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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56518

Title: The Socio-Economic Impact of the Ambazonian Conflict on Host Communities in Ikom and Its Environs, Cross River State, Nigeria, 2016–2024

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	✓			
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity	✓			
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Faheem Abdul Muneeb

Reviewer's Comment

This manuscript examines the socio-economic impact of the Ambazonian conflict on host communities in Ikom and its environs in Cross River State, Nigeria, between 2016 and 2024. Anchored in Conflict Theory and the Human Security Framework, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach incorporating interviews, field observations, and documentary analysis. It explores how the influx of over 85,000 Cameroonian refugees into Nigeria—many of whom settled in Cross River State—has affected livelihoods, public infrastructure, security, agricultural productivity, and inter-communal relations. The topic is timely and policy-relevant, particularly within the context of protracted displacement and cross-border humanitarian crises in West and Central Africa.

Scientific Contribution and Empirical Strength

The manuscript provides a detailed contextual background of the Ambazonian conflict, linking its colonial roots and constitutional grievances to contemporary displacement dynamics. The integration of both theoretical frameworks strengthens analytical depth: Conflict Theory effectively explains resource competition and structural tensions, while the Human Security Framework broadens the analysis to include food, health, environmental, and community security dimensions.

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The empirical component—drawing on oral interviews with refugees, traditional rulers, traders, and security personnel—adds richness and grounded perspective. The discussion of increased pressure on schools, healthcare facilities, housing, and agricultural land is well articulated. The manuscript appropriately highlights both negative impacts (inflation, unemployment, land disputes, overstretched infrastructure, rising insecurity) and limited positive spillovers (expanded markets, increased trade, humanitarian aid inflows, and labour contributions).

However, while the descriptive analysis is comprehensive, some sections of the literature review are extensive and could be moderately condensed to enhance analytical focus. Greater quantitative substantiation of economic claims—such as price increases or unemployment trends—would further strengthen the empirical rigor of the study.

Methodology and Analytical Approach

The mixed-methods design is appropriate for capturing the multi-dimensional nature of displacement impacts. The use of interviews and documentary evidence supports triangulation. The theoretical framework is clearly articulated and consistently referenced throughout the analysis.

Nonetheless, the methodology section could benefit from clearer specification of sampling procedures, number of interviewees, selection criteria, and data analysis techniques. Providing more explicit methodological detail would enhance transparency and replicability. Additionally, some references to data sources (e.g., humanitarian statistics and government reports) should be more precisely cited in-text for academic consistency.

Structure, Style, and Presentation

The manuscript follows a logical structure: introduction, theoretical framework, literature review, contextual analysis, socio-economic impacts, responses, summary, conclusion, and recommendations. The progression from historical roots to contemporary cross-border consequences is coherent and accessible.

However, there are noticeable grammatical inconsistencies, typographical errors, duplicated references (e.g., repeated Essien & Eno citation), minor formatting irregularities, and occasional spacing issues. Some sentences are lengthy and would benefit from stylistic refinement. The references section requires

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careful proofreading for consistency in formatting (publisher details, punctuation, capitalization, and date presentation).

Final Recommendation

Overall, the manuscript addresses an important cross-border humanitarian issue and contributes meaningful insight into the socio-economic consequences of protracted displacement on host communities. The integration of theory and field-based observations enhances its relevance for policymakers, humanitarian actors, and scholars of conflict and development.

With minor revisions focusing on methodological clarification, stylistic refinement, condensation of repetitive sections, and reference formatting corrections, the manuscript is suitable for publication.

Decision: Accepted with minor revisions.