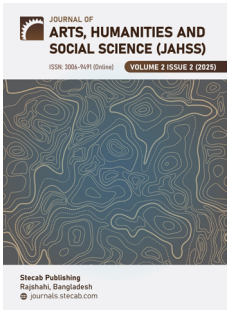

Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science (JAHSS)

ISSN: 3006-9491 (Online)

Volume 2 Issue 2, (2025)

https://doi.org/10.69739/jahss.v2i2.592

https://journals.stecab.com/jahss

Published by
Stecab Publishing

Research Article

Social Cohesion Between Internally Displaced People and Host Communities in Somali Region of Ethiopia: The Case of Qolaji Camp

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About Article

Article History

Submission: April 10, 2025
Acceptance : May 19, 2025
Publication : May 22, 2025

Keywords

Host Communities, IDPs, Social Cohesiveness

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ABSTRACT

In the Qoloji settlement in the Somali region of Ethiopia, this study examines the social cohesion between the host community and internally displaced people (IDPs). The study uses a mixed-methods descriptive approach that includes two focus groups, nine interviews, and a survey with 156 respondents. Three factors are used to quantify social cohesion: cooperation, feeling of identity, and trust. With mean scores of 4.1 for cooperation and trust and 4.3 for sense of belonging, the results show strong levels of social cohesion. Qualitative data emphasizes how crucial shared cultural components—like language, familial ties, and religious convictions—are to building a sense of trust and community. Age, educational attainment, and aid dependency are found to be important determinants of social cohesion by multiple linear regression analysis. There is a negative correlation between households with members who lack formal education and those who are over 60 and between the ages of 39 and 49. Social cohesion is adversely affected by aid dependency, indicating that certain community members may feel excluded. For males, there is a marginally significant negative correlation between gender and social cohesion. Despite issues with aid distribution and accusations of partiality, the study highlights the importance of cultural affinities, reciprocal assistance, and resource sharing in fostering social cohesion between IDPs and host communities. The results inform strategies for promoting peaceful cohabitation and integration and advance our understanding of the factors that influence social cohesion in displacement environments.

Citation Style:

Abdulahi, K. A. (2025). Social Cohesion Between Internally Displaced People and Host Communities in Somali Region of Ethiopia: The Case of Qolaji Camp. *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, 2*(2), 78-86. https://doi.org/10.69739/jahss.v2i2.592

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to conflict and violations of human rights, the number of people who have been forcibly displaced worldwide has increased to previously unheard-of levels since World War II, reaching a peak of 65.3 million people by 2015 (UNHCR, 2016). Internally displaced individuals (IDPs) made up about 63% of them, with refugees and asylum seekers making up the remaining percentage. Although refugees usually seek safety in nearby states, many of these host countries already face economic instability and resource scarcity, which makes matters worse (World Bank, 2015). Host towns are under more strain when displaced people arrive, which frequently results in competition for limited resources like housing, employment, and public services. Tensions and social unrest may be exacerbated by this strain (World Bank 2016). Failure to integrate displaced people into host cultures can lead to political and social instability and conflict-prone conditions, according to research (Mercy Corps, 2013; World Vision, 2015).

The interaction between internally displaced people and host communities can result in both opportunities and challenges for social cohesion. In certain contexts, such as northeast Nigeria, high levels of opposition from host communities towards IDPs have been documented, with 85% of surveyed host community members expressing discontent with the presence of IDPs (Kamta *et al.*, 2022). But maintaining social cohesiveness is still essential to encouraging harmonious cohabitation and assimilation. Initiatives to improve social cohesiveness, like participatory interventions like Somalia's Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) model, have demonstrated potential in fostering social integration, especially when it comes to meeting the health needs of displaced people (Jelle *et al.*, 2023). In order to effectively integrate IDPs, it is necessary to address both concrete factors, like accessible housing and work possibilities, as well as intangible factors, including cultural assimilation and a sense of belonging (Voznyak *et al.*, 2024). Additionally, mapping displaced populations' needs and capacities helps host communities better utilize IDPs' potential and skills, even amid violence, promoting economic resilience (Voznyak *et al.*, 2024).

A stable and flourishing society is said to require social cohesion. In addition to refugees and internally displaced people, it encourages inclusivity, resilience, and peaceful coexistence for members of the host community who are marginalized (Lutz & Portmann, 2022, OECD 2011). Cohesive societies are better able to handle conflicts and overcome obstacles during times of displacement (Janmaat, 2011; Delhey & Dragolov, 2016). However, the demand on resources and the ensuing rivalry can weaken the social fabric when relocation takes place during economic and social crises. The lack of access to healthcare, education, and livelihoods that displaced communities frequently experience might make it more difficult for them to compete with host populations for basic services (Jayakody, 2022).

Conflict can flourish as a result of the abrupt influx of displaced individuals, which can intensify competition for resources including shelter, food, water, and work (Walton, 2012; Fajth *et al.*, 2019). Even in the absence of overt violence, the World Bank (2022) cautions that these forces could result in increased inequality and even conflict if inclusive policies and development investments are not implemented. Competition for scarce resources, such land and water, is a common cause of tension and can lead to conflict between displaced people and their hosts (Ali *et al.*, 2017).

In Ethiopia, one of the countries most affected by internal displacement, 4.17 million IDPs were recorded as of July 2021, with the Somali region alone hosting over 828,000 displaced persons (Abdirahman *et al.*, 2021). Conflicts, environmental issues, and ethnic tensions between the Somali and Oromia regions are the main causes of displacement in this area. The crop season is disrupted by prolonged droughts, flash floods, and strong winds, all of which are effects of climate change that the Somali region is particularly vulnerable to. Since late 2020, three consecutive failed rainy seasons have resulted in an extended drought that has impacted an estimated 3.5 million people (Tsegay & Gezahegne, 2023). The number of internally displaced people returning to their previous locations gradually decreased, stabilizing the displacement in the Somali region, which peaked in the early to mid-2019 period. The interior zones of Korahey, Shabelle, Doollo, Sitti, and Jarar are where most displacements caused by drought are found. Displacements caused by conflict are mostly found close to the Somali-Oromia border, especially in the areas that border Oromia, such as Fafan, Dawa, Liban, and Afder (Abdirahman *et al.*, 2021). With about 80,000 inhabitants, Qoloji is the nation's largest displacement colony. Somali populations from the Oromia Region who were displaced by violence and are reluctant to return because of their lack of clan links and fear of attacks are the main internally displaced people (IDPs) in Qoloji. Furthermore, it has been claimed that the host community is unlikely to keep IDPs on board without assistance to lessen the burden of hosting (IOM, 2021).

The majority of studies concentrate on long-term solutions in the context of social cohesion and internally displaced people (IDPs), even though there is a wealth of research on social cohesion in the study area. A small number of studies have been carried out, such as the one by Getachew *et al.* (2024) on the use of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to improve employment and social cohesion between host communities and refugees. This study highlights social cohesion between hosts and refugees by boosting youth employment. Furthermore, "Social Cohesion and Refugee-Host Interactions" and East African refugees are the main topics of Betts *et al.*'s (2022) study. However, thorough studies on social cohesion between host communities and IDPs are scarce. Consequently, By examining social cohesion between host communities and IDPs, this study aimed to narrow this gap. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the factors that contribute to social cohesiveness as well as the level of social cohesion between host communities and internally displaced individuals. The following are the goals of the study.

- To assess social cohesion among IDPs and host community.
- To assess the determinants of social among host and IDPs

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. IDPs and Social Cohesion

It is still difficult to understand how social cohesion is impacted

by displacement. It is unclear which elements of displacement upset the social balances that already exist, resulting in pressures that affect the consequences of social cohesiveness (de Berry & Roberts, 2018). Over the past ten years, there hasn't been much noticeable progress in putting social cohesion-focused interventions into practice, but research shows that development and humanitarian actors are becoming more conscious of how their work can influence the interactions between host communities and displaced people (Holloway & Sturridge, 2022; World Bank, 2022).

Several implementing and funding entities, including government offices, NGOs, faith-based organizations, and UN agencies, acknowledged making conscious efforts to promote peace between host communities and displaced people in our research. Initiatives to promote social peace and economic inclusion between these groups have been started by regional organizations like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (IGAD, 2024). This has become a global trend, with "conflict sensitivity" being incorporated into project design more and more, and even turning into a requirement for EU financing. Furthermore, social cohesion is now specifically listed as one of the objectives of the EU's foreign policy tools. Nevertheless, in spite of these advancements, the phrase "social cohesion" is not regularly used or defined in many treatments. Rather, they frequently use different terms. According to Gezhegne and Adugna (2024), the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, for instance, characterizes the interaction between displaced persons and host communities in terms of "safety and security," utilizing a human rights-based approach.

Given that many refugees are hosted in places close to their countries of origin where they frequently have ethnic, cultural, or religious, contextual knowledge is crucial. In Ethiopia, displaced individuals frequently relocate to areas they refer to as "home," where they are comparable to the host communities in terms of ethnicity or sociocultural background. Cohesion can be promoted by these social ties, which may be founded on a common language, religion, or cultural customs. However, political tensions, rivalry for few resources, and historical grievances usually compound them.

This complexity is best illustrated by the plight of Eritrean refugees in Tigray. These refugees and the Tigrayan host community have linguistic, religious, and cultural similarities, but their interactions have not always been cordial. These encounters are made more difficult by host communities' lack of resources. As a result, paying close attention to local and regional dynamics is necessary to comprehend and address differences in social cohesion. It is important to customize community-based therapies to the unique social group configurations and settings of each environment (Kim *et al.*, 2020).

There are two primary viewpoints regarding the impact of contact between displaced and host communities on social cohesion: the first, known as contact theory, posits that greater social interaction between diverse groups can lessen prejudice and promote trust and reciprocity, ultimately improving cohesion (Vemuru *et al.*, 2020). The second viewpoint, on the other hand, highlights the potential for conflict: mass displacement can put a strain on local resources, such as housing, food, services, land, and water, making host communities perceive newcomers as a threat to their own stability and means of subsistence, especially when refugees are located in already marginalized areas with economic or environmental vulnerabilities (Walton, 2012; Fajth *et al.*, 2019; Mercy Corps, 2019; Betts *et al.*, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of Area

The study was conducted in the Qoloji settlement, established in 2016 near the Oromia-Somali Region border in Babile Woreda, which continues to receive IDPs. Settlement faces challenges, such as limited land, population growth, shelter densification, lack of basic services, and increased tension with the host community. Located along the main highway between Harar and Jijiga, Qoloji is located near Babile Town, Harar, and Jijiga. Despite Harar being the closest major city, IDPs primarily interact with Jijiga due to cultural ties and administrative authority (UN-Habitat, 2021).

Between 2016 and 2020, the Qoloji IDP settlement expanded approximately 0.19 km² annually southwards, housing 12,834 households/79,148 individuals (DTM round 21). Qoloji I, established in 2016, has 5,230 shelters/km² across 18 kebeles. Qoloji II, opened in 2017, has 7,742 shelters/km² across 19 kebeles. In comparison, Addis Ababa has a lower density. Anod's household size suggests a population of about 4,000 people, with a density of around 1,000 shelters/km² or 10,000 people/km². With a natural growth rate of 2.03 %, based on rural growth in the Somali region, the Qoloji IDP population is projected to reach 96,765 by 2030 (a 22.26 % increase). In contrast, the host community population is projected to grow from 4,000 to nearly 5,000 by 2030. Anod doubled in size from 0.08 km² to 0.16 km² between 2016 and 2020, hosting about 500 households. The Central Statistical Authority and Bureau of Somali Region Finance and Economic Development estimate the Qoloji IDP population as 12,532 households (75,192 individuals) living in overcrowded conditions (UN-Habitat, 2021). Figure 1 is represented a map of the study area.

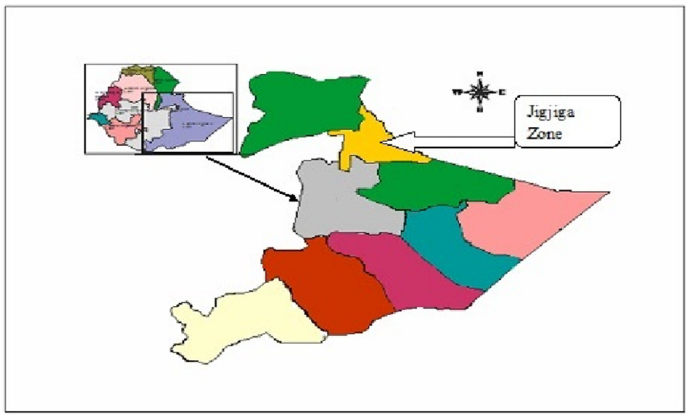

Figure 1. Map of the Study Area (Qoloji IDP camp)
Source: GIS projected information computed since 2023.

3.2. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design, utilizing mixed research methods, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Mixed methods were chosen to provide a more comprehensive understanding than could be achieved through standalone quantitative or qualitative studies. On the other hand, descriptive studies offer a more precise depiction of a particular phenomenon that has been previously researched but has not been thoroughly explored (Cooper, 2006). This design is particularly suitable for studies on attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics, as it helps understand how a specified or identified population reacts to or is affected by specific stimuli (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

3.3. Sampling Technique

Sampling may be defined as the methodology of choosing a unit of cases to conclude the study (Orodho, 2003). The study employed stratified random sampling as the most useful method for distinct sample sizes and procedures. The sample consisted of 160 respondents, aiming to capture the target group's diversity. The population was divided into distinct subgroups or strata based on key characteristics such as age, gender, profession, or location. This ensured that each segment was proportionally represented in the final sample.From the original pool of 160 respondents, at least 4 individuals did not respond or were unable to participate and were subsequently excluded from the analysis. To provide the findings with more context, focus groups with important stakeholders—such as elders, DRM office focal persons, camp chairmen, and local community members —were conducted. Nine (9) key informant interviews and two focus group discussions (FGDs) with six to eight participants each were carried out for both IDP and the host community.

3.4. Data Source

First-hand reports and viewpoints on social cohesiveness and intergroup competition were gathered from IDPs and members of the host community, camp administrators, local government representatives, and humanitarian organizations working in the region. Insights into common and differing viewpoints were provided by focus group discussions (FGDs) with representative groups of IDPs and members of the host community. These talks focused on group identities, interactions, and collective experiences in the camp environment. Secondary data was gathered from government agencies, international organizations, and humanitarian groups' publications and reports, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

3.5. Measuring Social cohesion

Social cohesion was measured on 5-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from 1 (“strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). The scale has 15 items with three dimensions: trust, sense of identity, and cooperation, each measured using five items.

• *Intergroup Trust:* Intergroup trust was measured using five items adapted from Knack *et al.* (1997). A sample item of the dimension was “I trust most people in this community”. The study used a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to measure trust.

• *Sense of Belonging/Identity:* Sense of social identity was measured using five items to determine the extent to which IDPs identify themselves with the host community. A sample item was “I identify with the values and traditions of this community”. The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. This scale was adapted from Chan *et al.* (2006).

• *Cooperation:* Cooperation was measured on five items to determine the extent of IDP and host community cooperation. The sample item was “People in this community are willing to help each other, even if they don't know each other well.” This was measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale was adapted from the Schiefer and van der Noll (2016); Nowak (2006).

3.6. Method of data analysis

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were calculated for the demographic variables and key measures of social cohesion, intergroup competition, and attitudes. This provides an overview of the sample characteristics and distribution of responses. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of intergroup competition and demographic factors on social cohesion.

Likewise, qualitative data were analyzed from focus group discussions, and key informant interviews were analyzed using thematic coding to identify key themes related to social cohesion, intergroup dynamics, and community perceptions. The qualitative findings were compared and integrated with the quantitative results to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of social cohesion.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study to evaluate social cohesion between internally displaced people (IDPs) and host community members are shown in the section that follows. In Kolaji Camp, which is in the Fafan Zone, 156 separate questionnaires were given to both IDPs and members of the host community to gather data. The purpose of the study was to investigate how many different factors affect these two groups' degree of social cohesion.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Descriptive statistics and a summary of the demographics of the homes in the study are presented in this investigation of social cohesiveness and intergroup competition between internally displaced people (IDPs) and the host community. Several significant trends may be seen in the demographics of the 156 households included in this study. Age-wise, the greatest group of respondents (39.1%) are between the ages of 39 and 49, followed by those between the ages of 50 and 59 (34.6%). Just 6.4% of respondents were over 60, while a smaller percentage (19.9%) were between the ages of 20 and 38. In terms of gender, men lead 51.9% of families. whilst women make up 48.1%. Most respondents (72.4%) are married, followed by

unmarried people (24.4%), divorced people (1.9%), and widowed people (1.3%). Regarding education, 27.6% of the respondents have only completed primary school, whereas 19.9% have finished secondary school. Of those surveyed, 44.9% say they have no formal education, while a smaller minority, 7.7%, have attended college or university. In terms of occupation, AID recipients make up the largest group (33.3%), followed by tiny dealers (21.2%). 13.5% of the sample works for the government, and 16.0% of the sample is made up of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Lastly, in terms of community status, 48.7% of respondents are a member of the host community, whilst 51.2% are IDPs (internally displaced people).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of Respondents

Demographic characteristics	Variables	Frequency n=156	Percent %
Age of the house holds	20-38	31	19.9
	39-49	61	39.1
	50-59	54	34.6
	>60	10	6.4
Gender of the households	Male	81	51.9
	Female	75	48.1
Martial Statutes	Married	38	24.4
	Unmarried	113	72.4
	Divorced	3	1.9
	Windowed	2	1.3
Educational level	No information education	70	44.9
	Primary education	43	27.6
	Secondary education	31	19.9
	University/colleges	12	7.7
Occupation	Agro-pastoralists	25	16.0
	petty trade	33	21.2
	pastoralists	25	16.0
	government	21	13.5
	AID Dependents	52	33.3
Status of the community	IDP	80	51.2
	Host community	76	48.7

4.2. Social cohesion

Social cohesion refers to the vertical and horizontal relations between members of society and the state that holds society together. Social cohesion is characterized by a set of attitudes and behavioral manifestations, including trust, inclusive identity, and cooperation for the common good (Leininger et al,2021). The first objective was to analyze the social cohesion between the IDP and the host community and to measure social cohesion using the three dimensions of social cohesion, Trust, Cooperation for the common good, and a sense of belongingness/identity, as revealed by Leininger et al,2021. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of trust among the IDP and the host community.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of social cohesion

Social cohesion	M	SD
Trust	4.1	.49
Sense of belonging	4.3	.36
Cooperation	4.1	.53
Total average mean	4.2	.27

Source: Survey data (2024)

As shown in Table 2, the mean score for trust was 4.1, with a standard deviation of 0.49, indicating a high level of trust. On the other hand, the sense of belonging also has a higher mean of 4.3 and a lower standard deviation of 0.36, indicating a stronger sense of belonging with less variation in participants' responses. The cooperation mean is 4.1, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.5 reflecting positive perceptions of cooperation, The overall average mean for social cohesion is 4.2, with a standard deviation of 0.27, highlighting a generally positive view of social cohesion. These findings suggest that, on average, the IDPs and host communities experience high social cohesion.

4.3. Determinants of Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is a multifaceted concept that can be defined in several ways. Most interpretations include societal elements such as trust in social and institutional structures, cooperation for the collective good, and a shared sense of identity (Chan *et al.*, 2006; Leininger *et al.*, 2021). While some definitions also incorporate broader issues such as poverty, inequality, and quality of life as aspects of social cohesion (OECD, 2011), others contend that these are better understood as factors that influence or result from social cohesion rather than being its

foundational components (Leininger *et al.*, 2021; Schiefer & Van der Noll, 2017; Walkenhorst & Unzicker, 2018).To determine the predictors of social cohesion, multiple linear regressions were calculated (Table 5).

Table 3. Linear regression result of the social cohesion between IDP and host community

Predictors	B	SE	T	β	Sig
Age of the households					
1= 39-49	.20	.07	2.62	.33	0.01
2= 50-59	.12	.07	1.68	.19	0.09
3= >60	.27	.12	2.16	.22	0.03
Education level					
1=No formal education	-.15	.07	-2.09	-.22	0.03
2=Secondary	-.016	.06	-0.25	-.02	0.8
3=colleges/university	.059	.10	0.59	.05	.05
Occupation of the households					
1=petty trading	.02	.07	0.36	.03	0.7
3=pastoral	-.02	.08	-0.25	-.02	0.8
2=Government	-.03	.08	-0.47	-.04	0.6
4=Aid dependent	-.19	.07	-2.71	-.30	0.008
Status 1= host community	.06	.050	1.19	0.236	.098
Gender of the households					
1=Male	-.08	.05	-1.7	-.14	0.08
_cons	4.01	.17	22.5	0.000	.

R^2 = 0.29, F = 155, p<0.05

Regression analysis of predictors of social cohesion between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the host community accounted for 29 % of the variance (R^2 = 0.29, F (8, 155) = 155, p < 0.05). Age and educational level were significant predictors. Households with members aged 39-49 years had a significantly positive relationship with social cohesion (β = 0.33, p< 0.01), and those with members aged over 60 years also showed a positive association (β = 0.22, p< 0.03). Households with a lack of formal education had a significant negative relationship with social cohesion (β = -0.22, p <0.03), while secondary or higher education levels were not significant. Aid dependency negatively impacted social cohesion (β = -0.30, p <0.008), indicating that there is some exclusion that some of the community with aid-dependent feelings undermine cohesion between IDPs and host communities. Occupations in the petty trade, pastoralism, and government jobs were not significantly associated with social cohesion. Gender has a significant negative at β = -0. -.14, p<0.08). Therefor these results suggest that age, gender, education, and aid dependency are key factors for social cohesion.

4.4. Discussion

Although there was considerable fluctuation in the replies, the results showed a mean trust score of 4.1 with a standard deviation of 0.49, indicating a relatively high degree of trust. This typically shows a favorable attitude toward interpersonal interactions and a strong basis of trust between internally displaced people (IDP) and the host society. The Somali group has a shared language, religion, and culture (Bettys *et al.*, 2022). "They are our brothers and sisters," they said. IDP and hosts did not differ from one another. Communities impacted by relocation have a long history of vulnerability and displacement, which promotes local solidarity beyond shared ethnic identification and cultural links.

Participants in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) stressed the value of shared cultural components including language, familial ties, and religious convictions in building trust between internally displaced people (IDPs) and host community members. Someone said, "We speak the same language, share similar traditions, and practice the same religion, so it's easier for us to understand each other, even if we are from different backgrounds." It was determined that this strong sense of cultural affinity was essential to fostering constructive interactions and teamwork between the two groups.

This finding aligns with that of Vemuru *et al.* (2020), who demonstrated that the Somali region of Ethiopia serves as a widely referenced example: a lengthy history of shared ethnic identity and cultural connections has arguably established the groundwork for solidarity among various groups. This conclusion is consistent with that of Vemuru *et al.* (2020),

who showed that the Somali area of Ethiopia is an often-cited example: a long history of shared ethnic identity and cultural ties has arguably laid the foundation for solidarity across diverse communities.

A somewhat higher average of 4.3 and a lower standard deviation of 0.36 for sense of belonging indicate a stronger sense of belonging with less variation in responses from participants. This study supports the finding that internally displaced people (IDPs) are generally accepted without limitations because ethnicity appeals to the emotions of group members. Reception is frequently emotionally charged, and resources are distributed by the regional government and the local host community. (Gezhegne & Adugna, 2024).

According to the results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), people in the community feel very connected, accepted, and aligned with its values. The participants reported feeling appreciated and warmly embraced by others, which added to their sense of integration as a whole. The group showed a high degree of acceptance and shared identity when one participant said, "I feel accepted here like I am part of something important." Furthermore, the majority of participants indicated a strong connection to the customs and values of the community, indicating that social and cultural ties are important in creating this feeling of inclusion. A long history of shared ethnic identification and cultural ties has undoubtedly provided the groundwork for unity among diverse communities, as demonstrated by the Somali area of Ethiopia, which was highlighted in a recent study as a commonly cited example (Vemuru *et al.*, 2020).

Positive attitudes toward cooperation are indicated by the mean cooperation score of 4.1 with a standard deviation of 0.5. The community demonstrated a strong basis of respect, cooperation, and mutual aid, according to the focus group. Although there are certain areas where attitudes vary, such as between inhabitants of the host community and internally displaced people (IDPs), the overall results point to a general unity among the community in their desire to work together for progress and help during difficult times.

Hosted IDPs support themselves by sharing food and resources with their hosts and taking advantage of the opportunities to earn money in the host community, as Davies (2012) pointed out. In essence, these roles serve as de facto NGOs that are vital for saving lives, building resilience, and providing basic services by placing host families and communities as informal humanitarian relief providers. This finding is consistent with Tefera *et al.* (2024), who showed that during times of need, community members maintain the custom of sharing, caring, and mutual aid. These self-organized communities assist conflict-affected individuals, especially internally displaced people.

4.5. Determinants of social cohesion

Age, education level, occupation, gender, and intergroup competition are among the elements that have varying degrees of impact on social cohesion between internally displaced people (IDPs) and the host community, according to the results of the linear regression analysis. Notably, there was a positive and statistically significant link between social cohesion and those aged 39–49 and above 60, suggesting that these age groups tended to score better on social cohesion measures. This result runs opposite to O'Rourke and Sinnott's (2006) research, which suggested that older inhabitants are more likely than younger ones to have unfavorable opinions toward IDPs.

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The significantly negative coefficient shows that, in terms of employment, reliance on aid is highly associated with a negative influence on social cohesiveness. This implies that some members of the community feel left out of the distribution of charity.

According to group talks, some people think local authorities do not accept them or that the government and non-governmental groups exhibit partiality. Previous research has suggested that enhancing infrastructure for both groups, integrating coexistence and human rights themes into communication strategies, and encouraging communication between local officials and refugee representatives are some of the strategies that can improve refugee-host relationships (Jerin & Mozumder, 2019).

On the other hand, displaced people frequently grow reliant on the relief they get, according to Jayakody *et al.* (2022). Furthermore, host communities may become envious and misunderstand financial aid provided to the displaced. Furthermore, in many respects, financial self-sufficiency is essential to the long-term and sustainable recovery of displaced communities. The results of Abedtalas & Mamo's (2022) study, which showed that "only those with 'other sources of income' (consisting mainly of aid) have a significantly positive attitude" about income, are in conflict with this study. According to the analysis, the existence and influx of IDPs in the region are linked to a significant amount of aid flow. Aid users' favorable perceptions of IDPs would therefore not be surprising.

In terms of gender, males show a marginally significant ($p=0.08$), somewhat negative connection with social cohesion. This suggests that, in comparison to other variables, the effect is less stable and reliable. The high rate of male land ownership may be the cause of the negative correlation, since the influx of internally displaced people may cause some to worry about the possible loss or diminution of resources and land, especially for pastoral or agricultural uses. These problems weren't recorded, though. Finally, there was no discernible correlation between social cohesion and intergroup competition, suggesting that group rivalry had little effect on the cohesiveness of IDPs and the host society.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined social cohesion between internally

displaced people (IDPs) and the host community in the Qoloji settlement in Ethiopia's Somali region. The findings indicate that social cohesion is generally high and that the two groups have a strong sense of trust, belonging, and cooperation. It has been demonstrated that common cultural elements, such as language, traditions, and religion, are crucial for fostering harmony and goodwill.

Regression analysis identified several key drivers of social cohesion. Age was a crucial influence; people over 60 and those between the ages of 39 and 49 demonstrated higher levels of cohesion. Lack of formal education had a detrimental effect, indicating the important role of education in fostering unity. Notably, a lower level of cohesion was associated with aid dependency, pointing to challenges around perceived inequities in aid distribution.

The study highlights the complex interplay of factors influencing social cohesion in displacement contexts. While shared cultural ties provide a strong foundation, unresolved issues such as unequal access to resources and limited economic opportunities remain significant barriers to sustained unity.

NGOs and local governments should put in place initiatives that support fair and open aid distribution to solve these issues and lessen conflicts associated with perceived partiality and dependency. Mutual understanding and economic cooperation can be improved by investing in adult education and vocational training, particularly for uneducated IDPs and members of the host society. Additionally, programs that help both groups generate revenue can increase interdependence and lessen rivalry for limited resources. To preserve open communication and cooperatively settle new conflicts, community conversation forums with local cultural customs and respected elders should be promoted.

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