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## Overcoming the socio-cultural challenges of refugees in the Mahama Refugee camp

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### Abstract

This study investigates the effects of socio-cultural challenges experienced by refugees in the Mahama Refugee Camp in Rwanda and proposes potential remedies to these effects. The mixed approach was applied for the collection of data. Questionnaires were administered to 102 respondents, while in-depth interviews were conducted to resource persons in the refugee camp. The Sociocultural theory by Vygotsky (1979) was employed to inspire the trend of research. This study used the purposive and random sampling to select research participants. Refugees were purposely selected to provide information about linguistic, cultural and communication challenges that they experience in the camp. The analysed data reveal a significant degree of socio-cultural challenges faced by refugees in the Mahama Refugee Camp. 82.4% of the refugees have language differences which make communication difficult. A considerable proportion of respondents (67.6%) reported experiencing culture shock, manifested primarily in feelings of isolation (75.5%) and heightened stress and anxiety (88.2%). Attitudes towards cultural integration were also assessed, with a small minority (23.5%) expressing support and a large majority (76.5%) preferring to maintain their cultural distinctiveness. The researchers recommend intercultural communication and integration workshops to make the camp a harmonious and comfortable place for all refugees.

### Keywords:

Cultural diversity, cultural integration, culture shock, and intercultural communication.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

When people flee in search of security, they need to adapt to their new environments. The 1951 UN Refugee Convention declares a refugee as someone who has fled their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on one of five grounds: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (UN Refugee Convention, 1951). People from different ethnic groups coming might have to get used to the rules and norms that are prevalent among another ethnic group. Their language and culture might not match with that of their new locality. The Mahama Refugee Camp in Rwanda is home to thousands of refugees, from the Republic of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who have escaped conflict and persecution in their homelands. The camp hosts refugees from diverse cultural backgrounds, each with their own customs, beliefs, and practices. This diversity lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and difficulties in communication and cooperation among the refugee population. Therefore, exploring and understanding these challenges is crucial for the effective management of the camp and the well-being of its residents. Hence, this study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the socio-cultural challenges faced by refugees in Mahama Refugee Camp.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Mahama Refugee Camp hosts individuals from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, each bringing distinct cultural background and languages. The absence of a shared language poses significant communication barriers among refugees and with the local Rwandan community, potentially obstructing their integration and access to essential services. Despite the common recognition of the multicultural issues in refugee camps, specific empirical research on these challenges remains limited. Also, Mahama Camp refugees often encounter difficulties adapting to Rwanda's cultural landscape due to their diverse traditions, norms and values. This cultural diversity leads to misunderstandings and conflicts among the refugees and the local population. This research seeks to thoroughly investigate these socio-cultural challenges to enhance the camp's management and improve the well-being of the refugees in the Mahama Camp. The rationale for this study is to examine the socio-cultural difficulties faced by the refugees in Mahama Camp and possible strategies that can be used to overcome these challenges.

### **Research Question**

The study is centred on the following research questions:

- What are the socio-cultural challenges faced by refugees in the Mahama Refugee Camp?
- What are the strategies put in place to address these socio-cultural differences?

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To analyse the different socio-cultural and challenges faced by refugees in Mahama Refugee Camp.

- To investigate potential strategies and interventions to address these challenges.

### **Research hypotheses**

- Cultural diversities and language differences are some of the challenges faced by refugees in the Mahama Refugee Camp.
- Psychological preparedness and intercultural communication studies could be put in place to address these challenges.

### **THEORETICAL FRAME WORK**

The Sociocultural theory was used to develop this research. According to Vygotsky (1979), human mental functioning is fundamentally a mediated process that is organized by cultural artefacts, activities and concepts. This theory looks at the important contributions that society makes to individual development. It stresses the interaction between developing people and the culture in which they live. Sociocultural theory also suggests that human learning is largely a social process. In other words, the way people interact with others and the culture in which they live shape their mental abilities. This theory directly pertains to the study because communication between refugees and staff members primarily centres around interaction. Consequently, both parties must engage in mutual learning to facilitate effective interaction.

Three fundamental tenets of the Sociocultural Theory by Vygotsky are social interaction, language and Zone of Proximal Development. In the context of this study, Mahama Refugee Camp which is home to refugees from a variety of cultural backgrounds, sociocultural theory helps us understand how cultural differences and diversity can both enrich and complicate interactions and relationships within the camp. Sociocultural theory also helps us understand how the social environment of the camp, including factors such as social structures, power dynamics, and interpersonal relationships, influence the well-being and integration of refugees. Sociocultural theory offers a valuable framework for understanding and responding to the complex challenges faced by refugees in multicultural settings, and for promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals in the camp. By recognizing and valuing the diversity of cultural experiences and perspectives within the camp, we can work towards creating a more resilient and cohesive community.

In order to address these challenges and promote the well-being of refugees in multicultural settings like Mahama Refugee Camp, it is essential to apply sociocultural theory in developing culturally sensitive and inclusive interventions and policies. This may involve creating spaces and opportunities for refugees to share and celebrate their cultural heritage, promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding among different groups, and empowering refugees to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

To collect data in this research, the researchers made use of secondary and primary sources of data collection. Secondary data were collected from documentary sources in libraries and from the internet. Primary data were collected through field research in the Mahama Refugee Camp. Fieldtrips to the Mahama Refugee camp enabled the collection of primary data. This

study utilised the purposive and simple random sampling to select research participants. 102 refugees were purposely selected to provide information about linguistic, cultural and communication challenges that they experience in the camp. These include refugee executive committee members, quarter leaders, village leaders who provide a voice for the refugee community. Out of the 102 respondents, the gender distribution of participants shows that 53 (51.96 %) were female and 49 (48.04 %) were males. The age group of respondents shows that 11.76 % of respondents are in the 15–20 age range, another 26.47 % falls into the 21–25 age range, while 61.76 % are in the 26-age range and above. Marital Status of respondents shows that 21 (20.59 %) respondents are divorced, 35 (34.31 %) are married, while 46 (45.10 %) are single. 52 (50.98 %) respondents were born in Burundi, while 50 (49.02 %) respondents were born in DR Congo. This near-equal distribution suggests that the sample provides a balanced representation of individuals from both countries. This balance is beneficial for comparative analyses that aim to understand language and cultural diversities across these two groups. Table 1 below illustrates the demographic data of respondents.

**Table 1: Demographic data frequencies**

	Gender		Age			Marital status			Place of birth	
	Female	Male	15–20	21–25	26 +	Divorced	Married	Single	Burundi	DRC
Count	53	49	12	27	63	21	35	46	52	50
%	52.0	48.0	11.8	26.5	61.8	20.6	34.3	45.1	51.0	49.0

*Source: Fieldwork, 2024*

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analysed using the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This method of data analysis helped to convert quantitative data to frequencies and percentages. The crosstabulation method was used to present the frequencies and percentages. Tables showing the relationship between two or more variables were used to analyse related quantities of data obtained in this study. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis method. Qualitative data obtained from the field and from documentary research were examined and conclusions drawn.

## FINDINGS

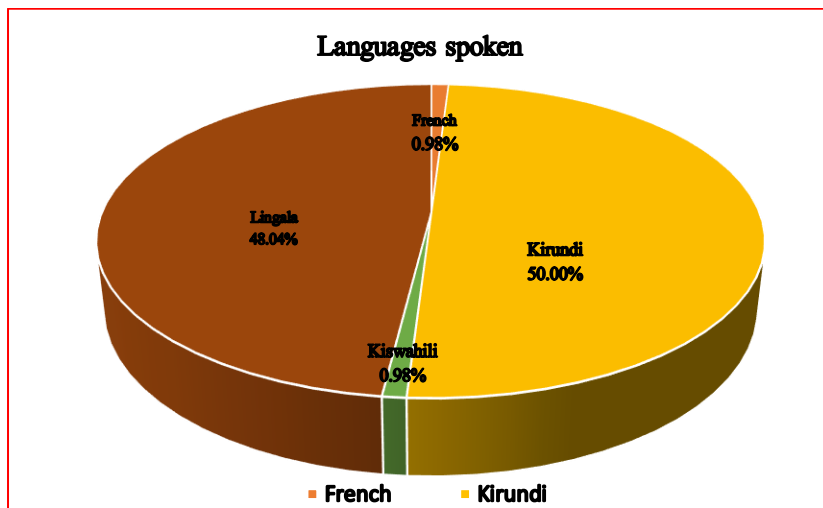
### Socio-cultural challenges faced by Refugee in the Mahama Camp

#### Language problems

In the Mahama Refugee Camp, language differences are a prevalent socio-cultural challenge faced by the refugees. The language distribution shows that majority of respondents speaks Kirundi (50 %), followed by Lingala (48.04 %). French and Kiswahili are spoken by a very small fraction of the respondents, each at 0.98 %. Kirundi and Lingala are the dominant languages in the camp, together accounting for 98.04 % of the total. This indicates a strong linguistic presence of these two languages within Mahama Camp. The dominance of Kirundi and Lingala suggests that these languages play a significant role in the cultural and social interactions within the community. Programs and services should consider using these

languages to effectively reach and engage the refugees. Figure 1 below illustrates the languages spoken.

**Figure 1: Languages spoken**



*Source: Fieldwork, 2024*

The camp uses different languages including Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, Lingala, French, Arabic, and mother tongues. 85.3 % of respondents identified language differences as a significant challenge. The presence of many languages and the fact that refugees do not understand all the languages in the refugee camp makes it difficult for the refugees to easily communicate and interact. This underscores the importance of addressing language barriers to improve communication in the camp.

Similarly, cultural diversities are highlighted as a significant challenge, with 29.7 % of responses and 86.3 % of cases, indicating that the diversity of cultural background can lead to misunderstandings or communication difficulties. The findings show that 86.3 % of respondents pointed to cultural diversities as a challenge. This indicates that the diversity of cultural backgrounds can lead to misunderstandings or communication challenges. Diversity enriches the camp experience but it also requires effective management to prevent misunderstandings. Overcrowding and lack of privacy is also a prominent barrier, with 28.4 % of responses and 82.4 % of cases, suggesting that overcrowding can impede effective communication by reducing privacy and increasing stress. Overcrowding exacerbates stress and discomfort, leading to communication breakdowns. Ethnocentrism, with 7.1 % of responses and 20.6 % of cases, is a notable barrier which can hinder open and respectful communication in the camp. Although less frequent, discrimination and racism are significant with 5.4 % of responses and 15.7 % of cases, highlighting the impact of prejudices and discriminatory behaviours on communication. Table 2 highlights the cultural and communication challenges faced by refugees in the camp.

**Table 2: Cultural and communication challenges faced by refugees**

Cultural and Communication Barriers Frequencies		
	Responses	
	N	Percent
Language differences	87	29.4%
Ethnocentrism	21	7.1%
Overcrowding and lack of privacy	84	28.4%
Discrimination and racism	16	5.4%
Cultural diversities	88	29.7%

*Source: Fieldwork, 2024*

### Culture shock

Culture shock in the Mahama refugee camp is another socio-cultural challenge faced by the refugees. Culture shock is the affective, behavioural, and cognitive disorientation that sojourners experience when in an unfamiliar culture (Zhang & Goodson, 2011; Hotta & Ting-Toomey, 2013). Culture shock can be seen as an unfamiliar event, which is not only under-defined, is little understood but also is unpredictable. Saylag (2014) referred to culture shock as a period of psychological distress, readjustment and stressful demands, a time when people process many powerful emotions, both positive and negative, perhaps for the first time in their lives.

Field research shows that the majority of the respondents, that is 60.8 %, have experienced culture shock. This indicates that nearly 6 out of 10 refugees faced challenges adapting to a new cultural environment. On the other hand, a significant portion of the respondents, 39.2 %, did not experience culture shock. This suggests that more than half of the refugees were unable to adapt to the new cultures as seen in the table below.

The refugees in the Mahama Refugee Camp encounter psychological challenges. From the findings, increased stress and anxiety is the most frequently reported challenge, with 29.7 % of responses and 88.2 % of cases, which shows that stress and anxiety are prevalent emotional challenges among refugees in the camp. The refugees also face the problem of isolation and depression, with 25.4 % of responses and 75.5 % of cases, indicating that isolation and depression are significant issues in the camp.

Culture shock, is also a notable psychological challenge, with 22.8 % of responses and 67.6 % of cases, reflecting the challenge of adapting to a new cultural environment. Representing 12.2 % of responses and 36.3 %, loss of identity highlights the impact of cultural transition on personal identity. Although the least frequently mentioned, feeling of displacement accounts for 9.9 % of responses and 29.4 % of cases, indicating the relevance of displacement within the camp. The high percentages of stress, anxiety, isolation, and depression underscore the need for robust mental health support services including counselling, support groups, and stress management programs in the camp.

The majority of the respondents, 60.8%, reported experiencing culture shock. This indicates that nearly 6 out of 10 refugees faced challenges adapting to a new cultural environment. On the other hand, a significant portion of the respondents, 39.2%, did not experience culture shock. This suggests that more than half of the refugees were unable to adapt to the new cultures.

Some aspects of camp life were found very different from those of refugees in their respective homes. Food and cuisine are the most frequently mentioned aspect, with 27.8% of responses and 58% of cases, possibly due to the importance of dietary preferences and cultural food practises. Social norms and customs are also a major aspect of camp life with 26.9% of responses and 56.9% of cases. Daily routines are another important aspect with 25.5% of responses and 53.9% of cases, indicating the role of structured activities and routines in the daily lives of refugees. Language and communication, although the least frequently mentioned, account for 19.9% of responses and 42.2% of cases.

**Table 3: Aspects of camp life found most different**

Camp life Frequencies		
	Responses	
	N	Percent
Social norms and customs	58	26.9%
Language and communication	43	19.9%
Daily routines	55	25.5%
Food and cuisine	60	27.8%

*Source : Fieldwork, 2024*

Some refugees who made up 3.7% of respondents considered their campmates strangers. It is demonstrated that 42.9% of the respondents engage in regular conversations and activities which is a primary way refugees bond. The second activity is social events and gatherings, with 39.8% of respondents, indicating that attending social events is also a significant bonding activity. Showing empathy and support is less common but notable, with 13.6% of respondents, which marks the importance of emotional support in building bonds. The presence of refugees who consider other refugees as strangers indicates a need for inclusive activities that encourage participation and reduce social isolation in the camp. The table below shows how refugees bond, socialise and cohabit among themselves.

**Table 4: Bonding and cohabitation**

Bonding Frequencies		
	Responses	
	N	Percent
Engage in regular conversations and activities with them	82	42.9%
Attend social events and gatherings together	76	39.8%

Show empathy and support towards them	26	13.6%
Strangers	7	3.7%

**Source: Fieldwork, 2024**

Some strategies to cope with culture shock were mentioned by respondents as follows: connecting with fellow refugees is the most common strategy, with 32.9% of responses and 52% of cases, which shows that finding support from individuals with similar backgrounds are primary way refugees cope with culture shock. Cultural exchange is the second strategy, with 21.7% of responses and 34.3% of cases, indicating that engaging in cultural exchange activities helps refugees adapt to new environments. Learning the local language (Kinyarwanda) is also a significant strategy with 19.9% of responses and 31.4% of cases. Although less common, seeking counselling or support groups is notable with 8.7% of responses and 13.7% of cases. A notable portion, of 16.8% of responses and 26.5% of cases, indicates that some refugees do not actively use any specific strategies to cope with culture shock.

**Table 5: Strategies to cope with culture shock**

Strategies to cope with culture shock Frequencies		
	Responses	
	N	Percent
Connecting with fellow refugees from similar backgrounds	53	32.9%
Participating in cultural exchange programs	35	21.7%
Seeking counselling or support groups	14	8.7%
None	27	16.8%
Learning the local language	32	19.9%

**Source: Fieldwork, 2024**

### Cultural differences and difficulties in accessing vital services

The study also assesses barriers to access services due to cultural background. Respondents were given two options indicated in the questionnaire. Those two options were Yes or No. the respondents were also asked to give reasons for their answer. Results from the findings indicate that barriers to access services exist in the camp. The results show that 24.51 % participants face challenges in accessing services due to different cultures. Besides, 75.49 % opted for No. in doing so, their answers indicated that linguistic and cultural aspects are not barriers in accessing services in the camp. The results presented in Table 6 clearly shows this trend.

**Table 6: Barriers to access primary services**

Barriers to access primary services because of cultural background				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	77	75.5	75.5	75.5



Yes	25	24.5	24.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Fieldwork, 2024*

Among those who said that they face challenges to access services due to their cultural differences, many of them mentioned access to health care and education services. Health care services in the camp are scarce, lack of good medications, transfers to referral hospitals that are not easy to get, among others; One respondent said:

Sometimes in our culture, if you are a girl, only your husband is allowed to see you and you can't be treated unless there are female doctors and she is not even allowed to discuss with strangers which can limit the way of expressing her sickness to the doctors. It is hard to afford medications once you have a serious sickness. It is hard to be transferred to another hospital even though you are very sick.

Another respondent laments that their children don't receive educational materials and equipment. She went further to explain that *“education is free here in camp but nowadays our children are no longer receiving enough school materials as it used to be, we don't know why they reduced them. Sometimes our children don't receive any school materials.”*

### **Challenges in Intercultural Marriages**

To gain insights of the views of refugees on the cultural aspects of the idea of marrying or dating someone from another culture, refugees were asked to choose either *Yes, No, Maybe, or I Don't know* for their answers. The result in Table 16 below shows that 6.9% agreed that they can marry, 26.5% were doubting, 14.7% said No, while 6.9% said they don't know.

**Table 7: Marriage consideration**

<b>Marriage consideration</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I don't know	7	6.9	6.9	6.9
Maybe	27	26.5	26.5	33.3
No	15	14.7	14.7	48.0
Yes	53	52.0	52.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source: Fieldwork, 2024*

From the above findings, the majority of the respondents 53 (52%) respondents, has a positive consideration of marriage, indicating a strong inclination towards marriage among the individuals surveyed. A significant portion, 26.5% responded “Maybe,” suggesting that while they are open to the idea of marriage, they have reservations or conditions that need to be met. 14.7% of respondents responded “No,” indicating a clear decision against considering marriage. A small fraction, 6.9% responded “I don't know,” reflecting uncertainty or lack of definitive stance on marriage consideration.

## Impact of multicultural challenges on daily interactions, decision-making, and community cohesion

**Table 8: Emotional and psychological effects**

Emotional and psychological effects	Frequencies	
	N	Percent
Increased stress and anxiety	90	29.7%
Sense of isolation and depression	77	25.4%
Culture shock	69	22.8%
Loss of identity	37	12.2%
Feeling of displacement	30	9.9%

*Source: Fieldwork, 2024*

As mentioned in Table 8, multicultural challenges pose several emotional and psychological effects on refugees in Mahama Refugee Camp. The findings rank increased stress and anxiety as the most frequently reported effect, with 29.7% of responses and 88.2% of cases, which shows that stress and anxiety are prevalent emotional effects among refugees in the camp. The second most common effect is sense of isolation and depression, with 25.4% of responses and 75.5% of cases, indicating that isolation and depression are significant issues in the camp. Culture shock, is also a notable psychological effect, with 22.8% of responses and 67.6% of cases, reflecting the challenges of adapting to a new cultural environment. Representing 12.2% of responses and 36.3%, loss of identity highlights the impact of cultural transition on personal identity. Although the least frequently mentioned, feeling of displacement accounts for 9.9% of responses and 29.4% of cases, indicating the relevance of displacement within the camp. The high percentages of stress, anxiety, isolation, and depression underscore the need for robust mental health support services including counselling, support groups, and stress management programs in the camp.

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Descriptively, findings show that the majority of respondents, agreed that the refugees in Mahama Refugee Camp face cultural and communication challenges because of language differences, cultural diversities, overcrowding and lack of privacy, discrimination and racism, and ethnocentrism. The refugee camp uses different languages including Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, Lingala, French, Arabic, and mother tongues. 85.3% of respondents identified language differences as a significant challenge. This high percentage underscores the importance of addressing language barriers to improve communication in the camp.

The findings show that 86.3% of respondents pointed cultural diversities as a challenge. This indicates that the diversity of cultural backgrounds can lead to misunderstandings or communication challenges. Diversity enriches the camp experience, but it also requires effective management to prevent misunderstandings. Among the respondents, 82.4% reported overcrowding and lack of privacy as a challenge. Overcrowding can exacerbate stress and discomfort, leading to communication breakdowns. It also suggests that physical conditions

could impede effective communication by reducing privacy and increasing stress. 15.7% of the respondents reported discrimination and racism as an issue. Although a lower percentage compared to other factors, it remains a critical area that needs attention to ensure a safe and inclusive camp environment. Ethnocentrism was identified as a cause of cultural challenges by 20.6% of respondents. This reflects the tendency of individuals to view their own culture as superior, which can hinder open, respectful, and effective intercultural communication in the camp. In conclusion, language differences and cultural diversities are the most pressing issues, followed by overcrowding and lack of privacy. Addressing these challenges through targeted strategies can significantly enhance communication and cultural coexistence in the camp.

According to the results, majority of respondents agreed that the causes of socio-cultural challenges include language and communication barriers, cultural differences, lack of interpreters, limited access to technology. The effects include culture shock, increased stress and anxiety, sense of isolation, conflicts and miscommunication. This is in agreement with Thomas (1985) who stated that symptoms of culture shock include depression, helplessness, hostility to the host country, feelings of anxiety, overidentification with home country, feelings of withdrawal, homesickness, loneliness, paranoid feelings, preoccupation with cleanliness, irritability, confusion, disorientation, isolation, tension, defensiveness, intolerance of ambiguity, and impatience.

The findings show that 77.5% of respondents identified language barriers as a big challenge, with a numerical value of 79. This high percentage underscores the importance of addressing language barriers to improve communication and cultural integration in the camp. A lack of interpreters was highlighted by 59.8% of the respondents as a hindrance to successful communication. Increasing the availability of interpreters can significantly reduce communication challenges within the camp. Specific cultural norms and practices cause misunderstandings among refugees, as highlighted by 47.1% of respondents. These norms include food and cuisine (58.8%), social norms and customs (56.9%), language and communication (58.8%), and daily routines (53.9%).

The findings show that 42.2% of the respondents have limited access to technology. This affects their harmonious stay within the camp as they have limited access to information. This view is in line with Quintanilla (2013:1) contends that, refugees are living in an information void and communication gap environment. They are left in the dark about what is happening around them. 24.5% of the respondents face barriers in accessing services such as education and health care services. Among the reasons provided include language barriers and communication issues, expensive medications, lack of school materials and equipment.

A high percentage of respondents, 88.2%, reported experiencing increased stress and anxiety. This indicates that cultural and communication barriers significantly contribute to mental and health issues. Feelings of isolation and depression were indicated by 75.5% of respondents. This shows that some refugees face severe emotional distress. Cultural differences are at 86.3%. Thus, 67.6% of respondents faced culture shock. The latter has affected their

emotional well-being by feeling isolated at 75.5% and increasing stress and anxiety at 88.2%. 23.5% of the respondents supported the idea of integrating other cultures into their own, while 76.5% did not support the idea of integration. This highlights the challenges individuals face when adapting to a new cultural environment. This is in concord with Furnham and Bochner (1982) who asserted that culture shock occurs in the social encounters, social situations, social episodes, or social transactions between sojourners and host nationals. In other words, we experience culture shock when many familiar cultural cues and patterns are severed, when our values and beliefs are questioned in a new environment (Kohls, 1984).

A sense of loss of identity was reported by 36.3% of respondents. This occurred when they felt disconnected from their cultural roots and struggle to find a place in their new setting of the camp. Feelings of displacement were reported by 29.4% of respondents. This reflects the emotional turmoil of being uprooted from familiar surroundings and the difficulty of establishing a sense of belonging in the new environment.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

All refugees are recommended to play their part in making the camp a harmonious and comfortable place for them by sharing personal stories and experiences, participating in community leadership and cultural awareness events. Refugees should be of best behaviour in order not to violate camp rules, regulations, and norms of both the host community and their mates. In addition, integration training should also include the cultural aspects on how to live together in intercultural domains and how to communicate with individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds.

The lack of integration, lack of communication, and lack of relationship among refugees create tension, which in return, can lead to serious conflicts due to the fact that, those refugees have differences based on their cultural, historical, and geographical backgrounds. In this regard, refugees should gradually receive intercultural communication and integration workshops to learn and exchange ideas and experiences. This will create mutual relationships and enhance interactions because when refugees understand that different cultures and languages are important, it will reduce ethnocentrism, and will give them a room to be open-minded and ready to learn from others. This will eventually contribute in reducing linguistic and cultural challenges in the camp simply because refugees will be able to accommodate each other.

Another recommendation is for integration efforts to be put in place to solve linguistic and cultural communication challenges in the Mahama Camp and other refugee camps in Rwanda, should be put in place. The study recommends that regional schemes such as East African Community and the Great Lakes Region should help the hosting community by providing expertise on intercultural communication integration trainings, funds as well as encouraging refugees to learn and accommodate each other. Furthermore, projects, education and health facilities such as schools and hospitals should benefit both refugees and hosts.

This will bring a good neighbourliness and harmony between hosts and refugees in the region.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has discussed and analysed the findings obtained from the research conducted on socio-cultural challenges faced by refugees in Mahama Refugee Camp. The existence of diverse social groups and ethnicity, discrimination, hatred and lack of trust between refugees and host hamper the interaction and acculturation. Thus, increased stress and anxiety, sense of isolation, conflicts and miscommunication are considered to be the main effects of culture shock which is prevalent in the camp. In addition, intercultural communication is a challenge in the camp due to language barriers. Camp staff and refugees do not all speak the same languages. The researchers opine that there is a strong need of strategies and initiatives that address these socio-cultural challenges among refugees in the camp. These strategies and initiatives include, provision of interpreters to ease communication, comprehensive language training, vocational skills development, cultural exchange workshops, community dialogues, advocating for inclusivity, providing psychosocial support, and mass sports activities.

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