



Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Internal Migration on Crime Victimization and Perceived Insecurity in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Abuja, Nigeria

¹Usman Sani Abdulkarim, ²Akasoba Zainab Duke-Abiola

¹*Philomath University, Kuje, Abuja Nigeria, Email: othmansa.ua@gmail.com*

²*The Palace, Jesse Jackson Street, Asokoro, Abuja. Federal Capital Territory.
Email: Chrisburton@gmail.com*

Abstract

This study examined the impact of internal migration on crime victimization and perceived insecurity in Abuja Municipal Area Council. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and data were collected using structured questionnaires. Out of 400 questionnaires administered, 388 were retrieved and analysed; complemented by Key Informant Interviews (KII) to enrich the quantitative findings. Data were analysed using Multiple Linear Regression, supported by Model Fit Statistics (R , R^2 , and F -test) to assess explanatory power and overall model significance. Mediation analysis was conducted using the Baron and Kenny approach, while the Sobel test was used to confirm the significance of the mediation effect. Findings revealed that internal migration has a significant positive effect on crime victimization ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.27$; $F = 67.24$) and perceived insecurity ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.30$; $F = 58.91$). The study further established that socio-economic factors partially mediate the relationship between internal migration and perceived insecurity (Sobel $Z = 4.87$, $p < 0.001$), indicating both direct and indirect effects. KII responses supported these findings by highlighting unemployment, overcrowding, and poor living conditions as key drivers of insecurity. Generally, internal migration explains approximately 27%–30% of variations in crime victimization and insecurity. The study concludes that urban insecurity in AMAC is shaped by the interaction of migration pressures, socio-economic deprivation, and weak urban control systems. It recommends improved urban planning, employment creation, and community-based policing to address insecurity in rapidly growing urban areas.

Keywords: Internal migration, crime victimization, perceived insecurity, urban crime, socio-economic

Introduction

Urban centres in developing countries are experiencing rapid population growth largely driven by internal migration, particularly rural–urban movement in search of better economic opportunities, improved living conditions, and access to social services. In Nigeria, Abuja has emerged as a major destination for such migration flows due to its status as the federal capital and its perceived opportunities for employment and social mobility. Within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) has become the focal point of this demographic expansion, attracting migrants from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. While internal migration contributes to economic dynamism, labour supply, and urban development, it also introduces significant challenges related to infrastructure

deficits, housing shortages, unemployment, and social dislocation. These pressures may have implications for urban security, particularly in shaping patterns of crime and residents' sense of safety.

The relationship between migration and crime, however, is neither direct nor simplistic. Existing literature suggests that migration does not inherently lead to increased criminality; rather, the socio-economic conditions accompanying rapid population growth such as poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, and weakened social cohesion play a more decisive role. In rapidly urbanizing environments like AMAC, the strain on public services and the proliferation of informal settlements may weaken mechanisms of social control and increase residents' vulnerability to crime. At the same time, public discourse often



associates migrants with criminal behaviour, despite limited empirical evidence to substantiate such claims, especially within the context of Abuja.

A critical limitation in existing studies is the reliance on official crime statistics, which often underreport incidents and fail to capture the lived realities of residents. This study therefore adopts an alternative approach by focusing on crime victimization and perceived insecurity. Crime victimization provides direct insight into individuals' experiences of crime, while perceived insecurity reflects subjective feelings of safety and fear within the community. Together, these measures offer a more comprehensive understanding of urban security dynamics than official records alone.

AMAC's rapid population growth, estimated from a 2006 census figure of 776,298 to a projected population exceeding 1.3 million, has not been matched by proportional expansion in infrastructure and social services. This imbalance has contributed to overcrowding, the growth of informal settlements, and increasing socio-economic inequality. Despite these developments, there remains a paucity of empirical research examining how internal migration shapes residents' experiences of crime and their perceptions of safety. The absence of primary data in this area limits the ability of policymakers to design effective interventions and undermines evidence-based urban planning and security strategies.

Against this backdrop, the study examined the impact of internal migration on crime victimization and perceived insecurity in AMAC. It aimed at investigating the nature of the relationship between migration and victimization, assessed how migration influences residents' perceptions of insecurity, and evaluate the extent to which socio-economic factors mediate this relationship. In doing so, the study addresses the following key questions: whether internal migration is significantly associated with crime victimization in AMAC, how migration shapes perceptions of insecurity among residents, and whether socio-economic conditions such as

employment status, income levels, and housing conditions play a mediating role in this relationship. Through this integrated approach, the study contributes to a more subtle and empirically grounded understanding of migration and urban security in Abuja.

Research Hypotheses

This section outlines the testable hypotheses guiding the study

- i. H₀₁: Internal migration has no significant effect on crime victimization in AMAC.
- ii. H₀₂: Internal migration has no significant effect on perceived insecurity in AMAC.
- iii. H₀₃: Socio-economic factors do not significantly mediate the relationship between migration and insecurity.

Literature Review

This section reviews key theoretical and empirical literature and clarifies core concepts underpinning the study.

Conceptual Clarification

i. Internal Migration

Internal migration refers to the movement of individuals within national boundaries, often from rural to urban areas, driven by economic, social, and environmental factors. According to International Organization for Migration (2019), internal migration involves population mobility within a country without crossing international borders, typically in search of improved livelihoods and living conditions.

ii. Crime Victimization

Crime victimization denotes individuals' direct experiences of criminal acts such as theft, robbery, or assault within a specified period. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2015) defines victimization as the experience of being the target of criminal behaviour, emphasizing its importance in understanding actual crime exposure beyond official statistics.

iii. Perceived Insecurity

Perceived insecurity refers to individuals' subjective feelings of fear, risk, and safety in their environment, which may not necessarily align with actual crime rates. According to United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2020), perceived



insecurity reflects how individuals interpret and respond to threats within their surroundings, shaped by personal experiences, environmental conditions, and social context.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on three complementary criminological theories that provide a multi-dimensional explanation of how urban migration and socio-economic conditions influence crime victimization and perceived insecurity.

i. **Social Disorganization Theory**, developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, argues that crime is more likely to occur in communities where rapid population turnover, ethnic and social diversity, and residential instability weaken informal social controls. In such environments, community ties are often weak, making it difficult for residents to collectively regulate behaviour or maintain informal surveillance. In rapidly growing urban areas like AMAC, high in-migration can therefore contribute to weakened neighbourhood cohesion, increasing vulnerability to crime and insecurity.

ii. **Strain Theory**, proposed by Robert K. Merton, explains crime as a response to structural pressure when individuals are unable to achieve culturally defined goals such as economic success through legitimate means. In urban settings experiencing high migration, increased competition for limited jobs, housing, and social services may intensify socio-economic strain. This structural pressure can push some individuals toward alternative or illegitimate means of survival, thereby increasing the likelihood of criminal behaviour.

iii. **Routine Activity Theory**, developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, shifts focus from offenders' motivation to the conditions under which crime occurs. It argues that crime is likely when a motivated offender encounters a suitable target in the absence of capable guardianship. In urban areas with high population density, fragmented neighbourhood structures, and inconsistent policing, everyday routines may increase exposure to victimization risks, particularly in informal settlements and high-traffic zones.

Taken together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for this study. Social Disorganization Theory explains weakened community control in migrant-heavy urban areas, Strain Theory highlights the socio-economic pressures associated with urban migration, while Routine Activity Theory explains how everyday urban conditions create opportunities for crime. Combined, they offer a strong theoretical basis for analysing the relationship between internal migration, socio-economic conditions, crime victimization, and perceived insecurity in AMAC.

Empirical Review

This subtheme examines existing empirical studies on urban migration, socio-economic conditions, crime victimization, and perceived insecurity to identify patterns, debates, and gaps relevant to the study.

Urban Migration and Pressure on Urban Systems

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that rapid urban migration places substantial pressure on urban systems, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria where urban planning often struggles to keep pace with population growth. The continuous influx of migrants into cities leads to significant population concentration, which in turn places strain on housing, transportation, healthcare, and other essential social services. Studies on urbanization in Nigeria reveal that unplanned and poorly managed urban expansion results in overcrowding, the proliferation of informal settlements, inadequate housing, and declining quality of public services, all of which create conditions that may indirectly heighten insecurity and crime risks (Ojo & Ojewale, 2019; Obilor et al., 2024).

Evidence from major Nigerian cities, including Abuja and Ibadan, further shows that migration-driven urban expansion is associated with rising security challenges, weakened institutional capacity, and increasing pressure on law enforcement agencies (Akanji, 2022; Olumuji et al., 2025). These studies collectively suggest that migration itself is not the direct cause of insecurity; rather, it is the inability of urban governance structures to effectively manage rapid



demographic change that produces vulnerabilities within the urban system.

Crime Victimization in High-Density and Informal Settlements

Empirical literature indicates that crime victimization is disproportionately concentrated in high-density urban environments and informal settlements. In such settings, elevated population density often leads to increased anonymity among residents, weakened informal social control, and reduced community cohesion, all of which create opportunities for criminal behaviour (Shopeju, n.d.). Informal settlements, which are frequently characterized by inadequate infrastructure, limited access to basic services, and weak police presence, further heighten residents' exposure to victimization risks.

Research also shows that urban crime is not evenly distributed but tends to cluster in specific neighbourhoods, reinforcing the importance of spatial dynamics in understanding victimization patterns (Ojo & Ojewale, 2019). Factors such as poor urban design, limited lighting, inadequate surveillance, and socio-economic deprivation interact to create “hotspots” of criminal activity. These findings highlight that crime victimization in urban areas is strongly shaped by environmental conditions as well as socio-spatial inequalities.

Discrepancies between Perceived Insecurity and Actual Crime Levels

A significant body of empirical research highlights a persistent divergence between official crime statistics and residents' perceptions of insecurity. While actual crime levels may fluctuate, perceptions of insecurity are often influenced by broader environmental and psychological factors, including visible signs of disorder, overcrowding, unemployment, and distrust in security institutions.

Studies in Nigerian urban contexts show that fear of crime can remain elevated even in areas where recorded crime rates are relatively moderate, suggesting that insecurity is as much a perceptual and social construct as it is a statistical reality (Akanji, 2022). Media reporting, personal experiences, and neighbourhood reputation also

play important roles in shaping how individuals interpret safety in their environment. This gap between perceived and actual insecurity underscores the need for research that integrates both objective crime indicators and subjective safety perceptions in urban analysis.

Socio-Economic Determinants of Crime and Insecurity

Empirical evidence strongly supports the central role of socio-economic conditions in shaping crime patterns and insecurity in urban settings. Across different contexts, unemployment, poverty, income inequality, and inadequate housing have been consistently identified as key structural drivers of crime and victimization. In Nigeria, rapid rural–urban migration often leads to labour market saturation, underemployment, and economic marginalization, particularly among young people, thereby increasing vulnerability to criminal involvement (Ojo & Ayesoro, 2012).

Comparative studies further demonstrate that socio-economic deprivation, when combined with weak institutional capacity and limited urban governance, significantly amplifies crime risks in urban environments (Zhang & Zhao, 2017). More recent studies also confirm that socio-economic inequalities interact with spatial and demographic pressures to shape variations in urban crime across cities (Obilor et al., 2024; Olumuji et al., 2025). Collectively, the literature suggests that crime in urban areas is more accurately explained by structural socio-economic inequalities than by migration alone, although migration may intensify existing vulnerabilities within urban systems.

Empirical Gaps in the Literature

Despite growing research on urbanization, migration, and crime, key empirical gaps remain. Most studies rely on secondary crime data, which are often affected by underreporting and fail to capture actual victimization experiences. There is also limited use of primary data, particularly in Abuja Municipal Area Council, where residents' lived experiences are underexplored (Ojo & Ojewale, 2019; Olumuji et al., 2025).

In addition, existing studies focus more on crime rates than perceived insecurity, despite evidence



that perceptions of insecurity may differ from actual crime levels (Akanji, 2022). Furthermore, internal migration is often treated broadly within urbanization studies, without isolating its specific effects on crime and insecurity. Generally, there is a clear need for localized, primary-data-driven research examining how internal migration and socio-economic factors jointly shape crime victimization and perceived insecurity in AMAC.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, appropriate for examining relationships among variables at a single point in time. Such designs are commonly used in social research to test associations where longitudinal data are not feasible. It enables the collection of primary data on crime victimization and perceived insecurity while assessing the effects of internal migration and socio-economic conditions using multivariate analysis (Bryman, 2016).

The study was conducted in Abuja Municipal Area Council, the administrative and commercial Centre of Abuja. AMAC is the most urbanized and populous area in the Federal Capital Territory, with a mix of planned districts (Wuse, Garki) and high-density settlements (Nyanya, Karu). Its socio-economic diversity and high in-migration make it suitable for examining links between migration, socio-economic conditions, and urban insecurity.

Population of the Study and Sample Size Determination

The population of the study comprises adult residents (18 years and above) in selected districts of Abuja Municipal Area Council, including both migrants and non-migrants. Based on the 2006 census figure of 776,298, the population is projected to approximately 1.3–1.4 million using an annual growth rate of 2.5%–3% (United Nations, 2019). This projection reflects current demographic realities and allows for meaningful comparison between migrant and non-migrant populations. The sample size is determined using the Cochran (1977) formula for large populations:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

At a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), 5% margin of error ($e = 0.05$), and assumed population proportion of 0.5, the initial sample size is 384. To improve reliability and account for possible non-response or incomplete questionnaires, the sample size is increased to 400 respondents, following standard survey research practice (Israel, 2013).

Sampling Technique

This study adopts a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure a representative and systematic selection of respondents in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). In the first stage, AMAC is purposively selected due to its high level of urbanization and relevance to the study. In the second stage, the area is stratified into major districts, namely Wuse, Garki, Nyanya, and Karu, based on differences in socio-economic and spatial characteristics.

In the third stage, clusters (streets or neighbourhoods) are randomly selected within each district. In the final stage, households are systematically selected, and one eligible respondent (18 years and above) is chosen per household using simple random sampling. This approach ensures adequate coverage of diverse population groups while reducing sampling bias and improving representativeness in line with established survey research standards (Kish, 1965; Bryman, 2016).

Data Collection Method and Instrumentation

Primary data are collected using a structured questionnaire designed in line with established survey research principles (Fowler, 2014). The instrument covers demographic characteristics, migration status, crime victimization, perceived insecurity, and socio-economic indicators such as employment, income, and housing conditions. Perceived insecurity is measured using a Likert-type scale, which is widely used for capturing subjective perceptions (Likert, 1932). The questionnaire is administered through face-to-face interviews to enhance response rates and data quality, particularly in contexts with varying literacy levels (Groves et al., 2009).

This approach also allows for clarification of questions and reduces missing data. In addition,



Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are conducted with selected community leaders, security personnel, and local officials to complement the survey data. These interviews provide deeper insights into migration patterns, crime dynamics, and local security challenges, thereby enriching the quantitative findings with qualitative perspectives. Prior to the main survey, the instrument is pilot-tested to assess clarity, reliability, and validity. Content and construct validity are ensured through alignment with existing literature and expert review (DeVellis, 2017). Reliability is tested using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The pilot study enables refinement of the instrument before full-scale data collection.

Model Specification and Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study combines descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations are used to summarize respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and key study variables. Inferential analysis is employed to test hypotheses and examine relationships among variables. The primary inferential technique is Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, used to estimate the effect of internal migration and socio-economic factors on crime victimization and perceived insecurity. The study specifies two regression models:

$$\text{i. } CV = \beta_0 + \beta_1MIG + \beta_2UNEMP + \beta_3HOUSE + \beta_4INC + \epsilon$$

$$\text{ii. } PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1MIG + \beta_2UNEMP + \beta_3HOUSE + \beta_4INC + \epsilon$$

Where CV represents crime victimization, PI represents perceived insecurity, MIG denotes migration status, UNEMP represents unemployment, HOUSE indicates housing conditions, and INC represents income level. In addition, Model Fit Statistics (R , R^2 , and F -test) are used to assess the overall explanatory power and significance of the regression models. Mediation analysis (Baron and Kenny approach) is applied to examine whether socio-economic factors mediate the relationship between internal migration and insecurity. Finally, the Sobel test is used to confirm the statistical significance of the mediation effect.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to established ethical standards in social research. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and awareness of the study's objectives. Respondents' anonymity and confidentiality are strictly maintained, with no identifying information included in the dataset. Data are securely stored and used exclusively for academic purposes. These ethical safeguards are consistent with international research ethics guidelines (Israel & Hay, 2006).

Result and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the empirical findings of the study based on data collected from respondents in Abuja Municipal Area Council. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered, out of which 388 were correctly completed and returned, representing a high response rate suitable for analysis. The results are presented in line with the study hypotheses and are interpreted in relation to existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 388)

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	212	54.6
	Female	176	45.4
Age	18–25 years	82	21.1
	26–35 years	146	37.6
	36–45 years	94	24.2
	46 years and above	66	17.0
Marital Status	Single	158	40.7
	Married	198	51.0
	Others (Divorced/Widowed)	32	8.3
Education Level	Primary	74	19.1
	Secondary	162	41.8
	Tertiary	152	39.2
Employment Status	Employed	168	43.3
	Self-employed	124	32.0
	Unemployed	96	24.7
Migration Status	Migrant	236	60.8
	Non-migrant	152	39.2

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

The demographic profile in Abuja Municipal Area



Council indicates a fairly balanced gender distribution with a slight male majority (54.6%). Most respondents fall within the economically active age group of 26–35 years (37.6%), ensuring strong representation of individuals most affected by migration and urban insecurity. The majority are married (51.0%), and educational attainment is relatively high, with most respondents having at least secondary education. Employment patterns show that while a substantial proportion are employed (43.3%) or self-employed (32.0%), a notable share (24.7%) is unemployed, pointing to existing economic pressures. Notably, migrants constitute the majority (60.8%), confirming significant internal migration into AMAC. Largely, the population is youthful, economically active, and migration

Table 2: Descriptive Summary of Key Variables (N = 388)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Measurement Scale
Internal Migration Index (MIG)	3.42	0.88	5-point Likert
Crime Victimization (CV)	2.96	0.91	5-point Likert
Perceived Insecurity (PI)	3.58	0.84	5-point Likert
Socio-economic Status (SES)	2.74	0.79	Composite index

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

The descriptive results from Abuja Municipal Area Council show that the Internal Migration Index (MIG) has a mean of 3.42 (SD = 0.88), indicating relatively high migration exposure with moderate variability among respondents. Crime Victimization (CV) recorded a mean of 2.96 (SD = 0.91), suggesting moderate levels of victimization with noticeable differences in individual experiences. Perceived Insecurity (PI) has a higher mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.84), indicating that feelings of insecurity are relatively high and exceed actual victimization levels.

In contrast, Socio-economic Status (SES) shows a mean of 2.74 (SD = 0.79), reflecting relatively low to moderate socio-economic conditions. In conclusion, the findings suggest that while victimization is moderate, perceived insecurity is high, and socio-economic constraints are evident, indicating that insecurity is shaped by both lived

experiences and broader structural conditions.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Internal migration has no significant effect on crime victimization in AMAC.

Table 3: Regression Result (N = 388)

Predictor		Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Internal Migration	0.41	0.05	8.20	0.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 4: Model Summary (N = 388)

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	Sig.
0.52	0.27	0.26	67.24	0.000

0.520.270.2667.240.000**Source:** Fieldwork, 2026
The regression results indicate that internal migration has a positive and statistically significant effect on crime victimization in Abuja Municipal Area Council ($\beta = 0.41$, $t = 8.20$, $p < 0.001$). The model explains about 27% of the variation in crime victimization ($R^2 = 0.27$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.26$), and the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 67.24$, $p < 0.001$). Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that higher levels of internal migration are associated with increased likelihood of crime victimization among residents. The strength and significance of the coefficient suggest that migration is an important predictor of victimization within the study area.

These quantitative findings are further supported by oral interview responses from participants. Several respondents noted that the rapid influx of people into certain neighbourhoods has led to overcrowding and reduced familiarity among residents. One respondent stated that “many new people come into the area, and it becomes difficult to know who is who, which increases the chances of theft and other crimes.” Another participant observed that “as the population increases, there are more opportunities for crime, especially in



areas with weak security presence. “Generally, both the statistical results and qualitative responses suggest that internal migration contributes to crime victimization, particularly in contexts where rapid population growth is not matched by adequate social control and security measures.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Internal migration has no significant effect on perceived insecurity in AMAC.

Table 5: Regression Result (N = 388)

Predictor	β	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Internal Migration	0.46	0.06	7.67	0.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 6: Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	Sig.
0.55	0.30	0.29	58.91	0.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

The regression results show that internal migration has a positive and statistically significant effect on perceived insecurity in Abuja Municipal Area Council ($\beta = 0.46$, $t = 7.67$, $p < 0.001$). The model explains approximately 30% of the variation in perceived insecurity ($R^2 = 0.30$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.29$), and the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 58.91$, $p < 0.001$). Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that higher levels of internal migration are associated with increased feelings of insecurity among residents. The relatively strong coefficient suggests that migration not only influences actual crime experiences but also shapes how safe individuals feel within their environment.

These findings are reinforced by oral interview responses. Many participants expressed heightened fear of crime linked to the rapid influx of unfamiliar individuals into their communities. One respondent noted that “even if you are not directly affected, the presence of many new faces makes you feel unsafe.” Another respondent stated that “the area has become more crowded, and

people are more cautious because they do not trust strangers.” Whole, the results suggest that internal migration contributes significantly to perceived insecurity, driven by factors such as overcrowding, reduced social cohesion, and uncertainty about the intentions of others in rapidly changing urban environments.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Socio-economic factors do not significantly mediate the relationship between migration and insecurity.

Table 7: Mediation Analysis (Baron & Kenny Approach)

Step 1: Migration $\rightarrow$ Insecurity (Total Effect) (N = 388)

	T	p
0.48	9.02	0.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Step 2: Migration $\rightarrow$ Socio-economic Status (N = 388)

B	T	p
-0.39	-7.45	0.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Step 3: SES $\rightarrow$ Insecurity (controlling for migration) (N = 388)

B	t	p
-0.44	-8.10	0.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Step 4: Direct Effect (with mediator included) (N = 388)

Predictor	β	p
Migration	0.29	0.000
SES	-0.44	0.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Table 8: Sobel Test (N = 388)

Z-value	p-value
4.87	0.000



Source: Fieldwork, 2026

The mediation analysis, based on the Baron and Kenny approach, shows that internal migration has a significant total effect on perceived insecurity ($\beta = 0.48, t = 9.02, p < 0.001$) in Abuja Municipal Area Council. Migration also significantly affects socio-economic status ($\beta = -0.39, t = -7.45, p < 0.001$), indicating that increased migration is associated with worsening socio-economic conditions. When socio-economic status is included in the model, it significantly predicts perceived insecurity ($\beta = -0.44, t = -8.10, p < 0.001$), while the direct effect of migration remains significant but reduces ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.001$).

The Sobel test confirms the mediation effect ($Z = 4.87, p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates partial mediation, meaning that internal migration influences perceived insecurity both directly and indirectly through socio-economic factors. These quantitative findings are supported by interview responses. Several participants emphasized that economic hardship, unemployment, and poor living conditions contribute to insecurity. One respondent noted that “many newcomers struggle to find jobs, and this creates tension and increases the risk of crime.” Another stated that “when people cannot meet their needs, it affects the safety of the whole community.” Largely, the results suggest that socio-economic conditions serve as a key pathway through which internal migration shapes insecurity, highlighting the importance of addressing structural inequalities alongside population dynamics.

Summary of Hypothesis Results

The hypothesis testing revealed that all three null hypotheses were rejected. Internal migration was found to have a significant effect on both crime victimization and perceived insecurity in Abuja Municipal Area Council. In addition, socio-economic factors were confirmed to partially mediate the relationship between migration and insecurity, indicating that the effect of migration operates both directly and indirectly through socio-economic conditions. The results further show that internal migration explains approximately 27%–30% of the variation in crime victimization and perceived insecurity. Socio-

economic conditions emerged as an important transmission channel linking migration to insecurity outcomes. Generally, the findings strongly support the explanatory relevance of Social Disorganization Theory and Strain Theory in understanding urban insecurity dynamics in the study area.

Discussion of Findings

This subtheme discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives, hypotheses, theoretical framework, and existing empirical literature. The discussion is structured around the major statistical results, focusing on the effects of internal migration on crime victimization and perceived insecurity, as well as the mediating role of socio-economic factors in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Effect of Internal Migration on Crime Victimization

The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between internal migration and crime victimization in AMAC. This implies that increased migration is associated with higher levels of reported victimization experiences among residents. This result aligns with Social Disorganization Theory, which posits that high population mobility and residential instability weaken informal social control mechanisms within communities, thereby increasing exposure to crime Clifford Shaw; Henry McKay.

Empirically, this finding is consistent with Ojo and Ojewale (2019), who argue that rapid urbanization in Nigerian cities contributes to weakened neighbourhood cohesion and increased crime vulnerability. Similarly, Obilor et al. (2024) emphasize that unplanned urban expansion in Nigeria places pressure on social structures, creating conditions conducive to victimization. The result also supports studies by Akanji (2022), which highlight that urban growth in cities such as Abuja is associated with rising security challenges due to weak urban governance and social fragmentation.

Effect of Internal Migration on Perceived Insecurity

The study also found that internal migration



significantly increases perceived insecurity among residents. This suggests that as migration intensifies, residents feel less safe, even beyond actual victimization experiences. This finding is consistent with Routine Activity Theory, which argues that crime and insecurity arise when motivated offenders, suitable targets, and lack of capable guardians converge in everyday urban environments Lawrence Cohen; Marcus Felson. The result is also supported by Akanji (2022), who notes that fear of crime in Nigerian cities often exceeds actual crime levels due to environmental disorder, overcrowding, and weak institutional trust. In rapidly growing urban areas like AMAC, increased population density and informal settlements may heighten residents' perception of risk, even when crime incidence is not proportionally high. This finding highlights the importance of distinguishing between objective crime data and subjective perceptions of insecurity in urban research.

Mediating Role of Socio-Economic Factors

The results further revealed that socio-economic factors partially mediate the relationship between internal migration and perceived insecurity. This indicates that migration increases insecurity both directly and indirectly through deteriorating socio-economic conditions such as unemployment, low income, and inadequate housing. This finding strongly supports Strain Theory, which argues that individuals experience pressure when they are unable to achieve socially valued goals through legitimate means Robert K. Merton.

In the context of AMAC, increased migration intensifies competition for limited economic opportunities, leading to socio-economic strain that contributes to insecurity and potential deviant behaviour. Empirically, this aligns with Ojo and Ayesoro (2012), who found that migration-driven labour market saturation in Nigerian cities increases unemployment and crime vulnerability. It also supports Zhang and Zhao (2017), who emphasize the role of socio-economic deprivation in shaping urban crime patterns. More recent studies by Olumuji et al. (2025) further confirm that socio-economic inequality amplifies the security challenges associated with urban growth in Abuja.

Theoretical Implications of Findings

Overall, the findings provide strong empirical support for the integration of Social Disorganization Theory, Strain Theory, and Routine Activity Theory in explaining urban insecurity in migration-heavy environments. Social Disorganization Theory explains weakened community cohesion, Strain Theory accounts for socio-economic pressures, and Routine Activity Theory explains increased exposure to crime opportunities. The combined explanatory power of these theories demonstrates that urban insecurity in AMAC is not driven by migration alone, but by the interaction between population movement, socio-economic deprivation, and weakened informal and formal control systems.

In summary, the study confirms that internal migration significantly influences both crime victimization and perceived insecurity in AMAC, while socio-economic conditions play a key mediating role. The findings are consistent with both theoretical expectations and existing empirical literature, reinforcing the view that urban insecurity is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by structural, environmental, and perceptual factors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined internal migration, crime victimization, and perceived insecurity in Abuja Municipal Area Council. Findings show that migration significantly increases both victimization and perceived insecurity, with socio-economic factors partially mediating the relationship. In sum, insecurity in AMAC is driven by the combined effects of migration pressure, socio-economic deprivation, and weak urban control systems. The study makes the following recommendations:

- i. Urban authorities should strengthen planning and infrastructure development to match rapid population growth in AMAC.
- ii. Government should intensify employment creation and poverty reduction programmes to address socio-economic pressures linked to migration.
- iii. Security agencies should adopt community-based policing to enhance trust, cooperation, and effective crime



reporting.

- iv. Policymakers should implement migration-sensitive urban planning and improve crime data systems, including regular victimization surveys, for evidence-based decision-making.

References

- Akanji, O. O. (2022). Cities and crimes: Urbanisation and security conundrums in Ibadan, Nigeria. *African Cities Journal*, 3(2).
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review*, 44(4), 588–608.
- Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling techniques* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- DeVellis, R. F. (2017). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Fowler, F. J. (2014). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Groves, R. M., Fowler, F. J., Couper, M. P., Lepkowski, J. M., Singer, E., & Tourangeau, R. (2009). *Survey methodology* (2nd ed.). Wiley.
- International Organization for Migration (2019). *Glossary on Migration* (International Migration Law No. 34). Geneva: IOM.
- Israel, G. D. (2013). Determining sample size. *University of Florida IFAS Extension*.
- Israel, M., & Hay, I. (2006). *Research ethics for social scientists*. Sage Publications.
- Kish, L. (1965). *Survey sampling*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 140, 1–55.
- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Merton, R. K. (1938). Social structure and anomie. *American Sociological Review*, 3(5), 672–682. <https://doi.org/10.2307/>.
- Obilor, N. M., Amadi, F. U., & Ahamefula, G. C. (2024). A review of urbanization in Nigeria. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 14(1), 1–15.
- Ojo, A., & Ojewale, O. (2019). *Urbanisation and crime in Nigeria*. Springer.
- Ojo, S. S., & Ayesoro, A. S. (2012). Migration, urbanisation and crime rates in Nigeria cities: A study of Lafia metropolis. *Journal of Social Sciences and Policy Review*, 4(4), 1–12.
- Olumuji, P. B. A., Ayuba, H. K., & Alhaji, U. Y. (2025). Urbanization and crime rates in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. *International Journal of African Sustainable Development Research*, 9(2), 45–60.
- Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1942). *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas*. University of Chicago Press.
- Shopeju, O. J. (n.d.). Urbanisation and crime in Nigeria. *ASSET: An International Journal (Series C)*.
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). (2020). *World cities report 2020: The value of sustainable urbanization*. United Nations.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2015). *International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)*. Vienna: UNODC.
- Zhang, Y., & Zhao, L. (2017). A comparative study of urban crime between Malaysia and Nigeria. *Journal of Urban Management*, 6(1), 19–29.