Personal communication, 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2025) states that any churches rely on the youth for various functions, including choir participation, evangelism, and technical support for modern worship services. Their migration leaves gaps in these roles, leading to challenges in maintaining the dynamism of religious gatherings. The absence of young people in religious spaces has generational consequences. The church serves as a training ground for future leaders, providing mentorship, moral guidance, and community responsibilities that shape individuals into responsible members of society. Only the participation of fewer youths involved would bring a leadership vacuum, and older generations are left without successors to continue religious traditions and administrative functions within the church.

#### d) *Weakening of Traditional Religious Practices*

Japa syndrome also affects Igbo traditional religion. Many young people leaving Igboland do not pass down indigenous religious practices, leading to the erosion of ancestral traditions such as *Igba afa* (divination), *Iri ji* (New Yam Festival), and other religious rites. According to S. Okafor (Personal communication, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2025) traditional religious shrines that once thrived in villages are gradually being abandoned, as modernity and migration contribute to the decline of indigenous worship. The weakening of traditional religious practices among the Igbo is one of the socio-religious implications of the Japa syndrome. However with the mass migration of young people in search of better opportunities abroad, these practices are increasingly fading as there are fewer individuals left to sustain and transmit them to future generations. One of the most affected aspects of Igbo traditional religion is *Igba Afa* (divination), which helps in guiding individuals through spiritual consultation. According to C.. Ezimmo (Personal Communication, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025) diviners also known as *Dibia Afa*, serve as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual worlds thereby offering solutions to problems through divination practices. With the younger generation moving away from home and showing little interest in traditional spiritual vocations, the number of trained *Dibia Afa* is decreasing. Many elders who are custodians of this knowledge are aging, and without apprentices to pass their wisdom onto, this sacred practice is at risk of extinction. Another cultural event affected by migration is the *Iri Ji* (New Yam Festival). This festival is a celebration in Igbo land that marks the beginning of the harvest season and honoring the earth goddess and ancestors for a bountiful yield. The festival brings unity and serves as a medium for cultural transmission to younger

generations. However, as more youths migrate abroad, there is decline in the participation of the festival thereby reducing its vibrancy. Many families no longer observe the festival with the same enthusiasm, and younger generations, influenced by Western lifestyles are increasingly detached from its significance. The absence of young people who would normally inherit these traditions has led to reduced communal engagement and in some cases, the outright neglect of this important ritual. According to S. Okafor (Personal communication, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2025) traditional shrines and sacred groves which once serves as centers for Igbo spirituality, are also suffering from abandonment. Many of these religious sites were maintained by families and communities that upheld indigenous belief systems.

However, as migration continues, the younger generation either converts to Christianity or distances itself from traditional worship, leading to the neglect and desecration of these sacred spaces. Some of these shrines have been demolished to make way for modern structures, while others remain in ruins due to a lack of maintenance and reverence.

Furthermore, migration helps in cultural dilution which is a case where younger Igbo people, after spending extended periods abroad, gradually adopt foreign religious beliefs and lifestyles that weaken their attachment to traditional practices. According to S. Okafor (Personal Communication, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2025) many youths who return to Igbo land do not actively engage in traditional worship, and in some cases, they discourage others from participating, considering it outdated or irrelevant in contemporary society. The exposure to global religious movements, especially Pentecostal Christianity, has also contributed to the demonization of many indigenous practices, further accelerating their decline.

### **C. Loss of Traditional Values to Modernization Among Igbo Youths**

As more Igbo youths migrate in search of better opportunities, there is growing concern about the erosion of traditional values due to modernization. The Igbo people have long been known for their rich cultural heritage, communal lifestyle, and deep religious devotion. However Nwosu (2022) remarks that migration exposes young people to foreign cultures that often conflict with indigenous values, leading to a gradual loss of traditional identity. One of the most significant areas of cultural erosion is language loss. According to Eze (2019), the Igbo language, once a crucial marker of identity, is rapidly declining as more youths embrace English and other foreign languages. Many emigrant youths struggle to maintain fluency in Igbo, and some fail to pass it on to their children. This decline is detrimental, as language carries historical narratives, folklore, and wisdom unique to the Igbo people.

Another area of concern is the weakening of family and communal ties. Obasi (2018) opines that Igbo society traditionally upholds the values of “onye aghana nwanne ya” (let no one leave their brother behind), emphasizing collective responsibility. However, modernization promotes individualism, where personal success is prioritized over family and community welfare. Many Igbo youths who migrate struggle to maintain close relationships with their extended families, resulting in a decline in social support systems that once played a crucial role in conflict resolution, financial aid, and moral guidance. The impact on religious commitment is also evident. Nwosu (2022) states that Christianity remains the dominant religion among the Igbo, but migration exposes many to secularism, atheism, and pluralistic ideologies that challenge traditional religious values. Indigenous Igbo religious practices, which were already declining, face further threats as younger generations show little interest in their spiritual heritage. Modernization also reshapes moral values and ethical standards among Igbo youths. Okonkwo (2021) opines that the traditional Igbo value system promotes virtues such as respect, humility, and integrity. However, Western influence, particularly through social media and global pop culture, encourages individualistic and materialistic lifestyles. For instance, the once-celebrated Igbo work ethic known as “igba mbo” (diligence and perseverance) is being overshadowed by a growing obsession with quick wealth, sometimes leading to engagement in unethical activities such as cyber fraud.

The concept of marriage and gender roles has also evolved among Igbo youths due to modernization. According to Obasi (2018), marriage in Igbo culture is a communal affair, with families playing roles in partner selection and marital negotiations. Today, many young Igbo emigrants embrace Western ideals of independence in choosing life partners, sometimes opting for interethnic or interfaith unions that challenge traditional norms. While this allows for personal freedom, it also creates cultural tensions between emigrants and their families, especially regarding expectations of bride price, family involvement, and gender roles in marriage. Okeke (2021) states that it presents opportunities for Igbo youth such as access to better education, improved economic prospects, and exposure to diverse perspectives that can enhance personal growth. However, the challenge remains in balancing modernization with the preservation of traditional values. If the loss of traditional values is not addressed, the Igbo cultural identity may face long-term decline. While change is inevitable, Igbo youths must find ways to integrate modern opportunities without completely abandoning their heritage.

### III. CONCLUSION

Japa Syndrome is driven by a combination of social, economic, and medical factors. Social pressure, stemming from cultural expectations, familial obligations, peer influence, and the pervasive impact of social media, often creates an environment where migration is viewed as the only route to success and fulfillment. Similarly, the lack of opportunities within Nigeria particularly in the areas of employment, education, and entrepreneurship further pushes individuals to seek better prospects abroad. The inadequacies of the healthcare system in Nigeria, including poor infrastructure, a shortage of skilled professionals, and limited access to specialized care, also compel many to migrate for medical purposes, seeking life-saving treatments and better healthcare services. The cumulative impact of these factors highlights the complexity of *Japa Syndrome* and the underlying structural issues that perpetuate it. Challenges require comprehensive reforms, including improving local opportunities in education and employment, addressing social pressures, and investing in healthcare infrastructure.

### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

To mitigate the prevalence of Japa Syndrome among Igbo youth, several recommendations can be made that address the causes and promote sustainable development. However, the following are possible recommendations:

- The quality of education and skills training in Nigeria, especially in Igboland, must be improved to meet the demands of the modern job market. More investment should be directed towards updating curricula, improving infrastructure in schools and universities, and providing vocational training programs. This will equip the younger generation with the necessary skills to thrive in both local and international job markets, reducing the need for migration in search of better educational opportunities.
- To address unemployment, it is essential to create more job opportunities through government policies that encourage local businesses and foreign investments. Governments at the state and federal levels should focus on infrastructural development, promoting industries, and providing entrepreneurship through grants, low-interest loans, and business incubators will help reduce the economic pressures that push individuals abroad in search of better financial opportunities.
- Significant investment is needed to improve healthcare infrastructure, training of medical personnel, and access to specialized medical services. This includes modernizing hospitals, ensuring access to affordable health insurance, and reducing the outflow of medical professionals by providing better working conditions and salaries. In creating a robust healthcare system that meets the needs of its citizens, Nigeria can reduce the reliance on migration for medical treatment and attract international patients, transforming the country into a medical hub.
- Instead of viewing migration solely as an escape, there should be a more positive engagement with the Nigerians in diaspora. Policies that encourage remittances, investments in local businesses, and partnerships between Nigerian expatriates and local entrepreneurs can help channel the resources and expertise of the diaspora back into the country. This would create a mutually beneficial relationship that both supports individuals abroad and strengthens the local economy.
- Many individuals migrate from rural areas to urban centers and eventually abroad due to the lack of opportunities in their hometowns. Government and private sector initiatives should focus on rural development by providing access to education, healthcare, and job opportunities. This will help reduce rural-urban migration, ensuring that people can thrive within their communities rather than feel compelled to leave in search of better prospects.

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## VI. APPENDIX

**Table 1 : List of Interviewed People**

	Name	Location	Occupation	Date of Interview
1	Rev Canon Dr. Divine Abalogu	Awka	Lecturer/Priest	27 <sup>th</sup> January, 2025
2	Dr. Simeon Achi	Canada	Medical Doctor	13 <sup>th</sup> January, 2025
3	Mr Okechukwu Omaka	Enugu	Immigrations Officer	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2025
4	Dr. Nnabuike Okorie	Onitsha	Medical Doctor	22 <sup>nd</sup> January, 2025
5	Mr. Chukwuebuka Adimorah	Awka	Student	12 <sup>th</sup> February, 2025
6	Nr. Eucharia Achi	Abakaliki	Nurse	13 <sup>th</sup> January, 2025
7.	Rev Chukwuma Ofor	Enugu	Priest	12 <sup>th</sup> January, 2025
8	Rev Chindo Obi	Nnewi	Priest	20 <sup>th</sup> January, 2025
9	Mr. Solomon Okafor	Nnewi	Student	10 <sup>th</sup> February, 2025
10	Mr Chibuzor Ezimmuo	Onitsha	Traditionalist	3 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2025

## VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors express their sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions whose support made this study possible. Special thanks go to the Department of Religion and Human Relations, **Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka**, for providing academic guidance and institutional support during the research process. The authors also appreciate the contributions of colleagues, mentors, and the participants who provided valuable insights during interviews and field observations. Their perspectives greatly enriched the study’s findings.

### a) Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. All expenses were personally covered by the authors.



*b) Author Contributions*

- Godswill Okechukwu Nwokedi<sup>1</sup> – Conceptualization of the study, data collection, analysis, and manuscript drafting.
- Daniel Achi<sup>2</sup> – Review of literature, critical editing, and methodological supervision.
- Chukwuebuka Adimorah<sup>3</sup> – Field coordination, data interpretation, and final proofreading of the manuscript.

All authors reviewed and approved the final version of this paper before submission.

*c) Competing Interests*

The authors declare that they have no competing interests financial, academic, or personal that could have influenced the research, analysis, or conclusions presented in this paper. No author has any affiliation, financial involvement, or relationship that might be perceived as a potential conflict of interest.

*d) Information and Resource Availability*

All data and materials used in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. There are no restrictions on data sharing or material transfer agreements (MTAs) associated with this research. No datasets, software, or additional materials from this study have been deposited in a public database; therefore, no accession numbers are applicable.