DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PREDICTORS OF FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS' INVOLVEMENT IN LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES IN ONDO WEST, NIGERIA

OLALEYE, OLUWASEUN MERCY Ph.D.

Department of Geography, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo.

*Corresponding Author: OLALEYE, OLUWASEUN MERCY Ph.D.

Article History	Abstract
  	This study investigates the socioeconomic features and livelihood activities of female migrant laborers in rural Southwest Nigeria. Rural-urban migration has been a recurrent issue in Nigeria, with women making up a growing share of migrants. However, there has been little research into the socioeconomic characteristics and livelihood choices of female migrant workers in rural areas. The cross-sectional study design was used. The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) provides an appropriate framework for the study, and a multi-stage sampling approach was used. Ondo West Local Government Area (LGA) was purposefully chosen due to the high concentration of female migrant labourers in its rural regions. Five political wards (Wards 2, 4, 5, 6, and 12) were selected at random from the LGA, with six rural communities drawn at random from each ward. The sample size of 1047 female migrant workers was determined using Slovin's sample size determination algorithm. A questionnaire was used to collect information on demographic parameters and livelihood activities. Data were examined with descriptive statistics and ANOVA at p≤0.05. The findings indicate that the majority of migrant women are young, married, and have a low level of education. Their livelihood activities include commerce, farming, and artisanal employment, which are frequently characterized by poor income, restricted access to finance, and vulnerability to shocks. *The results also reveal that the observed F-values for each socioeconomic factor (age, nationality, marital status, educational qualification, and yearly average income) are more than the crucial F-value of (1.0) at F0.05, 29, 1017 when the p-value falls below 0.05. This suggests that the socioeconomic characteristics of female migrant workers vary significantly among livelihood activities and rural wards. The study suggests that measures encouraging women's economic empowerment and rural development are critical to improve the livelihoods of female migrant workers. To increase their economic prospects and resilience, recommendations include giving access to microfinance, vocational training, and social protection programs.* ***Keywords:*** *migrant workers, livelihoods, rural women, migration, female.*

Introduction

Due to the growing social acceptability of women's economic freedom and mobility as well as the growing need for women's labor across a range of sectors and industries, female migration has significantly expanded in recent years (Awumbila, 2015; UNDESA, 2020). Significant numbers of women have migrated to many parts of the world, including Nigeria, particularly the rural parts of South-West Nigeria. In addition to being daughters, sisters, and wives, these women are also migrants seeking better economic chances and advancements. They engage in a variety of livelihood activities in an effort to improve their own and their homes' financial situation. (Akinyemi & Adepoju (2018); Ogunleye & Ojo (2020; Olaleye, 2023). There is a dearth of empirical information about the causes of female

migration into Ondo State's rural areas. Additionally, factors including age-based selection, the distance traveled, the livelihood activities undertaken, and the challenges faced by female migrants in their daily activities in rural areas are yet unknown.

The involvement of females in migration is not a recent development. During the colonial era, women controlled significant markets in the Niger Delta, Yoruba and Igbo areas, and the Middle Belt region (Oyeniyi, 2013). Initially, some of these women made sporadic trips to the regions to buy agricultural goods like groundnuts, kolanuts, cocoa, rubber, and so on. But eventually, some of the vendors made the decision to remain longer after the market days in order to act as intermediaries for vendors from nearby and far-off towns (Tijani, 2004). The factors that influence migration at the local and global levels have been the subject of several studies (Ikwuyatum, 2006; Yaro, 2007); however, research on the mechanisms and trends of female migration in rural regions has not yet been conducted.

There is a lack of research and knowledge on the variables that attract female migrant workers to Nigeria's rural areas, especially with regard to employment opportunities or means of sustenance. A significant percentage of people who travel from rural regions in Nigeria eventually settle there, at least temporarily, according to well-established internal migration theory (Afolayan, 2018; Okafor, 2014). However, the opportunities and difficulties of the several livelihood alternatives accessible to female migrant workers in rural regions are not well captured in literature (Mberu, 2005; Olaleye, Ogunboye & Olanusi, 2014). Therefore, more research is needed to better describe the flow of female migrant workers into the study area. The goal of this study is to get a deeper understanding of the idiosyncrasies of migration into rural areas, including the socioeconomic characteristics of female migrant workers, the movement pattern, and the livelihood activities accessible to migrants in the study area.

In order to support rural development and sustainable communities, it is crucial to understand how female migrants make a livelihood in rural areas. A wide range of economic sectors, including as small-scale enterprise, agriculture, and informal employment, are commonly occupied by female migrants. By acknowledging and valuing their contributions to local economies, rural development programs may use their labour and skills to advance economic growth and diversity. The families left behind are directly impacted by the capital that female migrants accumulate in their quest for livelihood. Raising living standards and expanding access to nutrition, healthcare, and education are all ways that this extra money may improve rural communities' overall well-being and lessen poverty.

In conclusion, an examination of the connection between the socioeconomic traits and means of subsistence of female migrant labourers in rural regions is important because it clarifies the intricacies of gender roles, economic dynamics, and shifts in migratory behaviour. The knowledge gained from these kinds of studies may empower people, influence policy, and advance a more inclusive view of society.

Aim and Objectives

The study aims to examine the relationship which exists between the socio-economic characteristics of female migrant workers and livelihood activities in the rural areas of Ondo West Local Government. The specific objective is to:

1. Examine the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of female migrant workers in the study area.
2. Analyze the relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of female migrant workers and their livelihood activities.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in socio-economic characteristics of female migrants across livelihood activities.

Study Area

The Ondo West Local Government Area is in Ondo State and is about 970 square kilometers in size. It is located between the latitudes of 5°45′ and 7°52′ North and the longitudes of 4°20′ and 6°05′ East (Ondo State Handbook, 2014). Osun State is to the west, Ile-Oluji/Oke-Igbo Local Government Area is to the north, and Odigbo Local Government Area is to the south of the Local Government Area. The location is in the tropical rainforest zone, which means that the southern portions have mangrove swamp plants and the northern parts have Guinea savanna plants. This varied ecosystem is home to a lot of farming, including both cash and subsistence crops. Cocoa is still the most important cash crop, although the area also grows yam, cassava, oil palm, kolanut, coffee, cashew, rubber, maize, plantain, cocoyam, rice, and banana.

The 2006 national population census says that Ondo West Local Government Area has about 283,672 people living there, with 141,759 men and 147,109 women. The area has a population density of roughly 481.4 people per square kilometer. Because of its fertile farmland and the job opportunities that cocoa plantations and other farming activities offer, a lot of migrant workers have come to the area. People that move to Nigeria come from many different places, including the North Central and South-East areas, as well as the states of Benue, Taraba, Ebonyi, Enugu,

Niger, Nassarawa, Kwara, and Bayelsa. Many of these migrants are from ethnic groups such the Igbira, Tiv, Bachama, Urhobo, and Fulani. Many of these migrants come from areas where there isn't much arable land and the economy isn't doing well. This makes Ondo West a popular place for rural tenant farmers to move to in search of better jobs.

A large part of the people of Ondo West Local Government Area works in agriculture and makes money from it. Growing commercial commodities like cocoa, oil palm, and lumber, as well as food crops like yam and cassava, are important parts of the economy. People in the area do a lot of different things to make money, like farming, processing garri, making palm oil, gathering food, doing small business, weaving baskets, logging, and making textiles. Migrant farmers in rural areas are involved in both the production and sale of agricultural goods such cocoa, palm oil, kolanut, cassava, garri, vegetables, and citrus fruits. These many kinds of businesses make a big difference in the area's economy and help families make money.

Materials and Methods

The study utilized a cross-sectional survey research design concentrating on female migrant laborers in the Ondo West Local Government Area. Due to the study's unique objectives, a gender-sensitive sampling method was used, and the sample size was purposely skewed toward female respondents because they were the main group of people being studied. A total of 1,047 respondents were chosen for the study to guarantee sufficient representation. Participants were selected from five rural political wards within the study area to provide a range of experiences and improve the sample's representativeness. The choice of Ondo West Local Government Area was deliberate, predicated on its extensively recorded significant concentration of migrant laborers involved in agricultural pursuits, especially within the cocoa and kolanut plantation sectors.

According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (2015) directory, Ondo West Local Government Area is divided into twelve political wards for administrative purposes. To make it easier to get a good sample for this study, these wards were divided into rural and urban areas. Seven of the wards in Ondo Township were deemed urban, while the other five were deemed rural. The study intentionally chose these five rural wards as the main sampling units since they have a lot of agricultural activity and a lot of people moving there. This segmentation allowed the study to concentrate on the rural dynamics of female migrant labor, hence enhancing the relevance and precision of the findings.
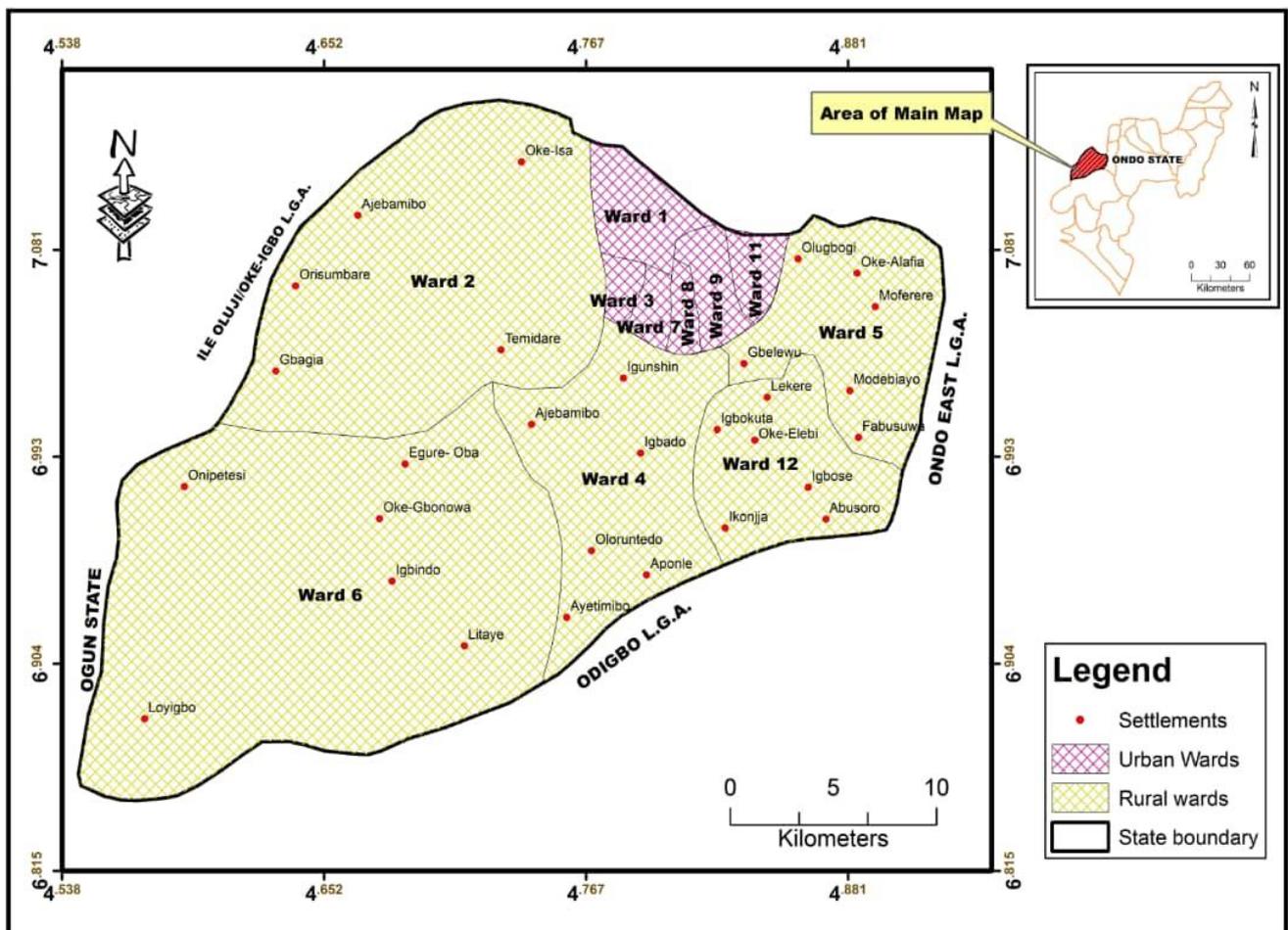

Figure 3.2: Ondo West LGA showing Political Wards
Source: Independent National Electoral Commission, Akure

This study used a multistage sample method, starting with the purposeful choice of five rural political wards in the Ondo West Local Government Area. Then, six villages were chosen at random from each ward to make sure that the sample was representative of the area. At the end, a systematic random selection procedure was used to choose individual responders for the questionnaire. The field study was executed inside the designated rural villages, concentrating primarily on female migrant workers as the target demographic. In each home, the female head was interviewed if she was available. If she wasn't, the oldest female migrant worker who was 18 years old or older and was actively doing one or more productive activities was chosen to be the responder. This method made sure that credible and useful data was gathered from those who were directly involved in rural livelihood activities.

In conclusion, six rural villages were randomly chosen from each of the five political wards in the study area. So, thirty rural villages were chosen for consideration. The following are the randomly chosen rural areas from each ward.

(a) Gbaghengha/Gbongbo/AjagbaAlaafia (Okesa, Ayetimbo, Ilutitun, Orisumbare, Laje, Temidire).
(b) Ilunla/ Bagbe/ Odowo I (Aponle, Igbado, Oloruntedo, Igunshin, Kudola, Odowo)
(c) Ilunla/ Bagbe/ Odowo II (Fabusuwa, Modebiayo, OkeAlaafia, Olugbogi, Moferere, Gbelewu)
(d) Litaye/Obunkekere/Igbindo (Okegbonawa, Egure Oba, Oke Ipa, Oke Onipetesi, Loyigbo, Litaye)
(e) Orisumbare/Araromi (Lekere, Abusoro, Igbokuta, Igbose, Ikonja, Oke Elebi)

The projected population was derived from the 1991 population census using the expression:

$$P_1 = \frac{(r \times P \times N + P)}{100} \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots(1.1)$$

Where P_1 = Projected Population
P = population as at the last census
N = number of years since the last census (12 years)
r = annual growth rate (2.6%)

After choosing the study villages, a systematic random sample method was used to choose 1,047 adult women from the Ondo West Local Government Area. The sample size was established in accordance to the distribution of the population across rural villages within the selected wards. The 1991 population census was used as a starting point for the research region, and an annual growth rate of 2.6% (NBS, 2016; World Bank, 2022) was used to make adjustments. This was because the 2006 census only gave aggregate data at the local government level. According to these estimates, the population of Ondo West Local Government Area in 2018 was 419,472, with 207,654 males and 211,818 females. The goal was to have 10,466 females living in thirty chosen communities. The respondents were evenly split up like this: 229 people answered from Gbaghenha/Gbongbo/Ajagba Alaafia, 249 from Ilunla/Babe/Odowo I, 167 from Ilunla/Babe/Odowo II, 257 from Litaye/Obunkekere/Igbindo, and 149 from Orisumbare/Araromi. This proportional allotment made guaranteed that there were enough female migrant laborers in each of the chosen rural areas.

In a systematic way, residential buildings were picked from the research area's defined localities. This was done by choosing the first building at the entrance to the hamlet. Unlike cities, rural communities don't have clearly marked streets. The next two buildings were not chosen, and the fourth, seventh, tenth, thirteenth, and so on were chosen ($x\ldots1st\ldots4th\ldots7th\ldots10th\ldots13th\ldots nth$) until each town had the right number. In cases when the next building needed for the exercise was either full or didn't have the right answer, the next building that was already full was chosen. The number of buildings in the chosen settlements and the number of households (respondents) that would be sampled were the main factors in choosing which buildings to skip. This method was used again and again until the right number of answers was found.

The sampling frame comprises all female migrant laborers in the rural regions of Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State. Because there were so many women who had moved to the area for work, a proportionate sampling method based on percentages was utilized to identify respondents. So, the sample size was set at 10% of the women living in each of the randomly chosen communities. This was based on what researchers said, which was that sample sizes in rural studies shouldn't be more than 10% of the target population (Olawoye 2018; Singh and Masaku, 2014).

The research included both primary and secondary data. Standardized questionnaire forms were used to collect primary data. The questionnaire had questions regarding socioeconomic factors, ways to make a living, problems, and ways to improve ways to make a living. The National Demographic Commission supplied the demographic data and settlement lists employed in the study. Population figures, maps of the study area, and estimates of how many women live in each hamlet are all examples of secondary data that are relevant to the research's goals. The study area map, the Population Commission (NPC), the Ondo West Local Government Council, and the Interdependent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Database (2015) were all used to produce the list of rural settlements in the study region. Also, libraries and the internet have useful books, journals, atlases, and government documents.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is an effective paradigm for assessing migrants' socioeconomic features and livelihood activities in rural regions. The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach takes into account the larger context (policies, institutions, shocks, and trends) that affect migrants' livelihoods. Migrants' assets (human, social, financial, physical, and natural capital) influence their livelihood strategies and decisions. The method considers outcomes such as income, well-being, and vulnerability. The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is a paradigm for understanding how people, particularly in developing countries, manage their lives and livelihoods. It helps examine how migrants' characteristics impact livelihood choices, how assets and circumstances determine livelihood outcomes, and the consequences for policies that promote migrant livelihoods.

Results And Discussion

Age Distribution of Respondents

Table I shows the socioeconomic traits of the female migrant workers in the area where the study was done. Of the 1,047 people who answered the survey in the designated rural areas, 13 (1.2 percent) are under 20 years old and 130 (12.4 percent) are 60 years old or older. Nine hundred and four people, or 86.3% of the total, are between the ages of 20 and 59, which means they are active and working. The average age of people who answered the survey in the whole research area is 45.7 years. This shows that teenage girls, like boys, decided to go to rural areas even if there were better job opportunities in nearby cities.

The age distribution of female migrant workers in the study area indicates a significant representation of young women among the workforce of the migration chain. This aligns with previous research on female migration in Nigeria (Ikwuyatum, 2006; Masanja, 2012; Ofuoku and Emerhi, 2014), which indicated that most migrants were young school leavers and members of the working class.

Table I: Socio -Demographic Characteristics of Female Migrant Workers

Age		
Age (in years)	Frequency	Percent
Below 20	13	1.2
20 – 29	81	7.7
30 – 39	206	19.7
40 – 49	300	28.7
50 – 59	317	30.3
60 above	130	12.4
Total	**1047**	**100**
Marital Status		
Single	92	8.8
Married	821	78.4
Widowed	124	11.8
Divorced	10	1.0
Total	**1047**	**100**
Household Size		
1– 3 members	282	26.9
4– 6 members	584	55.8
7– 9 members	178	17.0
10 members and above	3	0.3
Total	**1047**	**100**
Average Annual Income		
Amount in Naira		
Below 30,000	110	10.5
30,001 – 60,000	470	44.9
60,001 – 90,000	179	17.1
90,001 – 120,000	174	16.6
120, 001 & above	114	10.9
Total	**1047**	**100**

(source: author's analysis, 2025)

Marital Status of Respondents

Out of the 1047 people who answered, 92 (8.8 percent) were single women who had never been married, and 821 (78.4 percent) were married. One hundred and twenty (11.8 percent) of the people who answered were widowed. Most of them were older women, while the other ten (1.0 percent) were divorced. This shows that more people who answered are married, although the previous age distribution showed that majority of the people in the migration chain were adult women.

Five hundred and fifty-eight (53.3 percent) of the people who answered live with their husbands, while two hundred and sixty-three (25.1 percent) live apart from their husbands. The ladies in this category have husbands who live in nearby rural areas or big cities. These respondents are typically migrants seeking improved lives who have relocated autonomously to rural areas in search of better economic prospects unavailable in their former residences. This indicates that marriage does not impede female migrants' engagement in livelihood activities, as a substantial percentage of respondents are actively pursuing economic growth and significance.

Educational Characteristics of Respondents

A significant percentage of the respondents demonstrated limited levels of formal educational achievement. In particular, 196 respondents (18.6%) said they had gone to secondary school, however most of them said they had only finished Junior Secondary School, while a lesser number said they had finished Senior Secondary School. In contrast, the largest group of respondents, 411 people (39.3%), had no formal education. Some of them said they had stopped going to primary school before moving from their home regions. Only a small number of respondents—31 (3.0%)—had post-secondary degrees, such as the National Certificate in Education (NCE), National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), or university degrees in different fields.

The respondents' low levels of education help explain why they are mostly involved in rural subsistence activities. Rural economies offer more accessible chances that don't depend as much on formal qualifications. In contrast, urban areas often need more formal education and specialized skills. As a result, these women migrants' lack of education does not stop them from doing productive things like farming, processing, and trading. But this same limitation could make it much harder to get a job in cities, where there are more people looking for work and jobs frequently require more education and technical skills.

Size of Household

Five hundred eighty-four (55.8 percent) of the thousand forty-seven participants who answered the survey lived in homes with four to six people. Next, there are two hundred and eighty-two (26.9 percent) respondents who live in homes with one to three people, which is a tiny number. Seventeen percent of the total number of chosen respondents are from families with seven to nine members, which is one hundred and seventy-eight people. Only three people (0.3 percent) said they lived with more than ten people. Most of the people who move from low-income homes are single or divorced women who traveled to the country by themselves to find job.

The household size of female migrant workers influences their capacity to participate successfully in various livelihood activities. Large household numbers can be advantageous in some instances, particularly for farmers who can use household members as free farm labor rather than paying others. family size also influences female migrants' mobility; for example, a single-person family or one with three members might transfer more quickly to a new region when a better opportunity occurs than other migrants with larger households.

Average Annual Income

Getting accurate information about how much money respondents made each year was hard since many of them didn't keep formal financial records or had bank accounts to keep track of their daily income and expenses. Respondents, on the other hand, gave rough estimates of their yearly income for the year before, which were utilized to figure out their income levels and economic position. The results showed that 110 people (10.5%) made less than ₦30,000 a year, while the biggest group, 470 people (44.9%), said they made between ₦31,000 and ₦60,000 a year. Also, 179 people (17.1%) said they made between ₦61,000 and ₦90,000, while 174 people (16.6%) said they made between ₦91,000 and ₦120,000 a year. The other 114 people (10.9%) who answered made more than ₦120,000 from their jobs.

These relatively low income levels show that many female migrant workers in the rural parts of Ondo West Local Government Area are doing low-paying jobs because of their restricted economic opportunities and their socio-economic status. The rural location facilitates access to income-generating occupations that do not necessitate formal schooling or substantial capital, elucidating their preference for such environments. But the results also show that a lot of the people who answered the survey haven't made much progress in their economic situation yet. Even yet, a large majority—735 respondents (70.2%)—said that their present living conditions are better than their former ones. This suggests that moving to the study area has had a positive, if small, effect on their overall welfare and economic well-being.

Livelihood Activities engaged in by respondents

Table II displays the several ways that female migrant workers in Ondo West Local Government Area make a living. The livelihood activities identified among female migrant workers in the research area can be primarily categorized as agriculture, commerce, craftsmanship (including tailoring, hairdressing, and bag weaving), and small-scale agricultural processing (for instance, palm oil).

Table II: Livelihood Activities practiced by female migrant workers

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Farming	616	58.8
Trading	152	14.5
Artisan	49	4.7
Cottage Processing	71	6.8
Farm Labour	83	7.9
Civil Service	32	3.1
Lumbering	44	4.2
Total	1047	100

Source: Author Analysis, 2025

cassava flour and gari, farm work, civil service (such teaching and health care attendants), and logging. Six hundred and sixteen (58.8 percent) of the people who answered work as farmers. People who answered the survey grow both food crops (yam, cassava, plantain, and cocoyam) and commercial crops (cocoa). This high percentage is reasonable because farming is the main way that people in rural areas of southwestern Nigeria make money.

In this survey, over 60% of female migrant workers view farming as their primary employment, with no other secondary occupations. Farming is the most common livelihood activity, followed by commerce (14.5% of respondents) who sell agricultural goods, manufactured or processed commodities, clothing, and food. Other livelihood activities carried out by female migrant workers in the research region include farm labor, cottage processing, artisanal enterprises, logging, and civil service.

The livelihood activities of female migrant workers in the study area are influenced by their educational qualifications, financial resources, prevalent activities in their source regions, and the availability or lack thereof of resources and infrastructure at their current locations. Because there aren't many jobs in the rural sector, there aren't many other ways to make a living.

There are two main types of work that women who go to Ondo West Local Government Area do to make a living. These are things that happen on farms and not on farms.

Table III: Livelihood Strategies available to female migrant workers.

Livelihood Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Farm activities (e.g farming, farm labour and lumbering)	743	70.96
Non-farm activities (e.g trading, artisanal activities, cottage processing and civil service)	304	28.65
Total	1047	100

Source: Author Analysis (2025)

The types of labor that women migrant workers in Ondo West Local Government Area do show that most of them work on farms. Table III shows that 743 people (70.96%) work in agriculture, such as growing crops, working on a farm, or cutting down trees. This means that farming is the main way that people in the study make money. However, this does not preclude participation in non-agricultural activities, since 304 respondents (28.65%) indicated involvement in alternative livelihoods, encompassing small trading, artisanal labor, cottage processing, and civil service-related endeavors. This diversification shows how migratory women have adapted to rural life in order to make a living.

There has been a slow change in traditional gender roles, with women taking on more laborious tasks that were once mostly done by men. In many situations, women who move to a new country make extra money by trading tiny amounts of wood or acting as middlemen between local landowners and outside lumber operations. Others do low-skilled or menial work to help pay the bills at home. This trend shows how women's economic responsibilities are changing in rural areas and how they are helping both farming and new ways to make a living outside of farming.

Relationship between Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Female Migrant Workers and Livelihood Activities.

Table IV: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Female Migrant Workers across Livelihood Activities

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	6820.975	29	235.206	1.678	0.014
	Within Groups	142518.047	1017	140.136		
	Total	149339.022	1046			
Nationality	Between Groups	0.635	29	0.022	1.472	0.05
	Within Groups	15.121	1017	0.015		
	Total	15.755	1046			
Marital Status	Between Groups	13.045	29	0.450	1.903	0.003
	Within Groups	240.372	1017	0.236		
	Total	253.417	1046			
Number of Children	Between Groups	351.211	29	12.111	3.393	0.000
	Within Groups	3629.679	1017	3.569		
	Total	3980.890	1046			
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	83.149	29	2.867	4.662	0.000
	Within Groups	625.492	1017	0.615		
	Total	708.642	1046			
Annual Average Income	Between Groups	281731979097.835	29	9714895830.960	2.274	0.000
	Within Groups	4345096034273.703	1017	4272464143.829		
	Total	4626828013371.538	1046			

Source: Author Analysis (2025)

The study examined the connection between the socioeconomic and demographic features of female migrant workers and their livelihood activities in Ondo West. The hypothesis examined suggested that there is no significant association between these traits and the women's livelihood activities. However, the findings of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed overwhelming evidence to the contrary, demonstrating that socioeconomic and demographic characteristics had a major impact on the livelihood patterns of female migrants in the studied region.

The findings indicate that the F-value for age (F = 1.678, p = 0.014) is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that age has a substantial impact on the kind of livelihood activities pursued by female migrant workers. Younger age groups may participate in more labor-intensive employment such as commerce, artisanal work, or domestic service, whereas elderly women are more inclined to choose steadier or less physically demanding economic pursuits.

The finding reinforces the Harris-Todaro Model, which holds that demographic variables such as age impact labor mobility and employment preferences. It also supports the Human Capital Theory, which holds that age represents cumulative skills and experiences that influence employment decisions (Becker, 1993). The consequence is that female migrants in Ondo West diversify their livelihoods based on their age, physical aptitude, and job experience. Younger migrants may work in physically hard activities including trading, agricultural labour, and household work, but elderly women may prefer less rigorous jobs.

Nationality showed a significant connection with livelihood activities (F = 1.472, p < 0.05). This suggests that migrant women's economic activity is influenced by their ethnic and geographical background. Migrants from nearby Benin Republic or other regions of Nigeria may face disparities in social acceptance and access to local networks, influencing their occupational choice. According to the social capital theory, migrants use social networks to get access to knowledge, financial resources, and employment possibilities in host communities (Portes, 2014; Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, nationality not only defines identity, but it also influences integration and economic consequences. This conclusion is congruent with the study of Adepoju (2019), who discovered that cross-border female migrants in West Africa frequently encounter marginalization, limiting their access to formal employment. This research also implies that the diversity of migrant origins in Ondo West produces a range of livelihood outcomes influenced by both cultural adaption and local economic demand.

Marital status was also shown to have a statistically significant impact on livelihood involvement (F = 1.903, p = 0.003). Married women may have familial obligations that limit their mobility or time for particular income-generating activities, but single or widowed women may have greater freedom to pursue numerous economic

opportunities. The findings highlight the interaction of gender and family responsibilities in influencing livelihood choices. This study supports the claims of scholars such as Chant (2016), who stated that marital status had a major effect on women's economic involvement and financial independence in migration circumstances. It also implies that interventions aiming at enhancing livelihood outcomes should take into account family duties and socio-cultural expectations of married women.

Marital status was also shown to have a significant effect on livelihood engagement (F = 1.903, p = 0.003). Married women may be confined by home obligations and limited time, but single, divorced, or widowed women may have more freedom to pursue other economic pursuits. This is consistent with Chant (2016), who underlined how marital status affects women's mobility and economic autonomy in underdeveloped nations. In patriarchal countries like Nigeria, marriage frequently determines the kind and intensity of women's income-generating activities (Olanrewaju & Omisakin, 2021). As a result, migrant women's livelihood empowerment initiatives must take marital status into account as a factor influencing participation and productivity.

The household size variable had the highest degree of statistical significance (F = 3.393, p = 0.000), showing a substantial correlation with livelihood activities. The consequence is that female migrant workers' household size has a significant impact on their economic involvement. Women with bigger families are more likely to seek numerous income sources to satisfy family demands, which frequently leads to diverse or informal livelihood options. Women who have fewer dependents, on the other hand, may be able to pursue more secure or higher-paying careers. This research supports the dependence hypothesis by indicating that the economic demands of caring for dependents have a major impact on migrant women's livelihood decisions.

It also emphasizes the economic fragility of bigger households, as additional dependents do not always convert into enhanced livelihood sustainability. Furthermore, big family numbers might reduce women's ability to engage in skill development, perpetuating poverty cycles (Ehirim & Nwosu, 2022). This stresses the need of social protection systems that lessen the economic vulnerability of big households led by migratory women.

Educational qualification also had a statistically significant link with livelihood activities (F = 4.662, p = 0.000). Education determines access to economic possibilities and the ability to engage in formal work. Female migrants with a greater level of education are more likely to work in skilled, better-paying jobs, whereas those with less education are more likely to work in subsistence or informal

industries. This is consistent with the human capital development paradigm, which views education as a critical predictor of income and lifestyle sustainability (Schultz, 1971; Becker, 1993). The findings are congruent with those of Afolabi (2020), who discovered that women with post-primary education prefer to diversify into entrepreneurial activities that provide greater economic stability. Enhancing educational access for women, therefore, remains central to improving livelihood outcomes.

The research also found a statistically significant association between annual average income and livelihood activities (F = 2.274, p = 0.000). This shows that wage discrepancies among female migrant workers are determined by the sort of economic activity they pursue. High-income earners are more likely to work in official or semi-formal economic sectors, whereas low-income earners are concentrated in informal, unregulated, and frequently hazardous jobs. The findings highlight the economic stratification of the female migrant community, indicating disparities in access to financial capital, skills, and market connections. From a policy standpoint, this finding highlights the need of targeted economic interventions that bridge income gaps and facilitate the shift from low-income informal jobs to more sustainable livelihood activities.

The statistical data indicates that the null hypothesis of no significant link between socioeconomic and demographic factors and livelihood activities should be rejected. Instead, the study finds that socioeconomic and demographic factors influence livelihood outcomes among female migrant workers in Ondo West Local Government Area.

These findings have several implications:

i. Gender has a key role in migration and livelihood systems, with women's socioeconomic background influencing their economic choices. As a result, policymakers and development organizations must create gender-sensitive livelihood strategies that take into account these variances. For example, vocational training, literacy development, and microcredit programs should be targeted to women of various ages, marital circumstances, and educational levels.

ii. Demographic considerations like age and dependents should be considered while designing empowerment efforts. Younger female migrants may benefit more from skill development and apprenticeship programs, but elderly women may need access to cooperative finance and established business support networks. Addressing these variations can improve economic inclusion and livelihood sustainability.

iii. The importance of nationality highlights the need for cultural integration strategies. Female migrants from other areas or nations frequently experience social marginalization, limiting their access to productive resources. Strengthening community integration via inclusive policies can help to address this issue and provide equal livelihood prospects.

iv. Female migrant groups face persisting disparity due to income levels. To solve this, development initiatives must go beyond subsistence measures and focus on long-term economic resilience by promoting entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and cooperative finance institutions.

The study indicates that socioeconomic and demographic variables (such as age, nationality, marital status, number of children, educational qualifications, and income) have a substantial impact on the livelihood activities of female migrant workers in Ondo West Local Government Area.

The rejection of the null hypothesis demonstrates that these variables are important predictors of economic engagement and livelihood sustainability. To promote equitable livelihood development among female migrants, effective policy solutions must take a comprehensive strategy that includes education, family assistance, income generating, and social protection.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations.

This study examines the socioeconomic characteristics and livelihood activities of female migrant workers in rural Southwest Nigeria with focus on Ondo West Local government Area, Ondo State. The key findings include:

1. The majority of migrant women are young, married, and have little formal education.
2. Livelihood activities, such as trading, farming, artisanal employment, civil service, farm labor, cottage processing, and logging, may be divided into two categories: farm and non-farm.
3. Due to their poor financial position, ease of admission, and lack of formal education, the majority of female migrant workers choose to relocate to rural regions to pursue livelihood activities.
4. While a small home size facilitates movement if better possibilities exist in other locations, a big household size greatly helps migrant workers' effective involvement in particular livelihood activities such as farming (agriculture).
5. The socioeconomic traits of female migrant workers vary significantly among livelihood activities.

Conclusion

Age, education, marital status, household size, and income are some of the variables that affect the socioeconomic traits and means of subsistence of female migrant workers in rural Southwest Nigeria. Policymakers should think about focused initiatives that address particular possibilities and constraints in these women's livelihood activities in order to help them. Governments and other stakeholders may improve their economic empowerment and resilience by giving them access to social protection, microfinance, education, and skill development. This would ultimately help to reduce poverty and promote rural development.

Recommendations

The study recommends as follows:

i. To improve income-generating options, make microfinance and vocational training accessible.
ii. Put social protection mechanisms into place to lessen shock susceptibility.
iii. Encourage policies that prioritize education and skill development for rural development and women's economic empowerment.
iv. Support tailored to a particular livelihood: Create programs that target particular activities, such as financial access for women in small companies or farming, or skill development for young women engaged in artisanal or petty commerce.
v. Education and vocational training: Expand access to education and skill development with an emphasis on functional literacy and numeracy; vocational skills such as food processing, tailoring, or entrepreneurship; and social protection (implement programs addressing vulnerabilities, such as cash transfers or subsidies for low-income households and health insurance or emergency support).
vi. Market access: Encourage local communities and leaders to promote women's economic empowerment and remove social obstacles by strengthening market connections and infrastructure, such as market information systems, storage facilities, and transportation assistance, for women engaged in trade or farming.

These suggestions will ease the burden of rural-urban migration and promote urban-rural movement by making rural regions in Southwest Nigeria a feasible economic opportunity for female migrant workers.

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