

Educational resilience and trust among forcibly displaced students

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ABSTRACT

Following the 2023 conflict, forcibly displaced students entered Armenia's higher education system, raising urgent questions about integration, educational continuity, and trust in host state institutions. To investigate these issues, we surveyed 238 forcibly displaced students enrolled in Armenian universities and estimated binary logistic regression models for three outcomes: intention to emigrate, willingness to continue education in a tuition-based system, and trust in the state's capacity to protect their rights. The predictors were organized into four blocks: demographic/economic, legal/institutional, civic/integrative, and psychological. The results show that household employment reduces emigration intention while increasing the willingness to continue tuition-based studies, whereas educational integration also promotes persistence in paid higher education. In contrast, self-acceptance and longer prior educational trajectories reduce the willingness to continue tuition-based studies, fatalistic time orientation predicts stronger migration intentions, and past rights violations are associated with higher emigration intentions while coinciding with greater institutional trust under conditions of perceived redress. Overall, these findings support a human security and sustainability perspective, demonstrating that educational resilience, institutional responsiveness, and inclusive policy design jointly shape post-conflict integration trajectories.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Armenia, the 2023 conflict produced a sudden wave of forced displacement, including a substantial number of university students. Consequently, Armenian higher education institutions experienced an unexpected influx of displaced learners whose academic trajectories were abruptly relocated to a new institutional and social environment. For these students, displacement is not only a question of educational access but also a multidimensional integration challenge. Many faces interrupted learning paths, legal precarity, and socioeconomic marginalization, alongside a strain in their confidence in the institutions expected to provide support and protection. In practice, universities often become the first point of contact for both academic continuity and referral to psychosocial and legal support, making higher education a pivotal arena in which longer-term adaptation trajectories are shaped. Despite this, the forced-migration literature primarily concentrates on adult refugees and macro-level policy frameworks, while forcibly displaced students, especially those in higher education, remain comparatively underexamined in both research and policy design. This omission is consequential because displaced university students sit at the intersection of

protection and education systems, where resource constraints and institutional signals can rapidly redirect future planning and local integration trajectories [1]–[3].

This study examined emigration intentions, educational persistence under tuition uncertainty, and institutional trust among forcibly displaced university students in Armenia. Using a structured survey of 238 displaced students enrolled in Armenian universities, we estimated binary logistic regression models and evaluated predictors across four conceptual blocks: demographic/economic, legal/institutional, civic/integrative, and psychological. By modeling these three outcomes within an integrated resource-based framework, this study clarifies how material conditions, rights-related experiences, civic integration, and psychological orientations jointly shape students' post-displacement decisions, with direct relevance for educational inclusion and trust-restoring institutional responses.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated empirical examination of post-displacement adaptation among forcibly displaced university students in Armenia, a population that remains insufficiently examined in the higher education and forced migration literature. Specifically, this study jointly analyzes emigration intentions, willingness to continue education under tuition uncertainty, and institutional trust within a single multidimensional resource-based framework linking economic conditions, rights-related experiences, civic integration, and psychological orientations. In this way, the paper contributes to the literature by showing how educational integration and present-fatalistic time orientation help explain displaced students' future planning, educational persistence, and trust in host-state institutions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration and integration research offers strong explanations for mobility decisions; however, it often treats migration intentions, educational persistence, and institutional trust as separate outcomes. For forcibly displaced university students, these domains are closely linked: education can function as a capability-building resource, whereas institutional trust (and experiences of rights protection) shapes whether staying feels feasible, legitimate, and worthy of long-term investment. Theoretical lenses and their limitations. Carling's aspiration-capability framework distinguishes the desire to migrate from the ability to do so, highlighting how people may aspire to leave but remain immobile when constraints bind them [4], [5]. de Haas extends this logic by embedding aspirations and capabilities in broader developmental and structural change, emphasizing that migration patterns evolve as resources, opportunities, and legal channels shift over time [6], [7]. These perspectives converge on aspiration-capability reasoning but differ in emphasis: Carling is particularly useful for explaining constraint-driven (im)mobility at the individual level, whereas de Haas foregrounds macro-level transitions that reshape opportunity structures. For displaced youth, both lenses remain incomplete unless we specify which concrete resources build (or erode) capabilities and how institutional experiences redirect their aspirations.

Ajzen's theory of planned behavior further clarifies how intentions form under constraint; when perceived behavioral control is low—because of bureaucracy, stigma, poverty, or uncertainty—intentions and future planning shift accordingly [8]. In forced displacement, diminished agency and heightened uncertainty can foster fatalism and helplessness, making migration appear adaptive, even when the costs are high [9]. Research on youth aspirations under migration conditions similarly shows how uncertainty can suspend future planning and produce “lives on hold,” reinforcing the relevance of perceived pathways and control for intention formation [10]. Taken together, these models suggest that intentions reflect not only “push-pull” conditions [11] but also resource-mediated pathways through which people evaluate feasibility, control, and future prospects. Integrating perspectives through a “resource environment” framework. We build on these approaches by conceptualizing integration as a dynamic process shaped by a student's resource environment—a structured set of material, legal/institutional, civic, psychological, and educational resources that jointly influence aspirations, perceived control, and real options [12], [13]. This framework allows capability to be operationalized rather than assumed: employment, housing, and income security; rights protection and access to remedies; civic participation and social capital; psychological resources (well-being and time perspective); and educational integration and belonging are treated as interacting components of the same adaptation system [14]–[16]. Social capital perspectives further emphasize that civic participation and network-based resources can sustain cooperation and integration, making them analytically central to this resource configuration [17]. Framing integration as capability building and an inclusive opportunity also aligns with broader sustainability objectives that emphasize reducing vulnerability and strengthening institutional environments [18].

Structural and rights-based resources; legal restrictions, discrimination, and weak recognition of displacement-specific needs can limit participation and reduce the perceived feasibility of staying in a host country [19]. Rights violations can also reorient future planning by undermining dignity and security, sometimes making onward migration feel like the only viable path [20]. Because institutional trust is sensitive to procedural justice, transparency, and responsiveness, it can decline under neglect but become repairable when

credible redress mechanisms exist [21]–[24]. This makes trust not merely an attitude but a resource that shapes perceived legitimacy and long-term investments. Education, belonging, and psychological resources. Education is a central capability-building resource in displacement; it supports stability, routine, psychosocial support, and future socioeconomic mobility [25]–[27]. However, access alone is insufficient. Displaced learners face disrupted trajectories, trauma-related learning barriers, and cultural dissonance, while segregation and early tracking can deepen inequality and weaken institutional attachment [28]–[31]. Belongingness and inclusive school climates strengthen academic self-concept and well-being, and social/digital engagement can provide navigational capital and identity support [32]–[35]. From a eudaimonic perspective, resilience can be understood not only as reduced distress but also as “challenged thriving” under adversity, supporting the treatment of well-being as a resource in adaptation pathways [36]. At the psychological level, time perspective and well-being influence whether students perceive a future worth investing in locally; future orientation supports persistence, while fatalism can amplify the perceived necessity of exit [37], [38]. Evidence from educational interventions also cautions that participatory programs can produce uneven effects when design and local incentives are misaligned, underscoring the need for evidence-informed integration support rather than assumptions that participation automatically improves outcomes [39].

Local relevance; post-conflict Armenia and higher education. Empirical evidence on forcibly displaced university students in post-conflict settings remains limited, despite the fact that universities often function as key integration institutions where educational continuity, institutional experience, and future planning intersect. In Armenia, displaced students entered higher education under a government-funded one-year scholarship program, which intensified the salience of persistence under tuition uncertainty and made institutional trust practically consequential for long-term integration. Against this backdrop, our resource environment framework integrates aspirational capability reasoning, developmental opportunity structures, and intention formation into a single empirical model comprising three linked outcomes: emigration intentions, educational persistence, and institutional trust.

2.1. Research question

How do personal, socioeconomic, legal, and psychological factors influence migration intentions, the willingness to continue education in a paid system, and institutional trust among forcibly displaced students currently studying in Armenian higher education institutions?

2.2. Analytical dimensions and sub-questions

2.2.1. Migration intentions

To what extent do sociodemographic factors (e.g., age, household size, and employment status), legal conditions (e.g., citizenship and refugee status), and economic security (e.g., housing status and family income) predict the intention to emigrate from Armenia? How do psychological factors, such as perceived stress levels, time perspective, and psychological well-being, contribute to students’ emigration versus integration orientation? Does participation in civic life or perceived integration into Armenia’s educational, economic, and political systems reduce the likelihood of emigration?

2.2.2. Educational commitment (in the context of tuition-based systems)

What personal characteristics (e.g., mental well-being, stress, and academic satisfaction) and contextual factors (e.g., family income, access to scholarships, and housing) are associated with students’ willingness to continue their education if required to pay tuition? How does the subjective evaluation of educational integration, civic participation, or institutional support predict the decision to remain enrolled in a paid system? Are psychological dimensions, such as future time perspective and autonomy, significant predictors of educational persistence under challenging financial conditions?

2.2.3. Institutional trust

How do prior rights violations, legal status, and access to state support programs affect trust in the Armenian government’s capacity to protect rights? Are higher levels of civic engagement (e.g., volunteering and political discussions) and integration into the sociopolitical life of Armenia associated with increased institutional trust? Can perceived procedural fairness, positive experiences in the education system, and access to legal aid mitigate distrust, even among students with previous experiences of institutional abandonment?

3. METHOD

This study used a survey to examine how personal and environmental factors affect the educational paths, commitment to education, and trust in institutions of displaced students who are currently pursuing higher education in Armenia. Specifically, this study aimed to identify the predictors of i) the intention to

emigrate from Armenia; ii) the willingness to continue education in a paid system; and iii) trust in the state's protective capacity (institutional trust).

The sample consisted of 238 forcibly displaced students studying at Armenian universities under a government-funded, one-year scholarship program. As detailed nationally disaggregated statistics on forcibly displaced university students in Armenia are not publicly available, we defined the target population and sampling frame as scholarship beneficiaries enrolled in state-accredited universities during the study period. We implemented quota-based stratification by university affiliation and academic specialization using the administrative distribution of scholarship beneficiaries (university×field) as the most reliable population benchmark. Quotas were set for each stratum, and recruitment continued within strata until targets were reached or recruitment capacity was exhausted, thereby reducing the over- or under-representation of specific institutions or fields relative to the program's known administrative structure. This approach supports representativeness within the scholarship-beneficiary population, while generalization to displaced youth outside the scholarship program should be made with caution. Participants were recruited from various faculties and academic years of study. The inclusion criteria were as: i) forced displacement after the 2023 conflict; ii) enrollment at a state-accredited Armenian university; and iii) receipt of a one-year educational grant from the Armenian government.

The target population comprised forcibly displaced scholarship beneficiaries enrolled in state-accredited universities in Armenia during the study period. Recruitment was implemented through collaboration with Student Affairs offices and faculty-level contacts at participating universities, using a combined approach of an on-site recruitment during campus visits and distribution of an online survey link via official university channels and student office communication lists. Stratification was operationalized using a quota-based approach aligned with the administrative distribution of scholarship program beneficiaries across university affiliation and academic specialization of study. Specifically, quota targets were set for each stratum (university×field) based on the available administrative distribution, and recruitment continued within each stratum until the targets were reached or the recruitment capacity was exhausted. In total, 300 eligible students were invited to participate (on-site and online). Of these, 264 initiated the questionnaire, and 238 submitted complete responses that were included in the analysis (final analytic sample: $n=238$), yielding an approximate completion rate of 79% (start-to-completion rate of 90%).

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising four blocks: i) sociodemographic and economic background; ii) rights and institutional interaction; iii) civic participation and integration; and iv) psychological testing. The psychological component included two validated scales measuring stress, life transitions, time perspective, and psychological well-being. The questionnaire collected detailed sociodemographic and economic data to account for background variables that likely influenced integration and emigration decisions. The participants provided information on their sex, age, university affiliation, faculty, degree program, and year of study. They also specified their current place of residence, which enabled researchers to analyze the regional patterns of settlement in Armenia. To evaluate economic conditions, respondents were asked to report the total number of family members in the household and how many of them were currently working. They also indicated the industries in which their parents worked, whether their homes were rented or privately owned, and whether they had been employed in the past. Additionally, they provided details regarding their parents' employment sector, housing ownership, and employment status. If employed, students were asked to indicate whether their current work aligned with their field of academic specialization. Finally, they self-reported their families' approximate monthly income, providing a proxy for economic security.

To capture the legal-institutional dimension of integration, students reported their citizenship status and whether they held official refugee status. We asked participants to rate their perceived protection of fundamental rights on a 10-point scale. The questionnaire also inquired about any experience of rights violations, including the specification of the institution, whether governmental or nongovernmental, and responsibility for infringement. Furthermore, participants were asked whether they believed that the Armenian state could protect or restore their rights in cases of violation, through both a binary response and a scaled confidence rating. The survey additionally documented whether respondents had sought legal assistance (e.g., consulted a lawyer) and whether they currently benefited from any state-sponsored social support programs that they were invited to list in the survey. This section assesses the participants' levels of social integration and civic engagement across multiple spheres of public life. Students were asked how frequently they discussed political, civic, or socioeconomic issues with friends, neighbors, or on social media platforms. We also documented media consumption habits related to these topics in the study. To explore institutional engagement, the participants were asked whether they had ever contacted a government official to express their concerns or opinions. They also reported membership in community groups, associations, or organizations over the past 12 months and any voluntary activities conducted within that period. The self-evaluation items asked students to rate their satisfaction with the educational process on a 10-point scale and

to state whether they would continue their university studies if they transitioned into a paid tuition system. Three additional 10-point scale items measured students' perceived integration into Armenian society, specifically in the socioeconomic domain, educational system, and political and civic spheres.

To evaluate migration-related decision-making, the questionnaire included a key binary outcome variable: whether the participant plans to emigrate from Armenia in the near future. This variable serves as a central indicator of integration failure or the perceived necessity of relocation and is modeled as one of the primary dependent variables in this study. The final section of the questionnaire included three standardized psychological instruments adapted for the forcibly displaced student population. The first was an adaptation of the Holmes-Rahe social readjustment rating scale [40], which assesses the presence of major stress-inducing life events during the past year and the perceived likelihood of encountering significant life changes in the following year. This format allows for the quantification of recent and anticipated stress levels. The second instrument was the Zimbardo time perspective [41], which was used to assess students' orientation toward time. It includes five dimensions: negative past, positive past, present hedonistic, present fatalistic, and future-oriented. These assessments elucidate students' perceptions of their past, present, and future through a psychological framework that affects their motivation, resilience, and long-term planning. The third instrument was derived from Ryff's psychological well-being scale [42], which assesses six fundamental elements of eudaimonic well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive connections, life purpose, and self-acceptance. The subscales provided a multidimensional picture of each participant's psychological and emotional conditions, aiding the examination of psychological resources within a comprehensive resource-based integration framework. All psychological instruments were translated into Armenian and pretested for contextual relevance in a pilot group ($n=15$). Internal consistency was evaluated in the final study sample ($n=238$). For the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory (five-time perspective dimensions), Cronbach's alpha was 0.70. For the Ryff psychological well-being scale (six well-being dimensions), Cronbach's alpha was 0.88. Overall, the reliability estimates ranged from 0.70 to 0.88, with all estimates meeting or exceeding 0.70.

Data were collected in late 2024 through on-site visits and online forms distributed in collaboration with the Student Affairs Offices of multiple universities. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained electronically before participation. Participants could skip any questions and discontinue at any time without consequences, and they were provided with information on available university support services at the end of the survey. Data were de-identified at the time of collection and stored securely, with access restricted to the research team (see Ethical Approval Statement). Item-level missingness was assessed prior to modeling. Across the key demographic, outcome, and analytical variables, missingness was modest (approximately 2.3% of all entries across the key variable set), with variable-level missingness ranging from 0% to 12.2%. For the three dependent variables, missing outcome values were observed in 3.4% of the cases for emigration intentions (8/238), 5.5% for willingness to continue education in a paid system (13/238), and 12.2% for trust in state services (29/238). Missingness in core covariates was generally low (e.g., sex: 5.0% [12/238], household budget/income band: 2.9% [7/238], working status: 2.5% [6/238], rights violation indicator: 2.1% [5/238], state aid: 2.1% [5/238], and educational satisfaction: 2.1% [5/238]). For regression estimation, each model was fitted to respondents with an observed value for the corresponding dependent variable (complete case with respect to the outcome), yielding analytic samples of $n=230$ (emigration intentions), $n=225$ (paid education continuation), and $n=209$ (trust in state services). To evaluate whether outcome-level missingness could bias inference, we compared the basic demographics between the full sample and analytic subsamples used in each model. The mean age and sex distribution were virtually unchanged across subsamples (mean age ≈ 20.91 -21.02 years; female share ≈ 83.4 -83.6% among cases with observed sex), suggesting that outcome-related missingness is unlikely to materially distort the main conclusions.

The collected data were analyzed using binary logistic regression models to estimate the likelihood of three main outcomes: intention to emigrate, willingness to continue education in a paid system, and institutional trust. Each dependent variable was modeled as an outcome. The independent variables were entered into the blocks. Block 1: demographic and economic predictors; block 2: rights and legal/institutional experiences; block 3: civic participation and integration; and block 4: psychological resource variables (stress, time perspective, and well-being). This step-by-step model helped assess both direct and relevant interaction effects between personal, psychological, and environmental factors. We examined interaction terms that made sense to see how they affected things like time perspective and satisfaction with education. All models were estimated using binary logistic regression with the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) approach. Statistical significance was assessed using a conventional threshold of $p < 0.05$, employing two-tailed significance tests for all regression coefficients. The model fit and explanatory power were assessed using several criteria. The log-likelihood ratio (LLR) test was used to determine the extent to which the independent variables influenced the results by comparing each model with a simple model that included only the average outcome. The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 statistic was used to estimate the variation explained by the model, providing a standard way to assess how well the model fit the binary outcomes. Although not

directly comparable to R^2 in a linear regression, this measure offers a useful benchmark for the comparative strength of logistic models in social science research. We also examined the classification accuracy and prediction thresholds to assess the practical performance of each model. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test was used, where appropriate, to assess calibration by comparing observed and predicted values across deciles of risk. Finally, all models were examined for multicollinearity by reviewing the correlation matrices and variance inflation factors (VIFs) to ensure that the parameter estimates were reliable and not influenced by the connections between the predictors. Multicollinearity and interaction testing. Multicollinearity was evaluated using correlation matrices and VIF diagnostics. We applied a conservative threshold of $VIF < 5$ for acceptable multicollinearity. In the final specifications, the VIF values were generally low (typical range: 1.02-1.43) with a maximum VIF of 1.44, indicating stable estimation and no problematic redundancy among the predictors. We also explored a limited set of theoretically plausible interaction terms (e.g., time perspective dimensions $\times$ educational satisfaction and economic security indicators $\times$ perceived integration). However, none of the tested interactions were retained in the final models because they did not reach statistical significance and increased the standard errors without improving the model fit or interpretability.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Analysis of emigration intentions

The logistic regression model, which assessed the determinants of forcibly displaced students' emigration intentions, demonstrated a solid level of explanatory power. The model yielded a Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 of 0.2126 and a statistically significant LLR test ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that the model accounts for approximately 21% of the variation in students' emigration intentions, a result that is both meaningful and methodologically acceptable within the context of socio-psychological research, where complex, multifactorial behaviors are often underpinned by latent variables and contextual variability. To complement the inference-based interpretation, we report the classification performance metrics. The model demonstrated an area under the curve (AUC) receiver operating characteristics (ROC) of 0.813, indicating good-to-strong discriminative ability. Using a classification threshold of 0.50, the model achieved an overall accuracy of 81.3%, with a sensitivity (true positive rate) of 40.4% and a specificity (true negative rate) of 93.3%. These metrics suggest that the model provides not only explanatory value but also practical predictive utility for distinguishing between the outcome groups. Table 1 presents the full logistic regression results for emigration intentions, including coefficients, odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals, and p-values. Model fit indices (Nagelkerke R^2 , LLR test, and AUC) are reported for transparency and model comparability.

As shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, the number of employed household members is one of the most significant protective factors against outmigration. In the model, each additional employed family member was associated with a higher odd of intending to stay (odds ratio (OR)=1.78, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.23-2.57, $p=0.002$). Expressed in terms of emigration, this corresponds to an approximately 44% reduction in the odds of intending to emigrate ($1/1.78 \approx 0.56$), underscoring the stabilizing influence of household economic security on migration-related decisions.

Conversely, rights-related harm is a strong push factor. Students reporting rights violations had substantially lower odds of intending to stay (OR=0.28, 95% CI 0.12-0.65, $p=0.003$), which translates into roughly 3.6 times higher odds of emigration intentions ($1/0.28 \approx 3.57$) when interpreted in the opposite direction. This pattern is consistent with the idea that perceived injustice and weak protection motivate displaced students to seek alternative prospects abroad. The general "rights" measure showed only a marginal association with staying (OR=0.85, 95% CI 0.71-1.01, $p=0.066$) and should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Psychological orientation also contributes to this. The present-fatalistic time perspective was significantly associated with a lower staying propensity (OR=1.08 for staying per unit increase; 95% CI 1.02-1.14, $p=0.007$), implying that fatalistic beliefs and reduced perceived control are linked to higher emigration inclination when interpreted in the opposite direction (approximately an 8% increase in emigration odds per unit increase). Educational continuity further differentiates these intentions. The model indicates that the education-continuity indicator (EducCont) is strongly associated with staying ($\beta=1.21$; OR=3.38, 95% CI 1.51-7.56, $p=0.003$), suggesting that educational engagement can function as a practical anchor and psychological commitment mechanism in the host environment. If your Figure 1 displays EducCont with an OR below 1, that is the reciprocal representation of the same effect; it should be aligned with the table or explicitly noted to avoid confusion. Overall, these results suggest that emigration risk reflects a configuration of household economic resources, rights-related experiences, educational positioning, and time perspective. Household employment appears to buffer relocation pressure, whereas rights violations and fatalistic orientation are associated with stronger emigration inclinations. This supports a resource-based interpretation in which both structural conditions and psychological orientations shape mobility decisions.

Table 1. Logistic regression predicting emigration intentions

Predictor	β standard error (SE)	OR	95% CI (OR)	p
Constant	-3.502 (1.237)	0.03	0.003–0.34	0.005
Working	0.577 (0.187)	1.78	1.23–2.57	0.002
Rights	-0.163 (0.089)	0.85	0.71–1.01	0.066
Rights violation	-1.271 (0.427)	0.28	0.12–0.65	0.003
Education continuity	1.218 (0.411)	3.38	1.51–7.56	0.003
Fatalistic present	0.076 (0.028)	1.08	1.02–1.14	0.007

Note: model fit: LogLik=-99.368; pseudo R^2 =0.2126; and LLR p =2.448e-10.

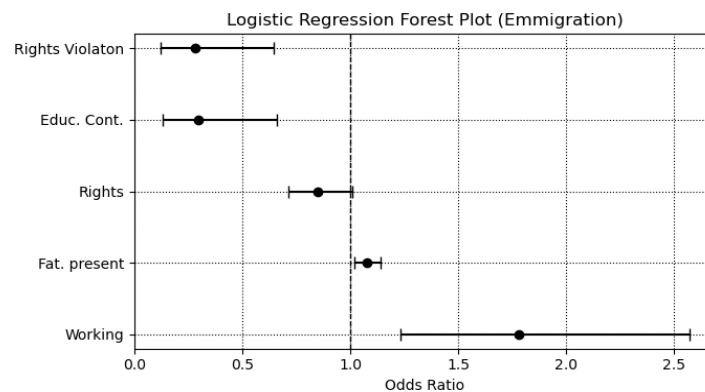


Figure 1. Predictors of emigration intentions among forcibly displaced students (odds ratios and 95% of confidence)

4.2. Analysis of willingness to continue education in a paid system

The second model, which assessed the readiness of displaced students to engage in higher education within a tuition-based framework, showed a moderate but statistically significant fit. The model accounted for approximately 14% of the variation in this outcome, as indicated by a pseudo R^2 of 0.1401 and an LLR p -value of <0.001. Although lower than that in the previous model, this level of explanation is considered sufficient, given the complex behaviors and social and economic challenges people face when deciding to pursue education despite financial difficulties. To complement the inference-based interpretation, we report the classification performance metrics. The model demonstrated an area AUC ROC of 0.760, indicating good discriminative ability. Using a classification threshold of 0.50, the model achieved an overall accuracy of 68.9%, with a sensitivity (true positive rate) of 54.4% and a specificity (true negative rate) of 78.5%. These metrics suggest that the model provides not only explanatory value but also practical predictive utility for distinguishing between outcome groups. Table 2 presents the full logistic regression results for the willingness to continue education in a paid system, including coefficients, odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals, and p -values. Model fit indices (Nagelkerke R^2 , LLR test, and AUC) are reported for transparency and model comparability.

In Figure 2, the findings indicate that the number of years spent in education negatively predicts the willingness to continue in a paid system. Specifically, each additional year of education corresponded to a 33% decrease in the odds of continuation, which may reflect growing disillusionment or fatigue among senior students, or a calculated decision to exit the educational system after acquiring a certain level of credentials.

Employment status was a key determinant. Approximately 70% of the students who were currently unemployed expressed a willingness to continue their education in a paid format. This result highlights the strong link between having enough money and staying in school, indicating that without financial independence or outside help, many displaced students are unable to pursue long-term education. Interestingly, indicators of social activity, such as the frequency with which students expressed their opinions on social media, positively influenced the likelihood of continuation. Socially active students were more inclined to remain engaged in education, possibly because of their stronger social networks, greater access to information, and greater perceived agency. This finding can be interpreted as a proxy for social capital and adaptive integration. Educational integration has emerged as a strong positive predictor. For each unit increase in students' perceived integration into the educational environment, the odds of continued enrollment increased by nearly 39%. This finding reinforces the idea that students who feel supported, included, and engaged in academic institutions are more likely to invest in their education, even in the face of

financial costs. The model showed a moderate correlation between elevated self-acceptance, which is often considered a psychological asset, and a lower likelihood of pursuing paid education. Despite the modest effect size (approximately a 4% reduction per unit), this finding suggests that students with robust self-concepts have greater confidence in pursuing alternative avenues beyond the traditional schooling system. This experiment shows how easy access to resources, mental support, and a feeling of belonging to an institution affect the school choices of students who have been displaced and are dealing with money issues. The negative relationship between the amount of education someone has received and their willingness to invest shows an important but often ignored aspect of continuing education: sticking to education is affected not only by money but also by feelings of tiredness or disappointment with school. In contrast, the positive impacts of involvement in education and social activities show the importance of mental and social support for staying committed to education, even when there are monetary issues, which greatly improves the usual discussions that only consider financial factors.

Table 2. Logistic regression predicting willingness to continue education in a paid system

Predictor	β (SE)	OR	95% CI (OR)	p
Constant	-0.434 (1.514)	0.65	0.03–12.60	0.774
Year of education	-0.406 (0.132)	0.67	0.51–0.86	0.002
Work	-1.172 (0.353)	0.31	0.16–0.62	0.001
Discussions in internet	0.386 (0.171)	1.47	1.05–2.06	0.024
Educ integration	0.332 (0.079)	1.39	1.19–1.63	<0.001
Self acceptance	-0.043 (0.021)	0.96	0.92–1.00	0.037

Note: model fit: LogLik=-137.51; pseudo $R^2=0.1401$; LLR $p=1.594e-08$.

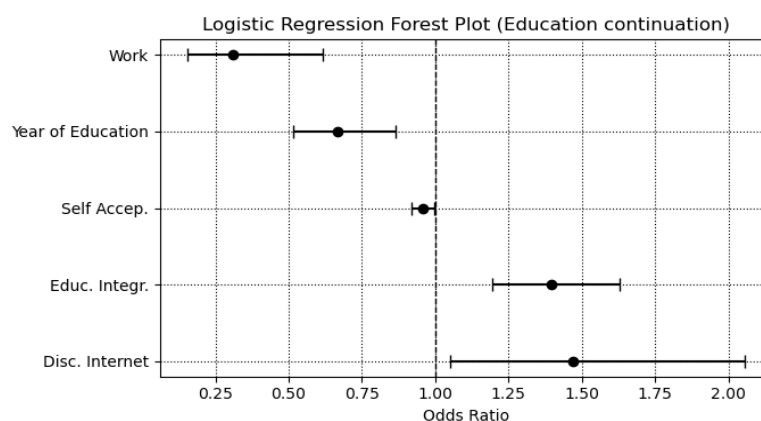


Figure 2. Predictors of willingness to continue education in a paid system among forcibly displaced students (odds ratios and 95% of confidence)

4.3. Analysis of institutional trust

The final model explored the factors associated with displaced students' trust in the Armenian state's capacity to protect their rights. Although the model has a low pseudo R^2 of 0.0896, the likelihood ratio test shows a significant result ($p=0.000018$), indicating that the factors in the model help us understand how trust in institutions is built, even when other hidden factors are involved in the model. To complement the inference-based interpretation, we report the classification performance metrics. The model demonstrated an area AUC ROC of 0.711, indicating acceptable discriminative ability. Using a classification threshold of 0.50, the model achieved an overall accuracy of 67.0%, with a sensitivity (true positive rate) of 60.4% and a specificity (true negative rate) of 73.1%. These metrics suggest that the model provides not only explanatory value but also practical predictive utility for distinguishing between outcome groups. Table 3 presents the full logistic regression results for institutional trust, including coefficients, odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals, and p-values for the model. Model fit indices (Nagelkerke R^2 , LLR test, and AUC) are reported for transparency and model comparability.

As shown in Figure 3, this analysis indicates that the number of employed family members positively affects institutional trust. For each additional household member, the likelihood of trusting the state increased by approximately 51%. This suggests that economic stability not only reduces migration intentions but also enhances perceptions of institutional legitimacy and protective capacity.

Conversely, household income level has a paradoxical effect. Students from higher-income families were approximately 41% less likely to report institutional trust. This inverse relationship may stem from increased critical consciousness or heightened awareness of institutional inefficiency among those with a higher socioeconomic status. A particularly intriguing result emerged regarding past violations of rights. Students who have experienced such violations are counterintuitively more likely to report institutional trust, which may reflect post-violation institutional responsiveness, such as successful access to legal remedies or support services, which helps restore faith in the system despite previous harm. Alternatively, this may suggest a complex process of moral rehabilitation, in which acknowledgment and redress strengthen perceptions of institutional commitment. Satisfaction with the education system was also a significant contributor to institutional trust. Thus, higher education settings can serve as sites to nurture civic trust because students who report more positive experiences with their education are more likely to extend their trust to state institutions.

Table 3. Logistic regression predicting institutional trust

Predictor	β (SE)	OR	95% CI (OR)	p
Constant	-1.863 (0.712)	0.16	0.04-0.63	0.009
Budget	-0.525 (0.264)	0.59	0.35-0.99	0.047
Rights violation	0.172 (0.062)	1.19	1.05-1.34	0.005
Satisfaction of education	0.190 (0.077)	1.21	1.04-1.41	0.014
Working	0.411 (0.144)	1.51	1.14-2.00	0.004
Citizen integration	-0.140 (0.060)	0.87	0.77-0.98	0.019

Note: model fit: LogLik=-150.05; pseudo R^2 =0.08958; and LLR p =1.825e-05.

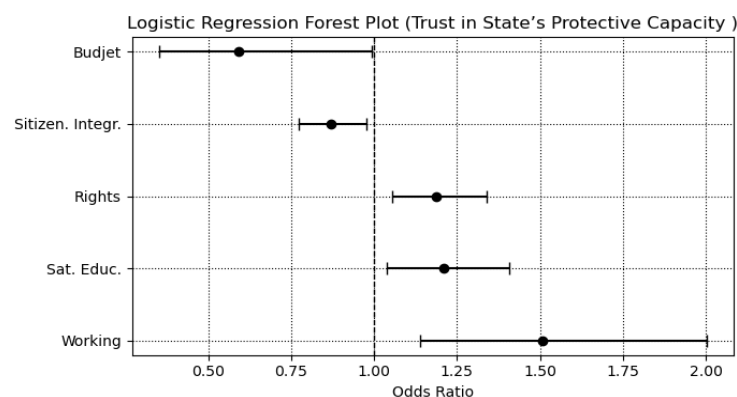


Figure 3. Predictors of institutional trust among forcibly displaced students (odds ratios and 95% of confidence)

A plausible mechanism is that rights violations trigger institutional contact and “belief updating” about state capacity. When a violation is followed by a credible response—access to remedies, visible accountability, or effective support—students may interpret this as evidence of procedural fairness and institutional responsiveness, thereby strengthening perceived legitimacy. In this sense, trust can become conditional and repairable: it is not determined only by harm exposure but also by whether institutions demonstrate the capacity to recognize grievances and deliver redress. An alternative, non-exclusive explanation is selection into institutional engagement: students who experienced violations may be more likely to seek help, and when that engagement is effective, they subsequently report higher trust. These interpretations align with our broader framework, in which institutional trust is a dynamic resource shaped by procedural justice signals and the perceived availability of remedies, rather than a stable trait. This concept posits that a combination of experiential, structural, and attitudinal factors shape institutional trust. The attitudes of relocated students toward the state as either a reliable protector or a deficient authority are shaped by economic stability, educational attainment, and prior institutional experiences. This surprising result challenges old ideas about trust in institutions, showing that when historical rights are violated, trust can increase if appropriate reparations are made. Trust is not a stable characteristic; it is contingent on context, amenable to repair, and generated dynamically through institutional responsiveness. This discovery significantly changes the current understanding, showing that institutional responsiveness is both helpful and transformative in situations where communities unite after conflict.

This study aimed to investigate the complex factors of integration and vulnerability among forcibly displaced students, focusing on three key areas: emigration intentions, willingness to engage in a tuition-based educational system, and confidence in the state's protective capabilities. This study employed a dynamic resource-based conceptual framework to clarify the complex relationship between structural constraints and subjective experiences that affect students' adaptation trajectories in a post-conflict host nation. The three logistic models showed that the paths of forcibly relocated youth were shaped by their economic conditions, institutional responses, mental strength, and sense of belonging to education. These findings offer robust empirical data that challenge multiple prevailing assumptions in migration studies. This approach explicitly dismisses static or one-dimensional interpretations of integration, which focus exclusively on material access or structural inclusion. It asserts that integration is a dynamic process influenced not only by resource accessibility but also by the displaced individual's psychological perspective of future opportunities, institutional legitimacy, and significant inclusion.

A study on why people want to leave their country showed that their decisions are affected not only by monetary problems but also by feelings of exclusion from society, a sense of hopelessness, and a lack of connection to the culture in which they live. Economic resilience at the household level, as shown by the number of employed family members, has proven to be a crucial protective factor, whereas experiences of rights abuse and fatalism significantly increase the probability of emigration. The strong impact of not wanting to continue education, especially if it costs money, shows that feeling disconnected from school reflects general disappointment with the country and its systems. The second model identified educational fatigue, employment status, and civic participation as the primary drivers influencing students' willingness to pursue higher education in a tuition-based system. Students exhibiting social engagement and high educational integration were more inclined to demonstrate sustained commitment despite financial limitations. These results highlight the importance of social connections, friendships, and being part of the school community in keeping students motivated during difficult periods. A minor negative correlation was noted for self-acceptance, indicating that individuals with elevated self-confidence may be more inclined to pursue alternative life trajectories beyond formal education. The third model examined students' confidence in the Armenian state's ability to safeguard their rights, thus providing theoretically stimulating insights. Contrary to traditional beliefs, historical rights abuses correlate with increased institutional trust. This contradiction bolsters the developing view that institutional trust is not merely diminished by injury but can be reinstated or even augmented through efficient redress. Consequently, institutional responsiveness is a pivotal factor in restoring confidence and stabilizing displaced people. Furthermore, positive assessments of the education system have proven crucial in fostering institutional trust, highlighting that schools serve not only as centers of learning but also as venues for civic socialization and reinforcing the legitimacy of the state. These findings collectively affirm that migratory decisions, educational persistence, and institutional trust are interrelated and influenced by a changing resource environment, which builds on previous resource-based integration models, suggesting that material, psychological, educational, and institutional resources are not fixed but are constantly evaluated, adjusted, and used by individuals. In this concept, psychological orientations, including fatalism, feelings of fairness, and trust, serve as mediating frameworks through which displaced youth assess their options and determine whether to invest in local futures or pursue alternatives abroad.

5. DISCUSSION

This study clarifies how displaced students' mobility decisions are shaped not by a single driver but by an interacting resource environment that combines economic capability, rights/institutional experience, educational anchoring, and psychological orientation. This pattern aligns closely with Carling's aspiration-capability framework, which separates the desire to migrate from the ability to act and emphasizes constraint-driven (im)mobility [4], [5]. In our models, household employment functions as a stabilizing economic capability that reduces emigration inclination, consistent with the idea that resource deficits can transform migration from an "aspiration" into a perceived necessity. Simultaneously, de Haas' developmental perspective highlights those aspirations and capabilities are embedded in changing opportunity structures, such as policy regimes, institutional access, and resource distributions that evolve over time [6], [7]. The Armenian post-conflict context represents precisely such a structural transition, where scholarship and tuition-compensation policies can meaningfully reshape the feasible option set for displaced students [43], [44]. Our contribution is to operationalize these theories at the level of higher education displaced students by specifying which resources constitute capability and perceived feasibility and by extending the framework with two dimensions that are often under-modeled in migration accounts: educational integration/persistence and psychological time orientation. Educational continuity and integration act as anchoring resources that strengthen "stay" feasibility, consistent with higher education as a pathway to self-reliance and long-term inclusion [1], [45]. Psychological fatalism maps onto the perceived-control element emphasized by intention-

based models [8] and is consistent with evidence that uncertainty can suspend future planning and intensify “lives on hold” dynamics among displaced youth [10]. Together, these results strengthen the argument that emigration intentions in forced displacement contexts are best understood as resource-mediated evaluations of feasibility, legitimacy, and future prospects rather than as reactions to single push factors.

5.1. Economic capability (household employment)

The protective role of household employment suggests that economic resources primarily function as stay-enabling capabilities in this setting, lowering pressure toward exit strategies. This complements forced-migration and integration research that emphasizes socioeconomic inclusion as a core domain of durable integration [14], [15], while also matching recent evidence that structural barriers to inclusion can deepen vulnerability and constrain adaptive planning [19]. In terms of higher education, economic stability may reduce the probability that students face tuition interruptions, unstable housing, or daily survival stressors that undermine persistence.

5.2. Rights experience and institutional pathways

Rights violations increase emigration inclination, which is consistent with research linking rights-related harms to mistrust and withdrawal from institutions [3] and broader accounts of how citizenship and protection deficits can redirect mobility trajectories [20]. Importantly, our trust model suggests a conditional dynamic in which trust can be damaged by harm exposure but repaired when a credible response and redress are perceived. This aligns with procedural justice and legitimacy perspectives, in which institutional trust depends on transparent, responsive processes rather than solely on cumulative experience [22], [23], and with reconciliation/redress accounts emphasizing the “repair” function of accountability mechanisms [24]. The key implication is that rights protection and grievance handling are capability-relevant resources, not merely normative ideals.

5.3. Education as an anchoring capability

Educational continuity and integration emerge as central: engagement in higher education is not only a “service outcome” but a capability-building resource that supports future orientation, routine, identity continuity, and long-term economic prospects [25], [26]. This is consistent with global evidence that refugee learners’ persistence depends heavily on institutional support and inclusion climate rather than access alone [45]. In Armenia, the salience of tuition uncertainty is amplified by scholarship program design and continuity questions, making educational persistence a key mechanism through which policy can reduce outward mobility pressure [43], [44], [46].

5.4. Comparative perspective

The present findings align with European evidence that educational continuity depends on institutional arrangements and inclusion climate. Research from European education systems shows how underserved and segregated or early tracking pathways can erode engagement and long-term persistence [29], [30], while diversity-climate research links inclusive environments to stronger belonging and achievement-related outcomes [30], [32]. Our results extend this evidence by highlighting that, in Armenia’s post-conflict setting, educational integration and tuition-linked continuity function as central anchoring resources. Their salience may be amplified because the cultural–linguistic distance for Artsakh Armenian students is comparatively smaller than in many European host contexts, shifting the emphasis toward economic feasibility and institutional capacity to sustain educational pathways. For institutional trust, our evidence supports a conditional pattern consistent with procedural justice accounts: trust is not only eroded by adverse experiences but can be partly repaired when grievance handling and redress are perceived as effective, particularly consequential in post-conflict institutional rebuilding. Against this backdrop, psychological orientation further clarifies why some students sustain commitment under uncertainty, while others lean toward exit.

5.5. Psychological orientation (fatalism)

The association between fatalistic time perspective and emigration inclination supports a psychologically enriched aspiration-capability account: even when resources exist, perceived control and future orientation shape whether “staying” is interpreted as a viable long-run strategy. This aligns with evidence that humanitarian crises elevate psychosocial needs and those interventions can improve some mental health and functioning outcomes when appropriately designed and contextually embedded [47], [48]. It also reinforces that campus-level psychosocial support is not peripheral; it is part of the resource environment that shapes persistence and planning.

Stabilize and extend tuition support beyond short horizons. Convert one-year funding into a multi-year, performance-and-need-sensitive pathway (e.g., guaranteed second year if attendance/credits are maintained; sliding support thereafter). Publish a predictable calendar for eligibility, renewal criteria, and appeals. Align

university financial offices with centralized application routes for tuition compensation to reduce administrative friction [43]. These steps match the logic that educational continuity is an anchoring capability and respond to policy discussions emphasizing continuation and system strengthening for displaced learners [44], [46].

Institutionalize campus-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) as part of student services. Create low-threshold counseling and group support options (stress management, adjustment groups), as well as referral pathways to specialized care. Train key staff (deans, advisors, and dorm staff) in basic trauma-informed identification and referral. Integrate MHPSS into academic persistence supports (advising, mental health, and financial guidance in one pathway). This is consistent with international evidence that MHPSS can help under certain modalities and implementation conditions [47], and with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reporting that MHPSS is a core component of protection systems in displacement responses [49].

Build transparent grievance and redress mechanisms to protect rights and repair trust. Establish a visible, multilingual, and confidential student grievance channel (online+in-person), with clear timelines, written outcomes, and protection against retaliation. Create an ombudsperson or independent committee with student representation and explicit appeal routes. Use aggregated grievance data for institutional learning (“close the feedback loop”) rather than solely for case resolution. This directly targets the trust mechanism highlighted by your novel findings and is consistent with UNHCR’s emphasis on structured complaint/feedback systems as part of accountability to affected people [50].

Link economic capability to local anchoring (employment pathways). Expand on-campus paid positions, internships with local employers, and job matching for displaced students, coordinated with tuition support, so that work stabilizes study rather than competes with it. Offer financial planning support for households facing tuition and living-cost volatility. The goal is to transform “capability” into local resilience rather than pressure toward exit.

Strengthen “educational integration” as a measurable institutional key performance indicator (KPI). Implement peer mentoring, bridge courses, academic writing support, and community-building activities that increase belonging and perceived integration (consistent with evidence on the diversity climate and belongingness) [32]. Monitor retention, credit accumulation, and service uptake among displaced students as an early warning system.

5.6. Limitations

Although this study provides useful evidence on the integration trajectories of forcibly displaced university students in post-conflict Armenia, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, it employed a cross-sectional design, which limits causal inference and prevents clear conclusions about the temporal ordering of economic, institutional, educational, and psychological factors in shaping emigration intentions, educational persistence, and institutional trust. Future research should use longitudinal or multiwave designs to test how changes in scholarships, employment, rights-related experiences, and psychosocial conditions predict subsequent decisions and outcomes over time.

Second, the data rely on self-report measures, which may be affected by recall and social desirability bias, particularly for sensitive topics such as trust in institutions, experiences of rights violations, and emigration intentions. Participants may underreport negative institutional perceptions or rights-related harms due to fear of repercussions or stigma. Future studies should strengthen validity by combining self-reports with administrative and observational sources, such as scholarship renewal and retention records, service utilization, and documented grievance-handling outcomes. Third, generalizability is limited by the sampling frame. The study focuses on forcibly displaced university students in Armenia—a post-conflict context with a specific higher education and policy environment (including scholarship-linked educational pathways). Findings may not generalize to displaced youth who are not in higher education, to non-student populations, or to settings with different legal, economic, and institutional structures. Comparative research across countries and the inclusion of non-student displaced youth would improve external validity. Finally, because one of the study’s novel patterns concerns rights violations and institutional trust under perceived redress, future research should test this mechanism more directly through moderation analyses (e.g., rights violations×perceived availability/effectiveness of remedies) and, where possible, through linked evidence on actual access to grievance and redress systems.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration trajectories of forcibly displaced university students in post-conflict Armenia are shaped by the interdependence of educational resilience, migration orientation, and institutional trust. The findings show that intentions to emigrate, willingness to continue education under tuition uncertainty, and trust in the state’s protective capacity are not isolated outcomes but are interrelated.

Rather, they reflect a common underlying adaptation process structured by the interaction of economic resources, rights-related experiences, and psychosocial orientations. In particular, household employment, perceived access to rights and remedies, and a present-fatalistic time perspective emerged as key factors influencing whether displaced students-maintained commitment to local educational and social futures or oriented themselves toward exit.

This study advances a multidimensional understanding of integration by showing that displaced students' capability to remain and persist is not reducible to material conditions. Economic security matters; however, it operates alongside institutional credibility and psychological agencies. Therefore, integration should be understood as a dynamic process in which individuals evaluate the reliability of their environment, interpret institutional signals, and make future-oriented decisions under conditions of prolonged uncertainty. This perspective is especially important in post-conflict settings, where formal access to education may coexist with fragility in support systems, administrative responsiveness, and long-term predictability. The results also highlight that institutional trust is not merely an attitudinal outcome but a structurally relevant condition of integration. When students perceive institutions as responsive, transparent, and capable of protecting their rights, the prospects for educational continuity and local commitment are strengthened. Conversely, uncertainty in educational financing, weak grievance mechanisms, and experiences of rights vulnerability may reinforce disengagement and increase the pressure to emigrate. Therefore, integration policies for displaced students should not focus narrowly on access alone, but on the quality, credibility, and continuity of the institutional environment in which adaptation unfolds.

From a policy perspective, this study indicates that sustainable integration requires coordinated intervention across several domains. Predictable multi-year educational support, accessible psychosocial services, and clear institutional mechanisms for complaints, redress, and rights protection are likely to play a critical role in strengthening both persistence in higher education and confidence in public institutions. In this sense, an effective integration policy is not a single measure but a system of mutually reinforcing supports that restores agency, reduces uncertainty, and enables displaced students to imagine viable futures within the host context. Overall, the Armenian case underscores that post-displacement adaptation among students is best understood through a resource-based institutionally embedded framework. Educational resilience is sustained not only by personal motivation, but also by the extent to which the surrounding environment provides stability, recognition, and credible pathways. By jointly examining migration intentions, educational persistence under financial strain, and institutional trust, this study offers an integrated empirical account of how displaced students navigate uncertainty and how policies can support durable inclusion in the future.

Future research should extend this work through longitudinal designs capable of tracing how shifts in economic stability, educational support, psychosocial well-being, and institutional experiences shape adaptation over time. Comparative studies across host country settings would also be valuable for identifying the mechanisms that are context-dependent and those that represent broader patterns in the integration of forcibly displaced students. Such research would deepen our understanding of the conditions under which resilience can be translated into sustained participation, trust, and long-term belonging.

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C : **C**onceptualization

M : **M**ethodology

So : **S**oftware

Va : **V**alidation

Fo : **F**ormal analysis

I : **I**nvestigation

R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : **O** : Writing - **O**riginal Draft

E : **E** : Writing - Review & **E**editing

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The funders had no role in the study design, execution, interpretation, or writing.

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

At the time of study planning, Yerevan State University did not have a standalone institutional ethics committee. The study protocol was reviewed for ethical and data protection compliance by the University Committee of Internal Grants, which determined the research to be of minimal risk and consistent with institutional human-subjects policies. The study adhered to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and the university guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants; participation was voluntary and anonymous, with the right to withdraw at any time. Vulnerable populations or deception were not involved. The data were anonymized and processed with restricted access and secure storage.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data presented in this study are openly available in Figshare at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.29015144>

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