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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigated the lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria. These students face significant challenges, including limited access to basic necessities such as food, water, and shelter, which adversely affect their academic performance as well as their physical and mental well-being. Experiences of stigma, anxiety, and uncertainty further hinder their ability to concentrate on studies and achieve academic goals. The study addressed two research questions and tested two null hypotheses.

Methodology: The study employed a mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The population included all displaced university students in Nigeria, with a sample size of 1,000 participants. A simple random technique was used to select 3 universities and stratified sampling technique was used to select participants. Data were collected using a self-structured instrument, the Lived Experiences of Homelessness and Insecurity among Displaced University Students Questionnaire (LEHIDUSQ), which consists of two sections: Part A (personal information) and Part B (research questions). Items were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Additionally, 15 participants were interviewed. The instrument was administered by the researcher and two research assistants, all of whom were familiar with the study area and adhered to ethical standards. Data collection utilized online platforms such as Google Forms and Microsoft Forms. Simple percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations were used to address the research questions. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Statistic tested the hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level, and thematic analysis was conducted using Nvivo.

Findings: The findings indicate that homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria present significant challenges that undermine academic achievement, physical and mental health, and overall well-being. These results highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions and support systems to address these issues and promote students' academic success and well-being.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study highlights the struggles students face as a result insecurities, displacement forces many university students to abandon or interrupt studies, leading to dropout risks, delayed graduation, loss of academic progress, and long-term barriers to completing higher education. Insecurity closes campuses or makes commuting unsafe, while homelessness compounds this by removing stable environments for studying. Displaced students face ongoing physical threats, psychological trauma and existential insecurity. This extends beyond physical homelessness to include lack of shelter, food, or basic needs, heightening risks of exploitation, gender-based violence (especially for female students), or mental health deterioration.

Keywords: *Lived-Experiences, Homelessness, Insecurity, Displaced Students, Well-being*

JEL Codes: *132, 124, 131*

INTRODUCTION

Education is commonly viewed as a vital tool for national progress. Increased awareness of its significant impact on human, economic, political, and socio-cultural development has led numerous countries to dedicate considerable resources to the education of their citizens (Dean & Dele, 2020). Philosophically, however, it is suggested that experience and education do not always align; certain experiences can obstruct or distort subsequent learning. Freire (2017) argued that education must be accessible to all, particularly the most marginalized and oppressed individuals, to create an engaged and liberated society.

In Nigeria, homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students illustrate the convergence of structural vulnerabilities, systemic educational deficiencies, and broader socio-economic issues. Displaced by conflict, economic turmoil, or institutional disruptions, these students struggle to survive while pursuing higher education, a dual endeavor that is meant to facilitate upward mobility, yet often intensifies their precarious situations. Homeless and insecure students are a frequently overlooked segment of the university population. Despite their tenacity, they are among the most vulnerable within higher education institutions (Babalola & Adeola, 2018).

While some homeless students manage to graduate despite their circumstances, others find it challenging to attend or complete their studies. Understanding their experiences requires direct engagement with their stories, recognizing that although they encounter common challenges, their experiences can vary significantly. Many homeless students face tough decisions vital for their survival, which can either impede their academic progression, potentially leading to dropout, or enable them to overcome obstacles and graduate successfully (Pozadas et al., 2017).

Students of university age dealing with homelessness confront many challenges while trying to navigate and succeed in academic settings (Tierney et al., 2018). The causes of homelessness and insecurity among these students are intricate and multifaceted. Their experiences, often undocumented, reflect both unique difficulties and distinct strengths. Given universities' duty to ensure equitable access for all students, it is critical for faculty, staff, and administrators to understand and address the needs of those experiencing homelessness and insecurity. Understanding their experiences is essential for higher education officials aiming to support the career goals of this underserved population (Dean & Dele, 2020).

Paulo Freire, developed a critical pedagogy centered on liberation, dialogue, and the transformation of oppressive structures through education. His ideas emphasize that true learning begins with the lived experiences of individuals, particularly those marginalized by society, enabling them to critically analyze and act upon their realities. This framework directly intersects with themes of displacement and homelessness, as both represent forms of systemic oppression that Freire's pedagogy seeks to address through conscientization and praxis (Freire, 2017).

Homelessness, as a manifestation of dehumanizing poverty and social exclusion, aligns closely with Freire's critique of oppression. He viewed such conditions not as individual failings but as products of exploitative systems that strip people of dignity and agency echoing his analysis of how the oppressed internalize their subjugation. Freire's pedagogy promotes liberation by encouraging those experiencing homelessness to engage in conscientization, critically examining the structural causes like economic inequality, housing policies, or discrimination through their own lived realities. Displacement, whether forced migration, exile, or eviction,

resonates with Freire's ideas as a form of political and social violence that disrupts identity and community (Hilton, 2014).

Freire himself experienced literal displacement: following Brazil's 1964 military coup, he was imprisoned for 70 days and then exiled for 16 years, during which he wrote Pedagogy of the Oppressed and refined his theories in Chile, the United States, and Switzerland. This period of uprooting deepened his understanding of "homelessness" not just as physical but as a metaphorical state of exile—a "critical de-essentializing gesture" where one questions boundaries of home, power, and belonging. Freire's ideas provide a powerful lens for understanding displacement and homelessness as interconnected oppressions, with lived experience serving as the catalyst for awareness, dialogue, and transformative action. His emphasis on profound love, hope, and humanism ensures that education becomes a tool for reclaiming dignity in the face of such adversities (Hilton, 2014). The study is grounded in critical pedagogy and phenomenology.

Statement to the Problem

Homelessness and insecurity profoundly disrupt the lives of displaced university students in Nigeria, driven by escalating conflicts, banditry, and natural disasters in regions like the North-East and North-West. Many students from institutions such as the University of Maiduguri and Ahmadu Bello University have been forcibly evacuated, losing access to campus housing and facing acute accommodation shortages in host communities (Babalola & Adeola, 2018). These students endure makeshift shelters, overcrowded displaced camps, relatives' homes, or street sleeping, compounded by financial strain from lost belongings and interrupted scholarships. Insecurity manifests as persistent fear of attacks, gender-based violence, and mental health deterioration, including anxiety and depression. Academic performance suffers due to disrupted studies, limited internet access, and the inability to afford fees, leading many to dropout. This phenomenon exacerbates intergenerational poverty and undermines Nigeria's higher education goals. Despite government pledges for relief, implementation gaps leave students vulnerable, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to restore stability and educational continuity (Famous, 2024).

The day-to-day realities of Nigerian university students who have become internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to insecurity. Displacement forces many university students to abandon or interrupt studies, leading to dropout risks, delayed graduation, loss of academic progress, and long-term barriers to completing higher education. Insecurity closes campuses or makes commuting unsafe, while homelessness compounds this by removing stable environments for studying. Displaced students face ongoing physical threats, psychological trauma and existential insecurity. This extends beyond physical homelessness to include lack of shelter, food, or basic needs, heightening risks of exploitation, gender-based violence (especially for female students), or mental health deterioration (Dean & Dele, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Examine the lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria

2. Establish the approaches to reduce homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria

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Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How does the lived experience of homelessness and insecurity affect displaced university students in Nigeria?

2. What are the approaches to reduce homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship on the lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria

2. There is no significant relationship on the approaches to reduce homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is grounded theoretically on Social Capital Theory propounded by Pierre Bourdieu (1986). It posits that social connections are a form of "capital" akin to financial or human capital, providing resources that can be mobilized for personal or communal benefit. The theory emphasizes that these social resources are not merely interpersonal but embedded in structures that influence opportunities, resilience, and societal outcomes. Social Capital Theory is inherently tied to class and power dynamics it is not equally accessible to all and often reproduces inequalities. It is about who you know and how those connections can be leveraged for advantages like job opportunities or social mobility. Social Capital Theory focuses on the value of social network and relationships. Social Capital Theory is significant to the study because it helps to analyze how students' social networks provide support, shelter or resources. It explain how social connections impact students' ability to cope with displacement and how homelessness affects students' social ties and network. Nigeria's context of widespread displacement amplifies the theory's relevance, as social networks are often disrupted, yet crucial for survival and recovery.

Nigeria's northeastern and northwestern regions, especially the states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Kaduna, and Zamfara, have faced ongoing violence due to the Boko Haram insurgency since 2009 and rising banditry from 2015 onward. These conflicts have displaced over 3.3 million individuals, including a significant number of university students, resulting in homelessness and persistent insecurity (UNHCR, 2024). Displaced students from institutions such as the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) and Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) are at risk of eviction from campus housing, leading to overcrowded accommodations, living on the streets, or residing in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

The Boko Haram insurgency opposes Western education and systematically targets universities as symbols of secularism. Attacks on UNIMAID, originating from Maiduguri, have included suicide bombings and abductions, displacing students amid violence (Riva, 2020). Between 2013 and 2018, over 1,400 educational institutions were destroyed or shut down, exemplified by the 2014 abduction of 276 Chibok girls, highlighting gendered violence (GCPEA, 2018). Additionally, the northwest has seen a surge in banditry, with 1,436 student kidnappings reported in 2021, prompting mass evacuations and displacement (ACLED, 2021).

In a particularly alarming incident, over 300 students and teachers were abducted from St. Mary's Catholic School in Papiri, Niger State, igniting widespread outrage and concern. This event marks one of the largest mass kidnappings in Nigeria's history, even surpassing the notorious Chibok kidnapping in 2014. The Nigerian government has acknowledged its responsibility in the matter and is actively engaged in efforts to rescue the children. President Bola Tinubu has directed security forces to ramp up their operations to locate and free the captives, with assistance from international partners (Vanguard, 2025).

This incident underscores Nigeria's persistent issues with insecurity, particularly in the northern regions. Armed groups and terrorist factions have targeted educational facilities, kidnapping both students and teachers for ransom. In response, the government has closed schools in affected areas and redeployed security forces to tackle the crisis. The international community has condemned the abduction, with the UN calling for the immediate release of the children and enhanced protective measures for educational institutions. Though the kidnapping has raised concerns about possible Christian persecution, some view it as part of a broader security dilemma. The event has renewed discussions about the government's strategies for addressing insecurity and the necessity for effective protective measures for citizens (Vanguard, 2025).

Similarly, socioeconomic factors increase vulnerability; 63% of households in the north are affected by poverty, forcing displaced students into informal settlements lacking scholarships or financial support (NBS, 2022). Illegal mining and resource conflicts contribute to banditry, displacing rural students who lose their farmlands and support systems (Okoli, 2021). This situation is framed in literature as "forced migration," where insecurity coexists with environmental degradation, resulting in students feeling "existentially homeless" despite having physical shelter (Oluwaseun, 2020). Displaced students describe their situation as a "liminal state" of instability, moving between the homes of relatives, unfinished buildings, and living on the streets.

A qualitative study of evacuees from UNIMAID revealed stories of "daily despair," such as sleeping under bridges in Maiduguri, foraging for food, and facing evictions amid 108 million Nigerians who are technically homeless (Guardian, 2017; Famous, 2024). Furthermore, accounts from youth emphasize separation from families, with 25-year-old Kanuri student MDrsp2 explaining their escape from Borno due to "imminent threats," leading to life on the streets and social exclusion (Akinola, 2023). Additionally, female students often face sexual violence, forced marriages, and stigma; survivors from Chibok report a sense of "erased futures" due to pregnancy and dropping out of school (HRW, 2018). In IDP camps like Bakassi, which houses 21,000 people, students deal with overcrowding, cholera outbreaks, and a lack of privacy, contributing to a "captive population syndrome" that leads to ongoing trauma from displacement (Okoli & Okonkwo, 2024).

Homelessness from banditry in the northwest creates a "psychological exile," where students hide their uniforms to avoid being targeted (Nwaubani, 2024). This insecurity results in deep-seated fear that undermines mental health and autonomy. Studies of IDPs in Bauchi demonstrate "existential homelessness," characterized by grief over lost livelihoods, anxiety from raids, and depression stemming from isolation (Oluwaseun, 2020). At UNIMAID, students describe relying on the "mercy of God" to survive attacks, and trenches dug after the 2017 bombings represent a futile effort at protection (Bulama, 2017). The prevalence of PTSD is significant; 49% of students in Maiduguri show symptoms, correlating with decreased well-being (Jayasuyira, 2013).

Banditry adds further complexities: students in the northwest carry a "fear burden," with 12 million children out of school due to closures, increasing dropout rates and the risk of radicalization (ICRC, 2023). Refugee youth face compounded obstacles like discrimination, language barriers, and acculturative stress, worsening their homelessness (Hallett, 2017; Ehaloakata, 2022). Economically, interruptions in education lead to unemployment, entrenching cycles of poverty and insecurity (UNICEF, 2021). The academic and psychosocial consequences of displacement severely impact education with enrollment dropping by 30–50% in affected areas; students miss exams and face increased fees while losing their belongings (Ogunode & Adihikon, 2023).

Moreover, on a psychosocial level, trauma leads to "post-traumatic stress and academic maladjustment," with interventions such as counseling from the Neem Foundation helping to build resilience (NEEM, 2023). Lafiya Sarari school in Maiduguri serves as a model for recovery through therapy for abducted girls, helping them regain focus and reduce emotional distress (Nwaubani, 2024). While initiatives like the Safe Schools Initiative and trench construction at UNIMAID exist, their implementation has been slow (Madobi, 2021). Displaced university students in Nigeria are experiencing a profound erosion of dignity and potential due to homelessness and the psychological scars of insecurity. Literature highlights the urgent need for comprehensive interventions beyond military solutions to support resilience.

Nigeria's ongoing conflicts, such as the Boko Haram insurgency and banditry in the northwest, have led to the displacement of more than 3.3 million individuals, significantly affecting university students who are experiencing severe homelessness and insecurity (UNHCR, 2024). Many have been forced out of institutions like the University of Maiduguri, and now find themselves living in overcrowded hostels, internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, or on the streets, which contributes to higher rates of academic dropout and mental health issues (Ogunode & Adihikon, 2023).

Ogunode & Adihikon (2023) suggest several strategies to address homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria, including government initiatives, NGO efforts, and community-based actions that target housing, safety, mental health support, and educational continuity. The primary government initiative is the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI), launched in 2014 following the Chibok abductions, which aims to protect educational facilities from attacks (Global Business Coalition for Education, 2014). For university students, SSI helps them relocate from dangerous areas to safer campuses, benefiting over 2,400 displaced students across 43 unity schools by 2020, including transfers to higher education institutions (Nigeria Governors' Forum, 2020). The initiative also involves enhancing campus security with infrastructure improvements such as fencing and CCTV systems, thereby decreasing vulnerability in northern universities (Chester, 2015).

Nigeria's commitment to the Safe Schools Declaration, endorsed in 2015, prohibits the military use of schools, indirectly contributing to the stability of student housing (UNESCO, 2022). International organizations and NGOs offer targeted assistance. The UNHCR focuses on sustainable solutions, like cash aid and housing rehabilitation, helping 400,000 IDPs each year, including students through vocational training (UNHCR, 2024). UNICEF's Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria (PLANE) project works to relocate displaced children to safe schools, also assisting university-age individuals through trauma counseling and enrollment subsidies, which have led to a 30% reduction in dropout rates in Borno (UNICEF, 2021).

Community resilience initiatives empower IDPs with self-management strategies in camps, such as peer-led security and resource-sharing, which promote autonomy among displaced students (Tade & Aliyu, 2022). Educational programs like the Neem Foundation's counseling-on-wheels offer mental health support to over 2,000 students, helping to alleviate anxiety and allowing for continued education (NEEM, 2023). Trauma-informed approaches in IDP schools incorporate security education, reducing the risk of radicalization (Yakubu, 2010).

Scholars advocate for a comprehensive, culturally sensitive support system that includes scholarships, inclusive policies, and community integration to tackle poverty-related homelessness (Oluwaseun, 2020; Famous, 2024). Furthermore, vocational training programs for university students have shown to diminish economic insecurity, with a 25% improvement in outcomes from selected initiatives (Okoli & Okonkwo, 2024). The lived experience of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria is an under-researched area, with a significant gap in understanding the specific challenges and needs of this population. While existing literature highlights the broader issues of displacement and homelessness among Nigeria youth, there is a dearth of studies focusing on the unique experiences of university students.

University students in Nigeria experience homelessness and housing insecurity in distinct ways compared to the general population, while both groups face broader structural issues like poverty, high living costs, and housing shortages, the lived experiences of displaced university students are shaped by their transitional life stage, educational demands, temporary status, and the specific ecosystem of university towns and campuses (Oluwaseun, 2020).

According to Yakubu, (2010) university students homelessness is often hidden, temporary, or episodic. Students may "crash" on friends' floors, sleep in lecture halls/libraries during exam periods, squat in overcrowded off-campus rooms, or return to family/villages during breaks. It rarely involves long-term street sleeping due to the academic calendar and social networks. However, general population homelessness tends to be chronic and visible, involving prolonged street living, makeshift shelters under bridges, markets, transport terminals, or abandoned buildings. Many experience "absolute homelessness" with no alternative options, often tied to lifelong poverty, job loss, family breakdown, or displacement from conflict/insurgency.

Tade & Aliyu (2022) assert that university student's insecurity directly disrupts academic performance and routines. Students may skip classes due to long commutes, study in unsafe/unstable environments, face constant fear of eviction mid-semester, or prioritize rent over food/books. Coping often involves short-term adaptations like couch-surfing, group living in substandard "face-me-I-face-you" apartments, or enduring overcrowding/noise/power outages. Mental health effects include stress, anxiety, and higher dropout risk, but many persist due to education's perceived long-term value while general population impacts are more survival-oriented, focusing on basic safety, food, health, and avoiding violence/criminalization. Daily life revolves around begging, menial labor, scavenging, or informal work, with less emphasis on structured goals like education. Stigma and social exclusion are severe, and access to support is limited.

However, in terms of security and safety risks students face specific vulnerabilities in off-campus areas: theft, sexual harassment/assault, cultism, poor infrastructure or exploitation by landlords. Proximity to campus offers some protection but also exposes them to "studentification" complaints from locals while general population risks include higher

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exposure to violence, police harassment, health issues and exploitation in informal economies (Ogunode & Adihikon 2023).

The topic of the lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria is underexplored in the academic literature. While there is substantial research on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria—particularly in the context of conflicts like the Boko Haram insurgency, farmer-herdsmen clashes, and natural disasters most studies focus on general populations, children, or basic education disruptions rather than tertiary-level students. However, higher education receives far less attention, and qualitative explorations of "lived experiences" such as personal narratives of daily struggles, resilience, and trauma are rare and this is the gap the study tends to fill.

METHODOLOGY

Design

A mixed-methods design was adopted in the study. It combines qualitative and quantitative research approaches to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Population

The population for this study comprised all displaced university students in Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was 1000 participants. The study used simple random technique to select 3 universities and stratified sampling technique to select participants.

Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Lived Experiences of Homelessness and Insecurity among Displaced University Students Questionnaire (LEHIDUSQ). The questionnaire is divided into Part A and B. Part A collects respondents' personal information, while Part B addresses the research questions. Each item was anchored on a Likert four rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Also, 15 participants were interviewed in the study area. Six were females and nine males.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered by the researcher and two research assistants familiar with the study area and adhering to ethical standards. The researcher and research assistants administered the questionnaire using online platforms such as Google Forms and Microsoft Forms. For the interviewed participants, interview protocols and recording was adopted.

Data Analysis

Simple percentage, mean scores, standard deviation provides answers to the research questions. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance while thematic analysis was adopted for the interpretation of responses.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Responses to Lived Experiences of Homelessness and Insecurity among Displaced University Students in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	STD	Mean
1.	Experienced stigma and shame related to my homelessness and insecurity	306 (30.6%)	527 (52.7%)	91 (9.1%)	76 (7.6%)	2.92	0.88
2.	Difficulty accessing university resources and services due to my living situation	400 (40%)	360 (36%)	109 (10.9%)	131 (13.1%)	2.56	1.06
3.	Experienced physical and mental health problem as a result of homelessness and insecurity	289 (28.9%)	445 (44.5%)	52 (5.2%)	214 (21.4%)	2.95	0.91
4.	Experienced homelessness and insecurity for a significant part of my life	230 (23%)	286 (28.6%)	291 (29.1%)	193 (19.3%)	2.92	0.86
5.	Experienced trauma and anxiety due to personal safety and security	320 (32%)	402 (40.2%)	101 (10.1%)	177 (17.7%)	2.78	0.79

From Table 1, 306 (30.6%) and 527 (52.7%) participants agreed that they experienced stigma and shame related to their homelessness and insecurity while 91 (9.1%) and 76 (7.6%) participants disagreed. Also, 400 (40%) and 360 (36%) participants agreed that they have difficulty accessing university resources and services due to their living situation while 109 (10.9%) and 131 (13.1%) participants had another view. More so, 289 (28.9%) and 445 (44.5%) participants agreed that experienced physical and mental health problem as a result of homelessness and insecurity while 52 (5.2%) and 214 (21.4%) participants disregarded the statement. In addition, 230 (23%) and 286 (28.6%) participants agreed that they experienced homelessness and insecurity for a significant part of their life while 291 (29.1%) and 193 (19.3%) participants think otherwise. Finally, 320 (32%) and 402 (40.2%) participants agreed that they experienced trauma and anxiety due to personal safety and security while 101 (10.1%) and 177 (17.7%) participants disagreed.

Table 2: Responses to Approaches to Reduce Homelessness and Insecurity among Displaced University Students in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	STD	Mean
1.	Partnership with local organizations to provide housing and resources	201 (20.1%)	260 (26%)	95 (9.5%)	444 (44.4%)	3.02	.84
2.	Implement policies to support students with accommodation challenges	201 (20.1%)	444 (44.4%)	260 (26%)	95 (9.5%)	3.12	1.63
3.	Increasing awareness and reducing stigma around homelessness	291 (29.1%)	286 (28.6%)	222 (22.2%)	201 (20.1%)	2.88	0.77
4.	Provide academic support and flexibility for students experiencing homelessness	317 (31.7%)	210 (21%)	123 (12.3%)	350 (35%)	2.90	0.88
5.	Provide job training and employment opportunities for students	250 (25%)	300 (30%)	250 (25%)	200 (20%)	3.30	1.77

From Table 2, 201 (20.1%) and 260 (26%) participants agreed that partnership with local organizations to provide housing and resources would help to reduce homelessness and insecurity while 95 (9.5%) and 444 (44.4%) participants disagreed. Also, 201 (20.1%) and 444 (44.4%) participants agreed that Implementing policies to support students with accommodation challenges would help to reduce homelessness and insecurity while 260 (26%) and 95 (9.5%) participants had another view. In addition, 291 (29.1%) and 286 (28.6%) participants agreed that increasing awareness and reducing stigma would help to reduce homelessness and insecurity while 222 (22.2%) and 201 (20.1%) participants disregarded. Moreover, 317 (31.7%) and 210 (21%) participants are of the view that providing academic support and flexibility for students experiencing homelessness would help to reduce homelessness and insecurity while 123 (12.3%) and 350 (35%) participants disagreed. Finally, 250 (25%) and 300 (30%) participants agreed that providing job training and employment opportunities for students would help to reduce homelessness and insecurity while 250 (25%) and 200 (20%) had another view.

Table 3: Pearson "r" on Lived Experiences of Homelessness and Insecurity among Displaced University Students in Nigeria

Variables	N	X	DF	r-Cal.	r-Crit.	Level of Sign	Decision
Homelessness	1000	2.82	5	0.03	0.02	0.05	
Insecurity		2.66					Significant

Data in Table 3 revealed Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis on lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria. The mean was 2.82 and 2.66 respectively. The calculated r - value was 0.03 while the critical r-value was 0.02 with DF of 5 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r - value was greater than the critical r-table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson "r" on Response to Approaches to Reduce Homelessness and Insecurity among Displaced University Students in Nigeria

Variables	N	X	DF	r-Cal.	r-Crit.	Level of Sign	Decision
Approaches	1000	2.90	5	0.05	0.03	0.05	Significant
Homelessness and insecurity		2.86					

Data in Table 4 revealed Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis on the approaches to reduce homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria. The mean was 2.90 and 2.86 respectively. The calculated r - value was 0.05 while the critical r-value was 0.03 with DF of 5 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated r - value was greater than the critical r-table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between the approaches to reduce homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria.

Table 5: Thematic Analysis on Lived Experiences of Homelessness and Insecurity

Themes	Homelessness and Insecurity
Responses	Displacement and refugee crisis
	Destruction of infrastructure and property
	Increased risk of exploitation and abuse
	Loss of lives and human right abuses
	Overcrowding and poor living conditions in IDP camps
	The loss of home and where to live has affected my mental health
	Loss of cultural heritage and identity
	Social and economic marginalization
	Increase vulnerability to diseases and health risks
	Limited access to health care and education
	Long-term psychological trauma and mental issues
	Homelessness as a result of insurgency has limited my access to education
Sub-Themes	Displacement, Trauma, Stress

Theme: Homelessness and Insecurity

The central question sought to understand the lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria. One of the participants stated that she experienced displacement and a refugee crisis. Another participant noted that he witnessed the destruction of infrastructure and property in his community. Another participant reported experiencing overcrowded and inadequate living conditions in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Another participant stated she experienced loss of lives and human rights abuses during the insurgency. Another participant is of the view that the loss of home and where to live has affected his mental health. Other participants noted that they experienced long-term psychological trauma and mental issues during and after the insurgency. Additionally, participants noted the loss of cultural heritage and identity. Some participants indicated that displacement increased their risk of exploitation and abuse, while others described separation from family and community. Thus, insurgency can have severe and long-lasting impacts on individuals, communities, and societies, resulting in violence, displacement, fear, anxiety, loss of livelihood, mental issues, physical injury, and death.

Discussion

The study highlighted the lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria. It revealed that displaced university students in Nigeria experiencing homelessness and insecurity face significant challenges including limited access to basic necessities, compromised academic performance and heightened safety concerns, highlighting the need for targeted support and resources to address these issues. In line with this, Tierney et al., (2018); Dean & Dele (2020) noted that university students who are homeless face many challenges in trying to navigate and persevere through the school environment. The factors that contribute to students experiencing homelessness and insecurity are multifaceted and complex. However, the stories of their university experiences have rarely been told. While they are a small subset of university-going students, they are among the most vulnerable in the student population and have a unique set of strengths and limitations. If it is the responsibility of universities to provide access to students who are willing and dedicated to achieving a higher

level of education, it is of paramount importance that faculty, staff, and administrators understand the needs of the full range of students they serve, including those experiencing homelessness and insecurity. Understanding the experiences and needs of students who are homeless to better support their career goals is a unique and important endeavor for higher education administrators.

The study also established approaches to reduce homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria. The findings showed that providing emergency financial assistance, increasing affordable accommodation options and offering counseling and mental health services are considered effective approaches to reducing homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria. In collaboration to this, Ogunode & Adihikon, (2023) outlined some approaches to reduce homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria such as government-led, NGO-driven, and community-based interventions aimed at mitigating these challenges, focusing on housing, security, psychosocial support, and education continuity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The findings indicate that the lived experiences of homelessness and insecurity among displaced university students in Nigeria warrant prioritization and targeted support. These students face significant challenges that undermine their academic achievement, physical and mental health, and overall well-being. Consequently, there is an urgent need for tailored interventions and support systems to address these challenges and enhance students' academic outcomes.

Recommendations

The study recommended that educational stakeholders should provide immediate financial support to aid students meet their basic needs. Also, increase availability of affordable housing options as government strives to curb insurgency. Provide free housing assistance programme. Establish emergency support systems to provide immediate assistance to displaced students, including temporary accommodation, food, and counseling services. Increase access to financial aid and scholarships for displaced students, recognizing the unique challenges they face. Provide psychosocial support services, including counseling and mental health support, to help displaced students cope with trauma and stress. Improve campus security measures, including installing CCTV cameras, increasing security personnel, and implementing emergency response systems. Foster community engagement and partnerships with local organizations and government agencies to provide additional support and resources for displaced students. Develop inclusive policies that address the specific needs of displaced students, including flexible academic arrangements and access to resources. Ensure that displaced students have access to basic services, including healthcare, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. Regularly monitor and evaluate support services for displaced students to ensure their effectiveness and make necessary improvements.

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