



# Systematic Review of Dispositional Determinants of Xenophobic Behaviours among South Africans: Implications for Psychological-based Intervention



Abayomi O. Olaseni<sup>1</sup>  and Segun E. Adewoye<sup>1,\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

## Abstract:

**Background:** Despite pieces of evidence suggesting that one of the major motivations of Xenophobic behaviour is cognition, there are limited studies that have systematically reviewed the influence of psychological factors on Xenophobic behaviour. Therefore, this study set to conceptualise a psychological-based intervention by weighing the pieces of evidence from previous studies that examined the dispositional determinants of xenophobic behaviour in South Africa using structured systematic reviews.

**Methods:** The articles considered in this study were incorporated using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses framework of 2009. We performed a review search in PubMed, PsychINFO, Google Scholar, and Unisa Library for studies published between 2008 and February 2022.

**Results:** The outcome revealed that shared external locus of control, repression, displacement, and learned helplessness were major dispositional factors influencing reoccurring xenophobic behaviour.

**Conclusion:** It was concluded that dispositional factors precipitate/perpetuate xenophobic behaviours in South Africa, and implementation of the conceptualised intervention framework could forestall further occurrence. The organised body of psychology in South Africa should implement a National Cognitive Re-Orientation Programme (NCRP) to tackle and boost the internal locus of control of South Africans.

**Keywords:** Conceptual intervention, Psychology, Immigration, Xenophobia, South Africa.

© 2024 Olaseni and Adewoye

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (CC-BY 4.0), a copy of which is available at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>. This license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

\*Address correspondence to this author at the Department of Psychology, College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa; E-mail: [adewoyesegunemmanuel@gmail.com](mailto:adewoyesegunemmanuel@gmail.com)

Cite as: Olaseni A, Adewoye S. Systematic Review of Dispositional Determinants of Xenophobic Behaviours among South Africans: Implications for Psychological-based Intervention. *Open Psychol J*, 2024; 17: e18743501279866. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/0118743501279866240409074450>



Received: October 26, 2023  
Revised: February 06, 2024  
Accepted: February 14, 2024  
Published: ?? ??, 2024



Send Orders for Reprints to  
[reprints@benthamscience.net](mailto:reprints@benthamscience.net)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa remains one of the most advanced nations in the African continent, with a relatively stable economy, and therefore stands a chance of being one of the most preferred choices of destination for most African migrants or asylum seekers [1, 2]. The perception of an uncontrollable influx of numerous foreigners has been the prevailing reason for xenophobic behaviours (XBs) among South Africans [3]. XBs could be described as a rational and/or irrational fear of foreigners. In other words, XBs are the hatred or fear of immigrants from other African

countries. Most of the xenophobic acts relied heavily on unfounded assumptions, which cognitively stimulate passive and active aggression towards immigrants. XBs have claimed the lives, properties, and businesses of hundreds of black immigrants over the years [4]. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [5], xenophobia is "an attitudinal orientation of hostility against non-natives in a given population".

The reoccurring XBs in South Africa predate two decades ago. The first published document about

xenophobia in South Africa was published in the year 1994, which reportedly occurred in Alexandra town, outskirts of Johannesburg. During that time, the personal belongings and properties of undocumented foreigners were destroyed and arrested by the the civilians before handing the foreigners over to the legal entity to get them deported to their respective countries [3]. After this time, there have been intermitted active xenophobic attacks for the respective years 1998, 2000, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2022. The recorded XBs often reoccur the moment the people within and outside South Africa assume the incidence of xenophobia is an unpopular problem in South Africa. Thus, it is imperial to provide a clear understanding of the construct of xenophobia.

People oftentimes construed XBs as physical attacks and destruction toward foreign nationals, which is not limited to kinetic expression but non-kinetic expression as well. According to Handmakers and Persley [6], xenophobia can be expressed in different forms, ranging from abusive language, the use of insulting signs and symbols, or toxic attitudes to unwelcoming comments [6, 7]. XBs could also be perpetuated by constitutionally recognised bodies or states [6]. There were instances where different policies and social, legal, and psychological dispositions were being mended towards African illegal migrants, compared to European or Asia tourists who might have overstayed their entry permits in the country [8].

Xenophobic behaviour is a regional phenomenon in Southern Africa [9]. Citizens across this geographical region consistently tend to exaggerate the numbers of foreign nationals in their countries. Migration of people within the region is viewed as a problem and to scapegoat non-citizens rather than as an opportunity. Also, the negative anti-foreign attitudes among Southern Africans are so pervasive and widespread that it is almost impossible to identify any kind of xenophobe profile based on status, ethnicity, or race. In other words, the rich and the poor, the unemployed and employed, the whites and the blacks, and the radicals and the conservatives all express remarkably similar attitudes. This poses a significant problem of explanation because it contradicts the general belief that certain groups in a population (usually those who are or who perceive themselves to be threatened) are more prone to xenophobic attitudes than others [10-12].

Although there are several published studies about the spate of XBs among South Africans [13-16], also, there were various intervention programmes organised by civil societies, and government agencies purposed to curb the incessant rate of xenophobia in South Africa but seem unproductive. This is because the negative attitudes of South Africans towards non-citizens, migrants, and refugees continue to manifest [9]. Despite pieces of evidence that one of the major motivations of XBs is the cognition of South Africans [17, 18], there were no known unified intervention strategies from the organised body of psychologists in South Africa to address the identified dispositional factors precipitating XB, which could invariably curb the reoccurrence of XBs.

There is uncertainty about the predominant dispositional factors precipitating and perpetuating XBs in South Africa, while pools of substantive questions about whether the implicated internal factors in the past could reflect in possible interventions framework useful to the organised body of knowledge (Psychology Society of South African [PsySSA]) in providing lasting solution to xeno phobia in the country. To date, unlike the social determinants of xenophobic behaviour [19, 20], there are limited studies that have systematically reviewed the influence of psychological factors on XBs. However, it is unclear what prevailing psychological or dispositional factors influence XBs. Also, to the best of our knowledge, no study hasharnessed the relationship between dispositional factors and XBs, primarily to conceptualise or develop a conceptual intervention framework from the weighing pieces of evidence. Therefore, the purpose of this systematic review was to synthesise dispositional determinants of xenophobic behaviours among South Africans and to consider, in a proper context, the prevailing psychological factors that precipitate/perpetuate xenophobic behaviours in South Africa. In line with this, the following is the specific research question for this study:

- What are the dispositional determinants of Xenophobic behaviour among South Africans?

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1. Selection Framework

The considered articles in the study were incorporated using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2009 framework [21]. The developed PRISMA framework was set to guide and stimulate the reporting of both systematic reviews. The framework entailed four (4)-phase diagrams and 27-item checklists. This study examined eight dimensions of empirical survey studies: purpose, study population, a revelation of interest, feedback measurement, analyses of statistics, findings, and discussion. The assessed domain was considered for meeting the minimum required standards, and a score (up to 8 points) was assigned to represent the power of the empirical evidence for those specific publications [22].

Studies included for review assess the understanding of xenophobia and the role of perceived dispositional factors or psychological characteristics among black South Africans. The psychological or dispositional factors in the study considered both subjective and objective reporting from both qualitative and/or quantitative articles.

### 2.2. Information and Data Sources

The literature search was conducted through multiple search engines to access the quantity and quality of published documents, either qualitative or quantitative, dissertation data, and peer-reviewed books. We searched through the literature, such as PubMed, PsychINFO, Educational Resources Information Centre, Africa-wide Information, CINAHL, Academic Search Complete, and SAGE for articles published between 2002 and February

2022. The search codes included a combination of key concepts/words, such as “xenophobic South Africa,” “psychology and xenophobia + South Africa,” and “individual problems\*xenophobic,” while the selection process summary is presented in Fig. (1). For ensuring the

reliability of the sourced data, two research assistants sequentially reviewed all articles, considering their titles and attached abstracts to decide the articles that would be incorporated for a full-text review as identified in the inclusion criteria (Table 1).

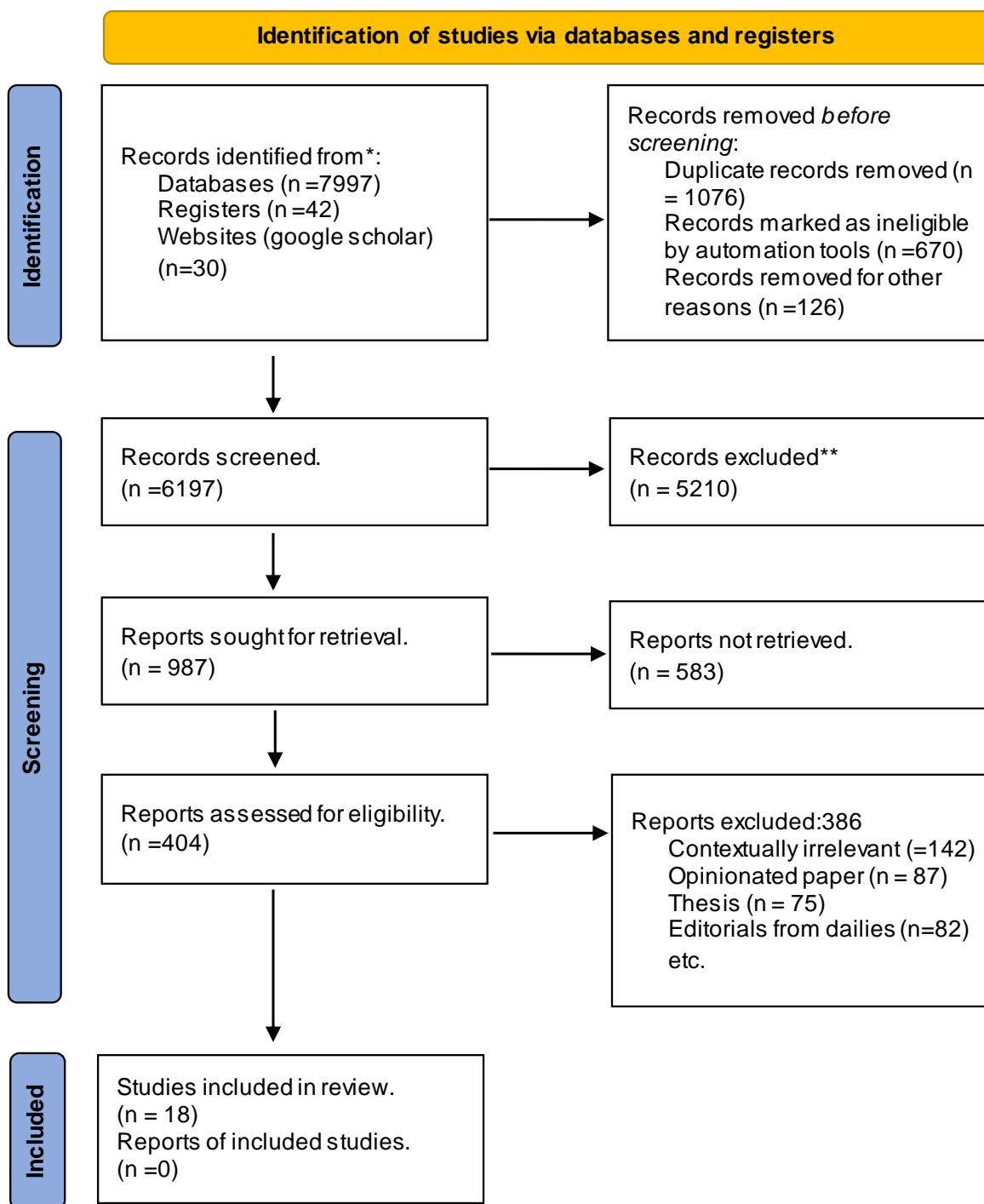


Fig. (1). Summary of selection process.

**Table 1. Profile of studies included for review.**

Authors & Year	Publication Outlet	Theory Applied in the Study	Focus of the Study	Research Designs	Results
Kerr <i>et al.</i> [4]	Journal of Asian and African Studies	Durrheim and Dixon 2005 Working Model of contact	Xenophobic Violence and Struggle Discourse in South Africa	Qualitative	Shared externalised locus of control
Tella [7]	Insight on Africa	Isolation theory	Role of the Individual, the State, and the International System in understanding Xenophobia in South Africa	Qualitative	● Shared externalised locus of control
Daudal <i>et al.</i> [13]	Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences	Avoidance condition theory	Xenophobic Violence in South Africa and the Nigerians' Victimization: An Empirical Analysis	Qualitative	● Shared externalised locus of control ● Learned helplessness (Marriage) Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement
Hewitt <i>et al.</i> [14]	Acta Commercii	Theory of Scapegoating	Dynamics informing xenophobia and leadership response in South Africa	Qualitative	● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement ● Shared Externalised locus of control
Obadire [16],	South Africa of Higher Education	Modelling theory	Towards a sustainable anti-xenophobic rural-based university campus in South Africa	Qualitative	● Shared externalised locus of control (academic resources)
Landau <i>et al.</i> [33]	Forced migration working paper series 13. University of Witwatersrand	Social learning theory	Xenophobia in South Africa and problems related to it	Qualitative narratives	● Shared externalised locus of control ● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement
Ogunyemi <i>et al.</i> [34]	Islamic University Multidisciplinary Journal	Theory of Ethnocentrism	Psychological Determinants of Xenophobic Behaviours	Quantitative survey	● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement
Tirivangasi & Mugambiwa [35]	SAAPAM Limpopo 5 Annual Conference Proceedings 2016	Rotational choice theory	Citizenship Crisis or Xenophobia? A Critical Analysis of Service Delivery Protest in South Africa	Qualitative narratives	● Shared externalised locus of control ● Learned helplessness (SLT) ● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement
Sphelelisiwe & Edmore [36]	African Journal of Development Studies	The relative Deprivation Theory	XENOPHOBIA: Causes of xenophobic violence in Umlazi suburb - perceptions of a migrant family	Qualitative	● Shared externalised locus of control ● Repression and Displacement
Arogundade, O.T [38]	IFE Psychologia	Theory of Bio-Cultural Issues	Xenophobia - Carl Jung Perspective	Qualitative	● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement
Bowman <i>et al.</i> [40]	South Africa Journal of Psychology	Theories of Intersectionality	South Africa's histories- living with and through the apartheid archive	Qualitative	● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement
Saleh [41]	Global Media Journal	The Schizophrenic identity conflict theory	Intentional act of Xenophobia in South Africa or Prejudice?	Qualitative	● Shared externalised locus of control
Alarape [42]	IFE Psychologia	Social Identity Theory of Xenophobia	XENOPHOBIA: Contemporary Issues in Psychology	Qualitative	● Repression and Displacement
Gordon [43],	South Africa Journal of Psychology	The attitude-behaviour relationship theory	Understanding the attitude -behaviour relationship: a quantitative analysis of public participation in anti-immigrant violence in South Africa	Quantitative	● Shared externalised locus of control
Young & Jearey-Graham [44]	Psychoanalysis, culture & Society	Contemporary Attachment theory	A psychosocial reading of South African xenophobia	Qualitative	● Shared Externalised locus of control
Mohamed [45]	Global Political studies	Fannon's Psychosocial Analysis theory	Pan-African failure in establishing oneness and ending disunity/xenophobia in South Africa	Qualitative	● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement
Omoluabi [46]	Ife Psychologia	Psychoanalytic theory	Psychological Foundation of Xenophobia	Qualitative	● Repression and Displacement
Langa & Kiguwa [47]	Agenda	Alienation and Estrangement theory	Racing xenophobic violence: Engaging social representations of the black African body in post-apartheid South Africa	Qualitative	● Repression (adverse life experience) and Displacement

A total of 8069 articles were found by searching seven databases, registries, and websites, as shown in Fig. (1). We eliminated 1872 duplicates from these articles' abstracts. This brought the total down to 6197 articles for screening. However, 404 articles were eligible for full-text screening. We further filtered to get rid of publications that were not suitable. The number of articles was thus lowered to 100. We further examined the publications in accordance with the given inclusion and exclusion criteria, leading to the inclusion of 18 articles for review. The study selection and search strategy were guided by the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) methodology [23].

### 2.3. Inclusion-exclusion Criteria

- Articles that have been reviewed and published between the years of 2002 and 2022
- Scholarly works, such as theses, articles, books, and conference proceedings
- The study population must be South African.
- Any editorial publications, opinion pieces, and commentary on xenophobia that did not specifically focus on South Africa were omitted.

### 2.4. Coding Method

The second step involved making comparisons using a coding system after finding the studies that met the inclusion criteria. The coding strategy should be comprehensive enough to include all studies while still being distinct enough to allow for comparison [24]. There were three primary sections and a total of eight questions in the coding process for this study. Study identity was the first subsection. This section contained 5 questions. Information such as the number of studies, the names, the names of the authors, the year and location of the study, and the name of the publisher were included in order to define the identity of the study. The second section, named "study content," included 2 questions [24]. Study data" was the third and last component. This section included descriptive statistical information for the experimental and control groups, such as sample size, mean values, and standard deviation values.

### 2.5. Data Analysis and Synthesis

About 18 papers were found to be appropriate for the review based on the final search results, the majority of which were qualitative studies. In the presence of such methodological heterogeneity, a systematic review, according to Clarke [25], is not required to pool the study results to provide an average estimate. As a result, the data in this study were synthesized using a narrative synthesis based on thematic analysis [26]. According to Percy *et al.* [27], thematic data analysis is a generic technique for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns across data. To synthesize data using theme analysis, we followed six phases. First, we familiarized ourselves with the data by reading and reading it again, and then we started creating codes. Using the study questions as a guide, we created preliminary codes from

the data. Coding is a method of systematic classification and meaningful data identification in relation to main and secondary research topics [28, 29].

In the third stage, themes were sought out to determine what was pertinent and what was not. Any mention of psychological elements that affected the propensity South Africans for xenophobia was taken into consideration. This laid the groundwork for us to start looking into potential codes. We defined the significance of the various themes as we developed them. We looked for information to support the responses to our research questions throughout the fourth phase. This left room for the themes to be expanded upon and reviewed as they changed. While some themes were condensed into more manageable chunks, certain themes that had earlier appeared collapsed into one another. The fifth phase involved defining and naming each theme and the information being collected. The sixth phase involved defining and naming each theme and the information being collected. As Saldana [30] and Maxwell [31] proposed, the authors collaborated throughout the process, checking and criticizing each other's work to minimize bias and improve credibility. The authors finished the theme analysis for half the articles, swapped their work to confirm the conclusions, and then got together to talk about any areas of disagreement or uncertainty.

## 3. RESULTS

Three key descriptive themes emerged as dispositional predictors of xenophobic behaviours among South Africans after the thematic analysis of the relevant research was completed. The themes were learned helplessness, repression, displacement, and shared externalized locus of control (E-LOC).

### 3.1. Theme 1: Shared Externalised Locus of Control (E-LOC)

Most of the research showed that a key dispositional element in xenophobic behaviour was "shared" externalised locus of control. Psychology views the locus of control (LoC) location as a key component of a trait that helps to explain both the individual and group behaviours of people. Lefcourt [32] created this phenomenon at its inception. Most commonly, the term "locus of control" (LoC) refers to people's attributional belief(s) that their experiences or actions were caused by either their own (internal LoC) or other people's (external LoC) actions. Most research found that the majority of South Africans displayed an overall external locus of control, which is thought to be the main driver of xenophobic behaviour in South Africa. Not only the academic community but also various social and political gladiators have expressed worry over the idea of shared external locus of control [33, 34]. For instance, Bertrand Ramcharan, the former South African acting Human Rights Commissioner, stated that:

*"Political parties, the media, and the general public harass and abuse them, using them as scapegoats for a variety of social evils. There are at least two particular*

reasons for scapegoating foreigners that are worth mentioning, despite the fact that it is impossible to thoroughly examine these reasons and that politicians in South Africa are by no means the only ones who do so”.

A prominent source of xenophobic behaviour was identified by ten research as an apparent external locus of control. According to these studies, the majority of foreigners are to blame for the multitude of societal evils that South Africans are experiencing, including unemployment, security threats, colonization, marriages, and other connections with non-natives, etc., just like in every other normal country.

### **3.1.1. E-LoC towards Unemployment and economic insecurity**

Many of the reviewed studies [33, 35] revealed that the majority of South Africans blamed foreigners for the soaring unemployment rate and economic suffering of the country. Black South Africans have been exposed to the psychological idea of external locus of control for approximately 20 years. For example, Landau *et al.* [33] found that such feeling was common among South African rulers. For instance, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a former minister, was cited as saying in his opening remarks before the parliament:

*“We can say goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Program if we as South Africans are going to fight for limited resources with the millions of foreigners who are moving here”.* (Human Rights Watch 1998: 20).

And further expatiated on his argument that:

*“Employing illegal immigrants is unpatriotic because it denies South Africans employment. Additionally, the RDP will face enormous challenges because of the rising immigrant population because they will consume unacceptably large amounts of housing subsidies.*

The assertions that foreigners are to blame for unemployment or economic difficulties of the nation are unsupported by any substantial evidence. There is evidence that many foreigners are more prepared, skilled, willing, and experienced than South Africans with whom they compete [33, 36], possibly due to long-time discrimination and deprivations. However, the study by Misago [37] found that immigrants had a major economic impact on South Africa's total economy through contributing to national development through net income. The study's findings also showed that South Africans assigned other causes for xenophobic behaviour in addition to unemployment and economic security.

Contrarily, research has shown that most local South Africans lack the fundamental initiative needed to build and sustain business concepts, whereas foreigners have this initiative and have been successfully applying it [38]. In a similar vein, the conclusion of research by Daudal *et al.* [13] supported what the former minister for small business, Lindiwe Zulu, had argued:

*“They have a fantastic network system, which is why I can say they are superior at running businesses than the local proprietors. They also live in the same manner. They*

*are exposed to trade from the minute they are born. Their mothers and uncles all trade. They began at a young age”.*

He further stated that:

*“the so-called “secret” behind the successful records of foreign nationals' business in South Africa is the ability to economize the resources. Our people need to learn what other people are doing. They must ask themselves, how are they able to be successful in a space where we fail? Then, they must look, learn, and do the same. They must do it; the government cannot, and the ministry cannot. We cannot just give money away. We have no money to give”-*

The main reality is that immigrants pay taxes through their businesses and contribute significantly to the gross domestic product of South Africa, even though South Africans use social and other welfare services less frequently. This is true even though they are comparatively less dependent on these services [39].

### **3.1.2. E-LOC towards Insecurity in South Africa**

Most of the studies reviewed [33, 40] linked XBs to the need to stop the growing insecurity in South Africa, which was thought to be brought on by the presence of black foreigners there. In other words, the problem that South Africa has with foreigners is that they are perceived as a threat to their physical security and property. According to Saleh [41] study,

*“48% of South Africans believed that foreign nationals in their nation posed a criminal threat to them”.*

Likewise, the study by Alarape [42] reported that

*“63% of indigenes residing in Johannesburg identified ‘aliens’ as the group perpetrating the highest rate of crime in their community”.*

Similarly, the study of Landau *et al.* [33] identified that:

*“The majority (70%) of black South Africans in Johannesburg think that the flood of immigrants is to blame for the sharp rise in crime in recent years.*

## **3.2. Theme 2: Repression and Displacement**

Out of the 18 studies that explored the determinants of incessant xenophobic behaviours among South Africans, the following studies: Kerr *et al.* [4], Dauda *et al.* [13], Hewitt *et al.* [14], Landau *et al.* [33], and Tirivangasi & Mugambiwa [34] identified repression and displacement as one of the major dispositional factors that influenced xenophobic behaviour in South Africa. The findings showed that other pervasive dispositional factors that influenced xenophobic behaviours in South Africa include repression and displacement. However, the current study placed them in the proper context within the discipline of psychology. Some authors of the selected articles labelled the concept differently because it suited their respective disciplines or basic everyday language use (such as the previous history of apartheid, discrimination, racism, nepotism, nationalism, etc.), but the current study put them in the appropriate context within the field of psychology.

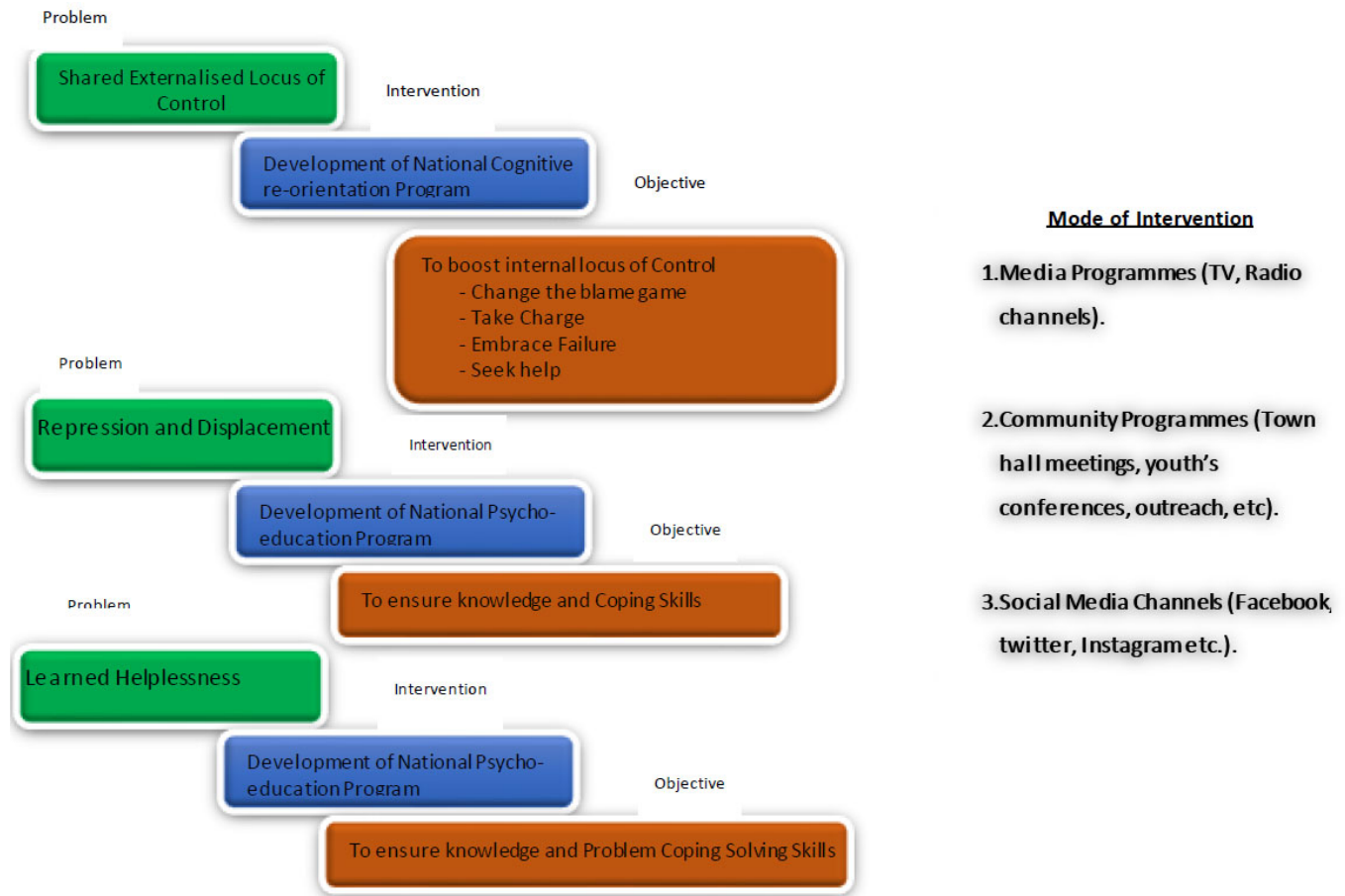


Fig. (2). The conceptual intervention frameworks that emanated from the study.

Displacement is a psychological defence technique in which a person redirects their negative energies and emotions away from their original source and toward less dangerous targets. Through the apartheid policy, which was a system of laws in South Africa that allowed racial segregationists to segregate themselves against black South African indigenes, black South African citizens have been marginalized, discriminated against, and prejudiced by the non-black South African indigenes.

For more than 50 years, the apartheid policy exposed South Africans to this type of prejudice, discrimination, and nepotism. Even though apartheid is no longer a part of South African history, its effects on awareness still seem extremely present but suppressed in its citizens' psychics. The displacement result shows that most South Africans who engaged in xenophobic behaviour toward black foreigners are viewed as less threatening racial categories than white South African.

In other words, xenophobic behaviour is a refocusing of negative energy or emotion synthesised from the White-South African towards the black foreign nationals. For instance, the study of Landau *et al.* [33] and Dauda *et al.* [13] postulated that:

*“South Africa has a lengthy history of political and racial discrimination by the white nationals, which invariably had an unquantifiable but significant impact on how black South African citizens perceive non-nationals”.*

### 3.3. Theme 3: Learned Helplessness

According to the findings of the studies reviewed, one of the dispositional elements that trigger XBs is learned helplessness. The results of these studies showed that among South Africans, learned helplessness (LH) is another pervasive dispositional component that determines XBs. It is crucial to be aware that some authors of the articles selected labelled the concept differently because it suited their fields or simple everyday language (for example, marriage xenophobia, romantic preference for foreigners, foreigners raising the standard of living, *etc.*).

The notion of LH in psychology describes a behavioural pattern characterized by malfunctioning or maladaptive behaviours marked by negative affect and avoidance of problems, which ultimately results in the collapse of problem-solving abilities when challenges arrive. Findings from the reviewed articles indicated that some male South Africans claimed that foreigners had stolen their women

for dating or marriage. Other participants claimed that foreigners were to blame for the exponential rise in South Africa's cost of living or standard of living. Meanwhile, the assertion was supported by South African women, who noted that the experiences of their male counterparts are considerably more typical and that every woman greatly depends on her husband for both sexual and financial strength. The study of Dauda *et al.* [13] and many other studies reported that:

*"While these South African men claim that foreigners are stealing all the jobs and the lower pay, foreigners and South African women generally accuse South African men of being lazy, unwilling to work, and spending their free time drinking, sleeping, and playing dice, where they might win a few Rands and then spend them on alcohol. Women in Alexandra are not very interested in partnerships with these kinds of males. Unemployed men are viewed as dom Khanda (dull headed) and omahlalela (loafers), unable to support themselves and their families, and as both insufficient and unreal men. Instead, women prefer guys who are either employed or appear to be making money in other ways. This particular man is an immigrant"-.*

Therefore, this outcome showed that the dispositions of some non-white South African men toward life might have made their female adults susceptible to male foreigners, which culminated in jealousy and hatred and resulted in xenophobic attacks on foreigners [41].

### 3.4. Implication for Psychological-based Interventions

Sequel to the outcomes of the study, the implicated and emerging dispositional factors that were implicated in the study were externalised locus of control, repression, displacement, and learned helplessness. These outcomes informed the basis upon which the psychological interventions were formulated in Fig. (2).

The framework for the psychological-based intervention was built on the outcome of the reviewed studies. The framework suggests the need for the organised body of psychology in South Africa to develop a National Cognitive Re-Orientation Programme (NCRP) to tackle the identified dispositional factors. The NCRP is expected to boost the internal locus of control of young people in South Africa through the intervention program that has been developed. The organised body could also launch a National Psycho-education Program (NPeP) to handle these prevailing social vices, such as displacement, reprisals, and learned helplessness. The NPeP is expected to assist in the management and development of adequate knowledge and training that is useful to build coping strategies and problem-solving skills (skills development) through different measures.

## 4. DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this study put in context and harnessed different scientific findings and recommendations to contribute more to the existing body of knowledge for the understanding of the relationships

between dispositional or psychological factors and recurring xenophobic behaviours in South Africa.

The study outcomes revealed that many studies had implicated the external locus of control as one of the core dispositional factors that influence xenophobic behaviour among South Africans. The selected articles arrived at the predictor using various research methods and approaches. The authors of the selected articles were Kerr *et al.* [4], Tella [7], Dauda *et al.* [13], Hewitt *et al.* [14], Landau *et al.* [33], Tirivangasi & Mugambiwa [35]; Saleh [41], Gordon [43], Young & Graham [44], and Langa & Kiguwa [46, 47]. Findings in this regard suggest that internal LoC is essential among the youths in South Africa, as it will enable them to think inwardly. By identifying internal explanations for any socio-political problem rather than external explanations, the incidence of xenophobia may not seem to come to an end.

Another major finding in the study was that repression and displacement are other salient dispositional factors of XBs in South Africa. The assertion was popularised from the work of Dauda *et al.* [13], Alarape [42], Mohamed [45], and Omoluabi [46]. Outcomes suggested that the majority of South Africans need to be psycho-educated against holding on to the past and displacing aggression towards non-nationals. South Africans should rather focus on the positives of the past and future to achieve a friendly and functional co-existence with foreign nationals.

The last outcome revealed that learned helplessness is another implicated dispositional factor in xenophobic behaviour among non-white South Africans. This finding is reflected in the work of Dauda *et al.* [13], Hewitt *et al.* [14], and Tirivangasi & Mugambiwa [35]. It is important to note that the recurring incidents of xenophobic behaviour may not end in South Africa until the citizens are aware and encouraged to sort for the missing skills to adapt effectively to the social deprivations they appreciate in foreigners.

Based on the outcomes, a psychological-based intervention was conceptualised. The development and implementation of the National Cognitive Re-orientation Program (NCRP) and National Psycho-education Program (NPeP) should be encouraged among the organised body of psychology in South Africa. The specific objectives will be to boost the internal locus of control and ensure adequate knowledge coupled with good problem-solving skills and coping skills. Lastly, the topic under investigation requires complementary engagement with relevant work in the social and human geography of xenophobia as well as social theory. This is because inadequate service delivery and a high rate of crime might fuel xenophobic sentiments, while there is little social cohesion between foreign nationals and locals to mitigate violent attacks.

## CONCLUSION

The current study concluded that dispositional factors (external locus of control, repression, displacement, and learned helplessness) precipitate/perpetuate xenophobic behaviours in South Africa. The outcome of this study will



be useful for the development of the psychological-based intervention. This study has contributed to the understanding of what constitutes internalised factors of the recurring xenophobic attacks in South Africa and the possible intervention techniques as a member(s) of the organised body of Psychology.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The significance of the study is that it will extensively benefit policies, practices, and theories purported to curb the menace of xenophobic behaviours when applied. Based on the outcome of the study, the current study suggests the following recommendations.

- The organised body of psychology in South Africa should implement a National Cognitive Re-Orientation Programme (NCRP) for South Africa to tackle the issue of combining externalised locus of control predominantly among South Africans majorly. The NCRP programme will boost the internal locus of control of South Africans.
- Expatriates within the behavioural science field should partner with the government in the development of the National Psycho-education Program (NPeP), which shall be essential in handling the prevailing problems of repression, displacement, and learned helplessness by ensuring knowledge and training of coping skills and problem-solving skills through the different channels.
- The target audience could be reached through different channels of communication, such as town hall meetings in a volatile or risky area, television or radio programs, cyber nets, youth summits and conferences, public sensitisation, posters, billboards, *etc.*

## LIMITATION

The current study utilised a relatively small number of articles that were available for use, which could limit the generalizability of the findings of the study. Also, the outcome of the study should be interpreted with caution because many of the selected articles described the constructs differently as they suited their respective discipline or language. The current study deconstructs the variables to fit into psychological terms and language. For example, the identification of external factors, such as the previous history of apartheid, unemployment, *etc.*, as the reason for engaging in xenophobic behaviour was redefined as an external locus of control in the study. The differences in terms used could mildly affect the validity of the study.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

It is not possible for any single research to be exhaustive, particularly research of this nature. Hence, there is a need for future research to establish other determinants, such as religion, that could also determine xenophobic attitudes among South Africans. This is because religion may also predict social behaviour. In addition to this, future studies need to extend the investigation of xenophobic attitudes to other Southern African countries as this might help to identify if similar

factors are responsible for the triggers of xenophobic attitudes in the Southern African region. Lastly, future studies should consider using a mixed-method approach, as this could allow more exploration of the study matter.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

XB	= Xenophobic behaviour
UNESCO	= United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
PsySSA	= Psychology Society of South African
LOC	= Locus of control

## CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION

Not applicable.

## STANDARDS OF REPORTING

PRISMA guidelines were followed.

## AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

The data supporting the findings of this article is available in the Zenodo repository at 10.5281/Zenodo.10974761, the file fingerprint is md5:a7716b58011f002d60d0d8eb0e3395d.

## FUNDING

None.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no known conflict of interest with reference to this study.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Declared none.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

PRISMA checklist is available as supplementary material on the publisher's website along with the published article.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Akinola AO. Introduction: Understanding xenophobia in Africa. The political economy of Xenophobia in Africa. Cham: Springer 2018; pp. 1-7.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64897-2\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64897-2_1)
- [2] Oloruntoba S. Crisis of identity and xenophobia in Africa: The imperative of a Pan-African thought liberation. The political economy of xenophobia in Africa. Cham: Springer 2018; pp. 9-22.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64897-2\\_2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64897-2_2)
- [3] South Africa history online. 2022. Available from: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/xenophobic-violence-democratic-south-africa-timeline>
- [4] Kerr P, Durrheim K, Dixon J. Xenophobic violence and struggle discourse in South Africa. *J Asian Afr Stud* 2019; 54(7): 995-1011.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0021909619851827>
- [5] United Nations education, science and culture organization. Xenophobia 2017. Available from: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/xenophobia/>
- [6] Handmaker J, Parsley J. Migration, refugees, and racism in South Africa *Refuge* 2004; 20: 40.
- [7] Tella O. Understanding xenophobia in South Africa: The

- individual, the state and the international system. *Insight on Africa* 2016; 8(2): 142-58.
- [8] Ruedin D. Not everyone is xenophobic in South Africa. *Open Science Framework* 2018; 1(1): 1-4.
- [9] Crush J, Pendleton W. Mapping hostilities: The geography of xenophobia, in Southern Africa. *S Afr Geogr J* 2007; 89(1): 64-82. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03736245.2007.9713874>
- [10] Simandan D. Being surprised and surprising ourselves: A geography of personal and social change. *Prog Hum Geogr* 2020; 44(1): 99-118. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0309132518810431> PMID: 32655206
- [11] Simandan D. Revisiting positionality and the thesis of situated knowledge. *Dialogues Hum Geogr* 2019; 9(2): 129-49.
- [12] Wiseman RM, Cuevas-Rodríguez G, Gomez-Mejia LR. Towards a social theory of agency. *J Manage Stud* 2012; 49(1): 202-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2011.01016.x>
- [13] Daudal M, Sakariyau RT, Ameen A. Xenophobic violence in South Africa and the Nigerians' victimization: An empirical analysis. *Pertanika J Soc Sci Humanit* 2018; 26(4)
- [14] Hewitt M, Masikane CM, Toendepi J. Dynamics informing xenophobia and leadership response in South Africa. *Acta Commercii* 2020; 20(1): 1-11.
- [15] Khosa RM, Kalitanyi V. 'Challenges in operating micro-enterprises by African foreign entrepreneurs in Cape Town, South Africa'. *Mediterr J Soc Sci* 2014; 5(10): 205-15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n10p205>
- [16] Obadire OS. Towards a sustainable anti-xenophobic rural-based university campus in South Africa. *S Afr J High Educ* 2018; 32(4): 186-98.
- [17] Clark JD. 'Cash, schools, and immigrants: The effects of income and education on xenophobia in South Africa'. *JPIR* 2011; 28(1): 4-16.
- [18] Steenkamp C. Xenophobia in South Africa: What does it say about trust? Round Table 2009; 98(403): 439-47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00358530903017949>
- [19] Ahmed S, Chen VHH, Chib AI. Xenophobia in the time of a pandemic: Social media use, stereotypes, and prejudice against immigrants during the COVID-19 crisis. *Int J Public Opin Res* 2021; 33(3): 637-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edab014>
- [20] Amisi B, Bond P, Cele N, Ngwane T. Xenophobia and civil society: Durban's structured social divisions. *Politikon S Afr J Polit Stud* 2011; 38(1): 59-83. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2011.548671>
- [21] Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *Ann Intern Med* 2009; 151(4): 264-269, W64. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7326/0003-4819-151-4-200908180-00135> PMID: 19622511
- [22] West SL, King V, Carey TS, Lohr KN, McKoy N, Sutton SF. Systems to rate the strength of scientific evidence. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, US Department of Health and Human Services 2002.
- [23] Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, *et al.* The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021; 372(71): n71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71> PMID: 33782057
- [24] Özcan FI. The effect of gender and in-service training status of the education manager on the job: A meta-analytic impact analysis 2008. Doctorate Thesis.
- [25] Clarke M. Reviewing research evidence for nursing practice: systematic reviews. Overview of methods. In: Webb C, Roe B, Eds. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2017; pp. 3-7.
- [26] Ritchie J, Lewis J, Nicholas CM, Ormston R. Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science student and researchers. London: Sage 2014.
- [27] Percy WH, Kostere K, Kostere S. Generic qualitative research in psychology. *Qual Rep* 2015; (20): 76-85.
- [28] Braun V, Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual Res Psychol* 2006; 3(2): 77-101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- [29] Seidman I. Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences New York, NY: Teachers College Press 2012.
- [30] Saldaña J. The coding manual for qualitative researchers. Sage 2015.
- [31] Maxwell JA. Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Thousand Oaks . (3rd ed.), SAGE Publications. 2013.
- [32] Lefcourt HM. Internal - External control of reinforcement. *A Review. J Pers Soc Psychol* 1966; 5: 372-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0024307> PMID: 6036566
- [33] Landau LB, Ramjathan-Keogh K, Singh G. Xenophobia in South Africa and problems related to it. Johannesburg : Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand 2005.
- [34] Ogunyemi AO, Babalola SO, Olaleye B. Psychological determinants of xenophobic behaviours. *Islamic University Multidisciplinary Journal* 2020; 7(2): 208-17.
- [35] Tirivangasi HM, Mugambiwa SS. Citizenship crisis or xenophobia? A critical analysis of service delivery protest in South Africa. SAAPAM Limpopo chapter 5th Annual Conference Proceedings Park Hotel, Makopane, Limpopo, South Africa. 2016; 41-8.
- [36] Sphelisiwe M, Edmore N. Causes of xenophobic violence in Umlazi suburb-perceptions of a migrant family. *J Afr Stud Dev* 2020; 9(2): 27-57. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31920/2634-3649/2020/10n2a2>
- [37] Misago JP. Political mobilisation as the trigger of xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa. *Int J Confl Violence* 2019; 13: 1-10.
- [38] Arogundade OT. Xenophobia-carl jung perspective. *IFE Psychologia An International Journal* 2008; 16(2): 167-72.
- [39] Sharp J, Fortress SA. 'Fortress SA': Xenophobic violence in South Africa *Anthropol Today* 2008; 24(4): 1-3. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8322.2008.00597.x>
- [40] Bowman B, Duncan N, Sonn C. Towards a psychology of South Africa's histories-living with and through the apartheid archive. *S Afr J Psychol* 2010; 40(4): 365-9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/008124631004000401>
- [41] Saleh I. Is it really xenophobia in South Africa or an intentional act of prejudice? *Glob Media J Afr Ed* 2015; 9(2): 298-313.
- [42] Alarape AI. Xenophobia: Contemporary issues in psychology. *IFE Psychologia Int J* 2008; 16(2): 72-84.
- [43] Gordon SL. Understanding the attitude-behaviour relationship: A quantitative analysis of public participation in anti-immigrant violence in South Africa. *S Afr J Psychol* 2020; 50(1): 103-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0081246319831626>
- [44] Young LS, Jearey-Graham N. "They're gonna come and corrupt our children": A psychosocial reading of South African xenophobia. *J Psychoanal Cult Soc* 2015; 20(4): 395-413. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2015.47>
- [45] Mohamed A. Digesting the pan-african failure and the role of African psychology: Fanonian understanding of the pan-african failure in establishing oneness and ending disunity/xenophobia in South Africa. *International Relations. Malmö University* 2021.
- [46] Omoluabi P. F psychological foundation of xenophobia. *Ife Psychologia* 2008; 16(2): 53-71.
- [47] Langa M, Kiguwa P. Race-ing xenophobic violence: Engaging social representations of the black African body in post-apartheid South Africa. *Agenda* 2016; 30(2): 75-85. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2016.1222086>