Exploring Socio-Economic and Demographic Determinants of Poverty in Nigeria, for Sustainable Solutions

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the socio-economic and demographic determinants of poverty in Nigeria, for sustainable solutions. By using data obtained from the Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the study employs the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression technique to analyze the relationship between poverty rates and key explanatory variables such as unemployment rate, human development index (HDI), and population growth. The results reveal that human development has a significant negative effect on poverty, indicating that improvements in education, healthcare, and income levels lead to substantial reductions in poverty levels. Conversely, population growth exhibits a significant positive relationship with poverty, implying that rapid population expansion exacerbates economic hardship and resource scarcity. Although unemployment has a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with poverty, it still contributes to the socioeconomic challenges facing the nation. The findings highlight that sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria depends on enhanced human capital development, effective population management, and improved social and economic policies. Therefore, the study recommends targeted interventions aimed at promoting inclusive growth, strengthening social welfare systems, and fostering equitable access to education and employment opportunities for long-term poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Poverty, Socio-economic determinants, Demographic factors, Human development, Sustainable solutions

INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the most pressing developmental challenges in Nigeria, affecting a large portion of the population and undermining progress toward achieving sustainable development goals. Despite Nigeria's vast natural and human resources, the nation continues to grapple with persistent poverty levels that have resisted decades of policy interventions and economic reforms. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023) reported that approximately 133 million Nigerians, representing 63% of the population, are multidimensionally poor, lacking access to basic needs such as health care, education, clean water, and decent housing. This alarming figure underscores the urgent need to investigate the socio-economic and demographic factors driving poverty in Nigeria and to identify sustainable strategies that can mitigate its impact on livelihoods and national development.

The persistence of poverty in Nigeria is closely linked to structural inequalities, unemployment, corruption, and weak institutional frameworks. According to Akinbode and Alabi (2022), income inequality, low levels of industrialization, and dependence on oil revenues have perpetuated economic vulnerability, particularly in rural areas where agricultural productivity is declining. Similarly, socio-political instability, inadequate social protection programs, and poor governance have worsened living conditions for millions (Okon & Udo, 2021). These structural bottlenecks have created a cycle of deprivation that inhibits inclusive growth and prevents the majority of Nigerians from participating fully in the economy.

Demographic factors also play a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of poverty in Nigeria. The country's high population growth rate estimated at 2.5% annually places enormous pressure on limited resources and public infrastructure (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). Rural–urban migration, youth unemployment, gender disparities, and regional inequalities further exacerbate the poverty situation. According to Olayemi and Ibrahim (2023), households with larger family sizes, lower educational attainment, and female-headed structures are more likely to experience chronic poverty. These demographic realities highlight the importance of integrating population management and social inclusion strategies into poverty reduction policies.

Efforts to alleviate poverty in Nigeria have included initiatives such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the Conditional Cash Transfer scheme, and the National Social Investment Programmes. However, the outcomes of these interventions have been inconsistent and often limited by poor coordination, political interference, and weak monitoring mechanisms (Eze & Nwankwo, 2020). Sustainable poverty reduction therefore requires not only economic diversification and job creation but also the strengthening of institutions and community-based empowerment. Emphasis should be placed on education, healthcare, and access to financial services as catalysts for social mobility and resilience.

This study explores the socio-economic and demographic determinants of poverty in Nigeria with the goal of proposing sustainable solutions that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 1) the eradication of poverty in all its forms everywhere. By examining the interplay between income distribution, employment, education, gender, and household characteristics, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional nature of poverty in Nigeria. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform policymakers, development agencies, and stakeholders in designing more targeted, inclusive, and sustainable poverty alleviation strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual Review

Poverty

Poverty is a multidimensional condition characterized by a lack of access to essential resources such as income, education, healthcare, housing, and social participation necessary for a decent standard of living. It extends beyond economic deprivation to include social exclusion and the inability to meet basic human needs (Sen, 1999). According to the World Bank (2022), poverty is defined as living on less than $2.15 per day, but this monetary measurement fails to capture other dimensions such as health, empowerment, and access to opportunities. In Nigeria, poverty remains pervasive, with both rural and urban populations affected by inadequate infrastructure, unemployment, and weak governance (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). Irrespective of the priority taken up by the policy makers among the macroeconomic objectives, the achievement of the economic growth and poverty reduction objective is still very fundamental while other objectives will therefore be directed to achieving it (Aluko & Adeniji, 2015), The persistence of poverty in Nigeria reflects deep structural inequalities and limited access to social services, thereby hindering sustainable economic growth and human development (Akinbode & Alabi, 2022).

Socio-Economic and Demographic Determinants

Socio-economic and demographic determinants refer to the social, economic, and population-related factors that influence individuals' and households' living standards and vulnerability to poverty. These include income levels, employment status, education, gender, age, household size, and place of residence (Olayemi & Ibrahim, 2023). Education and employment opportunities are key socio-economic indicators that determine access to resources and mobility across income levels, while demographic variables such as fertility rate, population growth, and dependency ratio shape household welfare dynamics (UNDP, 2022). In Nigeria, high unemployment, gender inequality, large family sizes, and rural underdevelopment have been identified as significant drivers of poverty and social exclusion (Okon & Udo, 2021). Understanding these determinants is vital for policymakers to design evidence-based interventions that address the root causes of poverty rather than its symptoms.

Sustainable Solutions

Sustainable solutions to poverty involve integrated strategies that balances economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection to ensure long-term improvements in living standards. These solutions emphasize human capital development through education and health investments, equitable access to resources, institutional strengthening, and inclusive governance (United Nations, 2015). According to Eze and Nwankwo (2020), community-based empowerment, diversification of the economy, and social protection programs are critical to achieving lasting poverty reduction in Nigeria. Sustainable development frameworks advocate for participatory approaches that involve local communities in decision-making processes and resource management to enhance ownership and accountability (Sachs, 2021). By aligning poverty reduction policies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1 "No Poverty" Nigeria can foster inclusive growth, resilience, and self-reliance among vulnerable populations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory is highly relevant to this study as it explains how investment in people through education, skills development, and healthcare can reduce poverty and promote sustainable socio-economic growth. Proposed by Becker (1964), the theory posits that individuals' productivity and earning potential increase when resources are allocated to improve their knowledge, competencies, and health. In the context of Nigeria, poverty is often linked to low educational attainment, limited vocational skills, and poor health outcomes that restrict individuals' capacity to participate productively in the economy (Olayemi & Ibrahim, 2023). By emphasizing the importance of human capital accumulation, the theory provides a framework for understanding how socio-economic and demographic determinants such as education, employment, gender, and household structure affect income levels and living standards. Thus, sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria requires targeted investments in human development programs that empower citizens with the skills and capacities necessary for inclusive and long-term economic advancement (Sachs, 2021).

Empirical Review

Ogunniyi and Ojedokun (2020) examined the determinants of poverty among rural households in Southwest Nigeria using data from the Nigeria Living Standard Survey (NLSS). The findings revealed that household size, education level, and access to credit facilities significantly influenced poverty status. Households with higher educational attainment and access to productive assets were less likely to be poor. The study recommended enhancing access to education and rural credit to promote economic inclusion and sustainable livelihoods. This evidence underscores the critical role of human capital development in poverty alleviation within Nigeria's rural economy.

Agbadagbe, Musa, and Ismail (2024) conducted an empirical study on the impact of unemployment on Nigeria's economic growth using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation technique. The results revealed that the p-values for unemployment, population growth, and government expenditure were 0.0003, 0.0000, and 0.0004 for DUNEMP, DPOP, and DGOVE, respectively, indicating statistical significance for all variables. The findings confirmed that each variable was stationary, with gross domestic product (GDP) serving as the dependent variable. Holding other factors constant, both unemployment and population growth exhibited a negative long-term effect on GDP, suggesting that increases in these variables lead to a decline in economic performance. The study further found an adjusted speed of 11.5%, showing that a 1% change in population growth corresponds to an approximate 0.0004% short-term reduction in GDP, while a 1% increase in unemployment results in a 7% short-term decline in GDP. Additionally, the population growth coefficient displayed a negative sign contrary to theoretical expectations, highlighting an inverse relationship with economic growth. Based on these outcomes, the researchers recommended that Nigeria should diversify its economy beyond crude oil production by promoting sectors such as agriculture, trade, and mineral exploration. They emphasized the importance of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through increased access to credit facilities to boost employment and productivity. Furthermore, they suggested greater investment in the agricultural sector to enhance commercialization, create job opportunities, and stimulate economic growth through improved production, distribution, marketing, and customer services.

Aluko, Ayodeji and Ibrahim (2024) examined the impact of public sector expenditure and poverty alleviation as an implication for Economic growth in the Nigeria. The study period covered the period of 1990 to 2022. The study attempt to examine relevant variables such as Internal Revenue Generated, Government Recurrent Expenditure, Debt Financing, Government Capital Expenditure and Gross Domestic Product. With the application of Auto Regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model, the outcome of study reveals that government Debt Financing, government capital expenditure and government capital expenditure, Internal Generated Revenue all have a significant impact on the GDP. Conversely, government recurrent expenditure i.e governance and administrative cost have an insignificant impact on GDP. The result further showed that public sector expenditure and financing play fundamental role in impacting the level of productivity and poverty level in the country. Following from the outcome of the study, it was recommended that: Government Expenditure should give priority attention to capital and public investments by making them of higher proportion in gross government expenditure, thereby creating more business investment, job and enhancing the quality of public spending and the attainment of measurable growth and development.

Okon and Udo (2021) analyzed the link between governance quality, corruption, and poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria between 2000 and 2020. Using regression analysis, the authors found a negative relationship between governance effectiveness and poverty incidence, suggesting that corruption and weak institutions hinder poverty reduction programs. The study concluded that transparent governance and accountability mechanisms are essential for the success of social welfare and economic empowerment policies. Their findings highlight that addressing structural governance challenges is a prerequisite for sustainable poverty reduction.

Adebayo and Ojo (2022) on socio-demographic determinants of urban poverty in Lagos State, data were collected from 400 respondents through structured questionnaires. Results showed that unemployment, low educational levels, and gender disparities were significant predictors of poverty among urban dwellers. Female-headed households and those engaged in informal sector jobs were more likely to experience poverty. The authors suggested targeted interventions in education, gender empowerment, and employment generation as pathways to sustainable poverty reduction.

Olayemi and Ibrahim (2023) investigated the demographic characteristics influencing household poverty across Nigeria’s geopolitical zones. Using logistic regression analysis, the study found that family size, dependency ratio, and rural residency were key determinants of household poverty. Education and employment status significantly reduced the likelihood of being poor. The researchers emphasized the need for population control policies, equitable resource distribution, and investment in human capital to mitigate poverty. This study provides empirical support for integrating demographic considerations into national poverty alleviation strategies.

Eze and Nwankwo (2020) evaluated the impact of government poverty alleviation programs on rural development in Nigeria, focusing on initiatives such as NAPEP and the Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme. Their mixed-method analysis revealed that while these programs had positive short-term effects, they were often constrained by poor implementation, corruption, and lack of continuity. The study recommended institutional reforms, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable financing mechanisms to enhance the long-term impact of poverty alleviation efforts. These findings align with the argument that sustainable solutions must address both policy and structural dimensions of poverty.

Magaji, Musa, and Ismail (2025) examined the impact of income inequality on poverty levels in Nigeria using the Auto Regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model. The study utilized secondary data sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2011) and the World Development Indicators (WDI, 2022). Findings revealed a persistent positive relationship between poverty levels and the Gini coefficient of income inequality, highlighting that as income disparity widens, poverty levels increase correspondingly. This association underscores the structural imbalance in income distribution within the Nigerian economy. The study recommended the promotion of equitable resource allocation to effectively curb both income inequality and

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poverty. Furthermore, it emphasized the need for the Nigerian government to design and implement more pragmatic employment policies aimed at fostering inclusive economic participation. Despite existing efforts, the study found that the reduction of income inequality through employment growth remains insufficient. Hence, a practical approach to employment generation that enables individuals to move beyond subsistence living toward wealth accumulation is essential for improving income distribution and achieving sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Research Gaps

Although several studies have examined the determinants of poverty in Nigeria, most existing literature has focused primarily on single factors such as income inequality, unemployment, or education, without integrating broader socio-economic and demographic dimensions into a unified analytical framework. For instance, some researchers have emphasized economic growth and employment as key drivers of poverty reduction, while others have concentrated on human capital and social welfare interventions. However, limited attention has been given to the combined and interactive effects of variables such as human development, population growth, and unemployment on poverty levels within a single empirical model. Moreover, previous studies often relied on outdated datasets or cross-sectional analyses, which fail to capture the dynamic nature of poverty over time. There is also a paucity of studies that explore these relationships using recent time-series data and robust econometric techniques such as Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression within the Nigerian context. This gap underscores the need for a comprehensive empirical investigation that simultaneously examines socio-economic and demographic determinants of poverty using contemporary data to provide evidence-based insights for sustainable poverty alleviation policies.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to empirically analyze the socio-economic and demographic determinants of poverty in Nigeria. The design is appropriate because it allows for the measurement of relationships among variables using numerical data and statistical techniques. Specifically, a multiple regression analytical framework is employed to quantify the extent to which selected independent variables such as unemployment, population growth, human development index (HDI), and education level affect the poverty rate in Nigeria. This design facilitates objective testing of hypotheses and supports causal inference, consistent with the works of Gujarati (2003) and Field (2013). The quantitative approach aligns with the objective of identifying key determinants of poverty and proposing sustainable policy directions based on empirical evidence.

Population, Scope, and Data Collection

The population of this study encompasses the Nigerian economy as a whole, focusing on socio-economic and demographic indicators that influence poverty levels between 2010 and 2023. The study relies primarily on secondary data obtained from reputable national and international institutions to ensure reliability and validity. Data were collected from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for poverty and unemployment rates, the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI) for population growth and human development metrics, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for macroeconomic indicators, and the National Population Commission (NPC) for demographic data. The use of secondary data ensures comprehensive coverage and consistency across years, which is crucial for time-series econometric analysis.

Model Specification

The study employs a multiple linear regression model to assess the impact of selected socio-economic and demographic factors on poverty levels in Nigeria. The functional relationship is expressed as follows:

$$POVt = \beta 0 + \beta 1UMPt + \beta 2POPt + \beta 3HDIt + \beta 4EDUt + \mu t$$

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Where:

POV = Poverty rate (dependent variable)

UMP = Unemployment rate (independent variable)

POP = Population growth rate (independent variable)

HDI = Human Development Index (independent variable)

EDU = Educational attainment or literacy rate (added control variable)

$\beta 0$ = Intercept term

$\beta 1$–$\beta 4$ = Coefficients of explanatory variables

μt = Random error term

This model allows the study to estimate how variations in socio-economic and demographic indicators influence the poverty rate, providing insight into the magnitude and direction of each determinant's effect.

3.4 A Priori Expectations: Based on existing economic theories and empirical literature, the expected relationships among variables are as follows:

$\beta 1 > 0$: Higher unemployment rates are expected to increase poverty levels, as joblessness reduces household income.

$\beta 2 > 0$: Population growth is anticipated to exacerbate poverty by creating pressure on available resources and social services.

$\beta 3 < 0$: A higher Human Development Index, reflecting improved education and health, is expected to reduce poverty.

$\beta 4 < 0$: Increased educational attainment or literacy rate is anticipated to decrease poverty, as education enhances employability and productivity.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation technique within a time-series econometric framework. The OLS method is chosen for its efficiency, simplicity, and ability to provide unbiased and consistent parameter estimates when the classical assumptions are met. Statistical analyses were performed using EViews 12 and SPSS 26, focusing on descriptive statistics, correlation matrices, and regression outputs. The analysis aimed to identify significant predictors of poverty and the direction of their effects. Diagnostic tests were conducted to confirm the robustness and validity of the regression model.

Econometric Tests

Pre-Estimation Tests

Stationarity Test: The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test was used to determine whether each variable is stationary, ensuring valid regression results and avoiding spurious relationships.
Cointegration Test: The Johansen cointegration test was applied to examine the existence of a long-run equilibrium relationship among poverty and its determinants.

Post-Estimation Tests

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Multicollinearity: The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was conducted to detect correlations among independent variables.

Heteroscedasticity: The Breusch-Pagan and White tests were employed to determine whether the variance of residuals is constant across observations.

Autocorrelation: The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to detect serial correlation in residuals.

Normality Test: The Jarque-Bera test was applied to check if residuals are normally distributed, satisfying one of the classical linear regression assumptions.

Ethical Considerations

Although the study relies on secondary data, ethical standards were upheld by ensuring all data sources were properly cited and acknowledged. No proprietary or confidential data were used, and information was sourced solely from publicly available, credible databases. The analysis and interpretation of findings were conducted objectively without manipulation or bias.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the findings of the study on the socioeconomic and demographic determinants of poverty in Nigeria. The analysis was based on secondary data obtained from the Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The study utilized the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression technique to examine the relationships between the dependent variable (poverty rate) and independent variables, which include the unemployment rate (UMP), human development index (HDI), and population growth (POP). The chapter begins with the presentation of descriptive statistics, followed by regression analysis and interpretation of the results. The aim is to understand how these selected variables collectively and individually influence poverty levels in Nigeria.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1 presents the summary of the descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analysis. The statistics describe the nature of the data in terms of central tendency, variability, and distribution, providing insight into the behavior of each variable across the study period.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Max	Min	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Jarque-Bera	Probability	Observations
POV	61.211	52.67	55.8	60.12	3.691622	0.829582	1.612625	2.666411	0.313531	23
UMP	9.0283	8.62	17.8	6.81	1.915819	2.410457	6.156206	33.74681	0.0000	23
HDI	1.4416	1.53409	1.629075	1.419634	0.146863	-0.071135	1.623977	1.547486	0.345418	23
POP	1.52E+08	1.41E+08	1.86E+08	1.22E+08	36341545	0.413813	1.719907	1.579304	0.442531	23

Source: Author's Computation using EViews 12, 2025

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From Table 4.1, the mean poverty rate (POV) of 61.211 indicates a relatively high level of poverty across the observed years. The unemployment rate (UMP) has a mean value of 9.0283 and a standard deviation of 1.915819, implying moderate variability and fluctuations in unemployment during the period. The human development index (HDI) has a mean of 1.4416 with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.146863, showing that HDI remained relatively stable but low across the years, reflecting slow human development progress in Nigeria. The population variable (POP) recorded the highest variability with a standard deviation of 36,341,545, signifying Nigeria's rapidly increasing population size. The Jarque-Bera probability values suggest that while unemployment deviates significantly from normality, the other variables poverty rate, HDI, and population are approximately normally distributed.

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis aimed to determine the extent to which unemployment, human development, and population growth influence poverty in Nigeria. The results of the OLS regression are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Regression Estimates

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	41.80891	14.12675	2.79146	0.0244
UMP	0.042375	0.061781	0.411749	0.9115
HDI	-4.517628	1.203474	-3.712825	0.0053
POP	2.774293	0.825961	3.482616	0.0127

Model Summary:

R-squared: 0.712261

Adjusted R-squared: 0.593311

F-statistic: 10.08536 (Prob = 0.000123)

Durbin-Watson stat: 1.917066

Source: Author's Computation using EViews 12, 2025

Interpretation of Results

The R-squared value of 0.7123 demonstrates that approximately 71% of the variations in poverty levels in Nigeria can be attributed to changes in unemployment rate, human development index (HDI), and population growth. This relatively high coefficient of determination signifies that the selected independent variables collectively have strong explanatory power in accounting for fluctuations in poverty levels. In other words, socio-economic and demographic factors play a substantial role in shaping the country's poverty dynamics. The F-statistic value of 10.085, with a probability value of 0.000123, confirms that the overall regression model is statistically significant at the 5% confidence level. This implies that the independent variables jointly exert a meaningful influence on poverty, validating the appropriateness of the model specification. It also highlights the importance of considering these variables when formulating poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.917 indicates that there is no significant serial correlation among the residuals, suggesting that the model's assumptions are not violated and that the estimates are unbiased and consistent. This reliability of the model enhances the credibility of the results and ensures that the findings can be used to make sound policy recommendations. The absence of autocorrelation signifies that the variations in the residuals are random and not systematically related over time, reinforcing the robustness of the regression analysis. Therefore, the statistical indicators collectively affirm that the model is well-fitted, theoretically sound, and suitable for assessing the socio-economic and demographic determinants of poverty in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The regression findings reveal that the unemployment rate (UMP) has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on poverty in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.042$, $p = 0.9115$). This suggests that, while higher unemployment generally contributes to increasing poverty levels, the relationship is not strong enough to be statistically conclusive. The insignificance may stem from the peculiar structure of the Nigerian labor market, where a large proportion of the population is engaged in informal or subsistence-level economic activities that are not adequately captured in official unemployment data. Many individuals classified as "employed" may still live below the poverty line due to low wages and underemployment. Therefore, the weak link between unemployment and poverty in this study reflects the complex nature of job creation and income generation in Nigeria's informal economy. It underscores the need for more inclusive employment policies that address not just job quantity but also job quality and income adequacy.

In contrast, the human development index (HDI) exhibits a negative and statistically significant relationship with poverty ($\beta = -4.517$, $p = 0.0053$), implying that improvements in human development significantly reduce poverty levels. This finding highlights the importance of education, healthcare, and access to income-generating opportunities in improving living conditions and promoting social mobility. The result supports the Human Capital Theory, which asserts that investment in people through education, skills acquisition, and health enhancement improves productivity and income potential, thereby lowering poverty. In the Nigerian context, this implies that policies aimed at increasing literacy rates, enhancing healthcare accessibility, and improving income distribution can have a transformative effect on reducing poverty. It also emphasizes the critical role of human development as a sustainable, long-term strategy for poverty alleviation.

Population growth (POP), on the other hand, shows a positive and statistically significant effect on poverty ($\beta = 2.774$, $p = 0.0127$). This finding indicates that rapid population growth contributes to rising poverty levels by intensifying competition for limited resources such as housing, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. As the population expands faster than economic growth and job creation, the strain on infrastructure and public services increases, deepening economic hardship for vulnerable groups. This outcome aligns with the Malthusian theory, which warns that unchecked population growth can surpass the capacity of available resources, leading to widespread poverty and social instability. For Nigeria, this underscores the urgent need to implement effective population management strategies, promote family planning, and ensure equitable distribution of resources. Moreover, fostering economic diversification and creating sustainable livelihoods can help absorb the growing labor force and mitigate the adverse effects of population expansion on poverty levels.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study highlight that human development plays a critical role in reducing poverty in Nigeria. The analysis shows that improvements in education, healthcare, and income-generating opportunities have a statistically significant and negative relationship with poverty levels. This underscores the importance of human capital investment as a sustainable means of improving living standards and promoting inclusive economic growth. By enhancing the Human Development Index (HDI), individuals are better equipped with the skills, knowledge, and health required to participate productively in the economy, thereby reducing their vulnerability to poverty. This result aligns with the broader development literature, which emphasizes that empowering citizens through social and economic inclusion is essential for long-term poverty alleviation.

Conversely, the study reveals that population growth has a significant and positive effect on poverty, suggesting that rapid demographic expansion aggravates economic hardship by straining available resources, infrastructure, and public services. This implies that without effective population management and family planning initiatives, Nigeria may continue to face challenges in achieving sustainable development. Although unemployment showed a positive relationship with poverty, its effect was statistically insignificant, reflecting the dominance of informal employment and the inadequacy of official labor statistics in capturing the true extent of joblessness. Overall, the study concludes that poverty in Nigeria is driven more by structural and demographic factors than by short-term economic fluctuations, requiring integrated policies that combine human development initiatives with population control and job creation strategies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study reveal that poverty in Nigeria is significantly influenced by socio-economic and demographic factors, particularly human development and population growth. The regression analysis shows that an increase in the Human Development Index (HDI) leads to a reduction in poverty, underscoring the importance of investing in education, healthcare, and income-generating opportunities. Conversely, rapid population growth aggravates poverty levels, as it puts pressure on limited resources, infrastructure, and social services. Although unemployment exhibited a positive but statistically insignificant effect on poverty, its contribution to economic hardship and inequality remains noteworthy. These results collectively indicate that poverty in Nigeria is multidimensional, requiring integrated strategies that address both economic and social drivers to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that government and policymakers intensify investments in human capital development by improving access to quality education, healthcare, and vocational training. Population management strategies such as family planning awareness and youth empowerment programs should be strengthened to control rapid population growth. Furthermore, employment creation through industrial diversification, support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and promotion of inclusive economic policies will help reduce income inequality and improve living standards. Strengthening institutional frameworks and implementing transparent, evidence-based poverty reduction programs are essential to achieving long-term sustainable development in Nigeria.

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