



Issues and Challenges concerning access to Justice in Nigeria: Clinical Legal Education Aid as a Panacea

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Abstract. The right to remain and be treated as innocent when going through a criminal trial, is, particularly, a hallmark of the dignity of the human person as against the brutish, nasty and naked aggression that characterizes the lifestyle of wildlife in the jungle. However, in Nigeria, these germane rights are usually denied, especially, to the less privileged members of society. It is in this regard, that this study adopts a hybrid method of study in ascertaining the cause of denial of access to justice in Nigeria and if clinical legal education can aid in expanding access to the Nigeria justice system. 321 questionnaires were distributed to various respondents residing in the various geo-political zones in Nigeria. The study found that there is an existence of denial of access to justice in Nigeria and some of the causes of denial of human rights access to justice include; Mal-administration of the criminal justice system, poverty, illiteracy and systemic dysfunction. The study further found that the introduction of clinical legal education could play a vital role, not only in expanding access to justice, but also aid in bridging the gap of human rights abuse in Nigeria. It was, therefore, concluded and recommended that for better access to justice by victims of human rights abuse in Nigeria, there is a need for the government and actors of the justice system in Nigeria to ensure an effective enhancement

and improve more on clinical legal education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Education, Clinical, Justice, Legal, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Many international human rights documents, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, as well as a host of other regional human rights chronicles, provide for the right of an accused person to be presumed innocent of any criminal charge until he is proved guilty in a public court trial at which he is given all the guarantees necessary for his defence (Olanike, 2017). The same provision has also been domesticated into the laws and constitutions of so several countries within the global environment (Aidonojie et al., 2020). The fundamental objective behind this is the preservation of the dignity of the human person at all times even when charged with an allegation of wrongdoing (Obuka & Ukwueze, 2020). It is, also to ensure that no innocent person is, wrongfully, punished or made to be prejudged as a criminal (Oludayo, 2021). For example, in Nigeria,

section 36(5) of the Constitution, recognizes the innocence of any person charged with a criminal offence until he is proven guilty in an independent and impartial court trial that is fair, conducted publicly, and within a reasonable time.

Furthermore, In Angola, by section 67(2) of their constitution, the innocence of a citizen is upheld and sustained until his sentence has become *res judicata*. In Ghana, by section 19(2) of the constitution, a person charged with a criminal offence is presumed to be innocent until he is proved otherwise or has pleaded guilty. Also, in South Africa, section 35(3)(h) of the South African Bill of Rights, every accused person has a right to a fair trial, which includes the right to be presumed innocent, to remain silent, and not to testify during proceedings.

Concerning the above, it suffices to state that the need to dignify the existence and personality of a human person, to distinguish him from wildlife or domestic animals, is the basis for the conception of protection of the fundamental human right (Abamgbose Olomola, 2014; Adlabi and Sani, 2020; Aidonojie et al., 2022). After the right to life, which is the fulcrum of all human rights, the next in the pyramid of importance is the right to the dignity of the human person (Abirimoro, 2019). This is the reason why a person charged with an offence is entitled to a fair hearing in public, and within a reasonable time, must be informed in detail and, in the language he understands, the nature of his offence and must be given adequate time and facilities to prepare his defence (Abamgbose, 2015)

It is, however disheartening that in Nigeria, this important human rights provision is being gradually reduced to a mere myth, a folk tale nor supported by the actual application. This is due to some institutional, administrative, and systemic factors and deficiencies forming a barrier to the enjoyment of the right of a person to be presumed and treated as innocent while facing a criminal charge. In this regard, it suffices to state, how can it be explained in a situation whereby someone, statutorily considered innocent, is plunged into prison custody for the entire duration of a standing trial lasting for up to eight, ten, or fifteen years. Furthermore, at the end of his trial, he is absolved of all the charges preferred against him, adjudged not guilty, discharged, acquitted, set free, and asked to go in peace - without anything to compensate for the long periods he of being kept in the prison custody. These are some of the travail experienced by clinical legal education in Nigeria.

It is concerning the above, that this study tends to embark on a cursory review concerning the concept of clinical legal education in Nigeria, and the challenges concerning the right to access justice in Nigeria. How they have aided in the expansion of the right to access justice in Nigeria.

2. Methodology

Concerning the methodology used in this study, the study adopts a hybrid method (doctrinal and non-doctrinal methodology) of research in this study. The doctrinal methodology is aimed at analyzing and theorizing the concept of legal education, instances where victim rights to justice have been grossly abused in Nigeria given the maladministration of the justice system. In this regard, for an effective doctrinal method of study, the researchers relied on scholarly works of literature, laws, and case law.

However, the non-doctrinal method of study is aimed at examining the general public view and perception concerning the denial of the rights of an accused person and if access to justice in Nigeria is constricted. Furthermore, if legal aid education is a panacea it could aid in curtailing the denial of an individual right to justice and expansion of access to justice in Nigeria. Concerning this, the questionnaire was issued to respondents' residents in the various geo-political zones in Nigeria.

3. Concept of Clinical Legal Education and Expansion of Access to Justice in Nigeria

Access to justice and preservation of the dignity of the human person are very important parts of democracy. The dignity of a human person means and necessitates that an accused person should not be subjected to inhuman or dehumanizing treatment, torture, agony, pain, servitude, or humiliation before or during the trial because he remains innocent until he is pronounced guilty by the court. Lack of access to justice and denial of the dignity of human persons in any form whatsoever make people lose faith in the legal system of getting redress (Aidonojie et al., 2024; Safi et al., 2024; Aido ojie et al., 2024). They may prefer to either result to self-help by taking the law into their hand or become unrepentant or hardened criminal elements due to the hostility received in the hands of the actors in the criminal justice system when alleged with wrongdoing. Poor administration of criminal justice has been fingered as one of the reasons for the cause and uprise of violent criminal activities like banditry which started from the northwest of Nigeria and, is now, spreading to all the nooks and crannies of the country. The Highhandedness of security

operatives as well as denial of justice when cases and the lackluster attitude of law enforcement agents when cases of cattle rustling are reported to them, and how they end up not getting the needed justice in court, were observed as some of the factors contributing to the violent crime, leading to an endemic killing spree and bloodshed. Most times, also, someone who has been alleged of wrongdoing is arrested and kept in the custody, kept among hardened criminals, and subjected to different levels of inhuman treatment. In the end, he comes out to become a monster that he was not before his arrest and detention. One former bandit narrated that his father spent seven years chasing justice for his rustled cattle, detailing how justice was not achieved until the man died. "We became impoverished by judicial cases hence the decision to take up arms," the repentant bandit was quoted to have said.

It is concerning the above, that most faculty of law in Nigerian university has to sort out the need to establish clinical legal education (Law Clinic). Clinical legal education is a clear departure from the Socratic or traditional method of instruction in which the mentality of thinking of a prospective lawyer is with emphasis on legalism, without attention to values and justice, rather, it is an innovative idea of a practical approach to legal education (Adekoya, 2022). The concept of clinical legal education aid was spearheaded by the Network of University Legal Aid Institution (NULAI) which made its incursion into Nigeria in the year 2003 as a non-governmental, non-profit, and non-political organization. Clinical legal education aid is committed to promoting clinical legal education, legal education reform, legal aid, access to justice, and the development of future public interest lawyers (Olugbenga, 2014). It is a learning method focused on enabling students of law to understand how the law works in action rather than the conventional exclusive theoretical approach to the teaching of law.

However, it suffices to opine that, a law clinic is one of the two legs of clinical legal education, and it is a facility run by a law school or faculty to provide free legal services to the public while training their students in clinical legal education (Mukhlis et al., 2024; Aidonojie et al., 2024). The concept of clinical legal education as operated by the most institution, allows law students to practice as student clinicians as part of the training of a prospective lawyer which will make him/her gain experience in handling real legal problems. Furthermore, it suffices to opine that one of the major aims of clinical legal education is equipped students and law lecturers in providing free legal services to disadvantaged persons and groups, who, because of little or no income, social deprivation, or

lack of awareness, cannot afford legal services. The philosophy behind this is that the right to a fair trial and justice should not depend on how much money a person has, or his connections; and that access to justice, especially in criminal proceedings, must be available to all persons for there to be peace, harmony, and happiness in the society.

Concerning the above, it is apt to state that through NULAI's activities, a network of cohesive university-based law clinics providing pro-bono legal services to the less privileged members of the public has been built while at the same time training a new generation of skilled law students committed to public service and justice. In 2018, NULAI sponsored a project titled: expanding access to justice for pre-trial detainees (Mutawalli et al., 2024; Aidonojie et al., 2023). This idea of NULAI is currently being executed by the Olabisi Onabanjo University's law clinic (OOU law clinic), Faculty of Law, Edo State University Uzairue, Faculty of Law, University of Benin, Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin. Furthermore, the project has been retained and sustained by several universities in Nigeria, and, ever since, the project has been a new and veritable avenue for free legal services to the underserved members of the public.

Clinical legal education aid also offers students and presents them with the opportunity to be exposed to simulated, real-live cases and clients, and as such, they are allowed to think, conduct themselves and perform as lawyers. However, clinical legal education as a practice by Olabisi Onabanjo University's law clinic, Edo State University Uzairue's law clinic, and several other institutions in Nigeria, has, as its members as follows:

- A lecturer as coordinator
- A lecturer as a staff manager
- Some few selected lecturers, as staff clinicians
- Students, who are referred to as student clinicians

However, it must be noted that clinical legal education aid (law Clinic) in several institutions in Nigeria is administered by the students. For this reason, it is otherwise referred to as a 'students' law firm', and it is headed by a student who is called the head clinician. Furthermore, clinical legal education aid (Law Clinic) as practiced in Onabanjo University's law clinic and Edo State University Uzairue's law clinic is segmented into departments such as:

- Street Law Department
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Department
- Advocacy Department

Each of the above-identified departments of clinical legal education aid (Law Clinic) is overseen by a sub-head. The clinic attends to life cases from members of the university community (staff and students) as well as the general public. Individual whose right has been impaired and abused can have access to the law clinic and seek legal assistance or report matters, mostly civil issues. They are interviewed by the student clinician on duty. Their matter may be taken up where a reasonable cause of action is disclosed and such is within the purview of the clinic's mandate. Furthermore, it also suffices to state that, clinical legal education aid (law clinic) plays a mediatory role most of the time when dealing with civil matters. It also plays a vital role in criminal matters, especially in respect of pre-trial detainees. One of the key functions of the clinic is the facilitation of pre-trial detainees' cases.

4. Human Rights Abuse Cases resolve through the Aid of Clinical Legal Education Aid

Access to justice has been described as the possibility of an individual to bring a claim before a court, have it heard and adjudicated upon by the standards of the principles of fairness and justice, and with the assurance that legal and judicial outcomes are just and equitable. Poverty and lack of awareness have played a major role in militating against access to justice in Africa. As of October 2022, the unemployment rate in Nigeria was at 33.3%, and inflation was at 21.09%. In Nigeria, stakeholders in the criminal justice sector have, technically, designed some antics and attitudes to rub the poor accused persons of their innocent status which ought to be presumed by the constitution (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), section 36 (5)). Delay in the prosecution of criminal cases is the most potent instrument of making an accused person be kept in prison custody for as long as eight, ten, or fifteen years. Most often, a court judgment will, eventually, be pronounced and adjudged him innocent of the charges preferred against him; then, discharged (Mukhlis et al., 2023; Imoisi et al., 2023; Aidonjje et al., 2023), acquitted, set free, and asked to go in peace without anything to compensate for his number of years wasted in custody with so much discomfort, agonies, and hardship. In this regard, it is apt to state that the evil that the Constitution will not do to the poor is done by the hostile criminal justice system.

However, there is a plethora of criminal cases which has been undertaken pro bono by clinical legal education aid. These criminal cases give a vivid illustration of how most suspects have been grossly

abused and limited in accessing justice in securing their rights. A good example is the *State V. Segun Adefi Charge No: HCJ/13C/2018*, which was resolved by clinical legal education aid (Olabisi Onabanjo University's Law Clinic). In this case, the defendant was picked up by the officers of the Nigeria Police Force, Ilese Division (Ilese Police Station) on the 24th of September, 2014 at a bank where he had gone to withdraw money for his son's school fee for a new term. He was, then, detained at the station following a complaint laid against him by the complainant who was a student of Ogun State College of Health Technology, Ilese, Ogun State (Health technology, Ilese) that the defendant came to rob her in her room while she was with a female friend in her room at about 8.30 pm. The Defendant was charged, in the High Court of Ijebu-Ode in the Ijebu Ode Judicial Division, for armed robbery contrary to section 1 (2) (a) of the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Act, Cap R 11, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; assault, contrary to section 252 of the Criminal Code Laws of Ogun State, 2006; and negligently causing harm contrary to section 344 of the Criminal Code Law of Ogun State, 2006.

As of 2018 (four years after the defendant's arrest and detention), legal advice had not been issued by the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) in the Ogun State Ministry of Justice on whether the charge against the defendant should be sustained or not. Throughout his trial, he remained in the prison facility as awaiting trial inmate. Any time he was to be produced in court for his trial, he would be brought to court along with so many other awaiting-trial inmates whose trials were also to be conducted the same day. They would be chained together with a handcuff and stuffed at the back of a small iron-bodied pick-up vehicle with one or two tiny holes simulating the window with a ring of iron rods hanging at its entrance to make contact with the outside world difficult. During one of the regular visits of the Olabisi Onabanjo University's Law Clinic student clinicians to the prison facility at Igbeba, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State in 2018, the defendant was asked questions, his case file was gone through, prison officials and inmates were asked questions about the observed behavior and lifestyle of the defendant. His matter was found to have merit and fell under such that the clinicians had the mandate to attend to, hence, the taking over of his case for adequate legal representation. The student clinicians had to start by putting up some advocacy for legal advice to be issued without further delay. Shortly after that, and after four years of detention, his trial commenced. On the 13th of December, 2022, the proceedings were finally dispensed with in the case and the judgment of the court was delivered

exonerating the defendant and absolving him of any wrongdoing concerning the charges preferred against him. He was discharged, acquitted, set free from prison custody, and asked to go in peace.

It took the defendant eight years, two months, and nineteen days of pain, suffering, agony, humiliation, maltreatment, and lowering of self-worth to 'prove' his innocence (Edetalehn and Aidonojie, 2023; Gunawan et al., 2023; Aidonojie 2023). In the end, he goes home to a twisted and shattered future without a pronouncement from the court for compensation or, even, a public apology. Furthermore, the defendant did not return to meet his only son whose school fee he had wanted to withdraw money to pay through a bank's automated machine when he was arrested. He lost him while he was still an inmate in prison custody attending his trial. The child, probably, could not wait to be denied fatherly care for as long as his father could endure in custody. He, also, did not come back to meet his wife. She was tired of waiting for him, and she went right into the arms of another available man. His mother, too, has become bedridden, as she suffered a stroke while he was in prison. His shoe-making shop was taken over by another entrepreneur his entire familiar life deserted him, and he became a dot in a wide circle.

Another instance is the *Commissioner of Police v. Tunde Adebayo Suit No. CHARGE NO: MIJ/282C/2019*, the defendant was a commercial motorbike rider (otherwise referred to as 'Okada rider' in Nigeria) before his arrest and detention in the year 2018. He had been given a Motorcycle by one Mr. Rasaan Modiu, who was the complainant in this case, on hire purchase with an agreement that the defendant should make daily payment of One Thousand Five Hundred Naira (N1,500.00). The complainant had bought the Motorcycle for Two Hundred and Thirty Thousand Naira (N230,000) and gave it out, on hire purchase, to the defendant for Three Hundred and Sixty-Five Thousand Naira (365,000). The complainant and the defendant had made an agreement that bound their hire-purchase relationship. The defendant, with the concurrence of the complainant, often kept the Motorcycle in his house and used it daily for commercial riding purposes. He never defaulted in payment until the Motorcycle was stolen from his house, alongside another motorcycle, on the 10th of November 2018. The defendant had locked the neck of the motorcycle a night before the theft, as he always did, but woke up the following morning only to discover that the motorcycle and one other, parked together in the neighborhood, had been stolen.

The defendant, thereafter, informed the complainant about the incident. The complainant, who was suspecting foul play, reported the matter to the Police. At the police station, the defendant and the complainant made a statement wherein both parties narrated the incident. They also, later, agreed, under the watch of the Police, that the defendant would pay by installment, for the stolen Motorcycle. The defendant began the payment for the Motorcycle but failed subsequently and the complainant made an allegation of theft against him. Hence, the defendant was arraigned in the Magistrate's Court II, Ijebu-Ode, and charged with stealing.

Even though the defendant was admitted to bail, he was kept in prison custody for months as he could not perfect the bail granted him by the court with onerous conditions before his case was taken up by Olabisi Onabanjo University's Law Clinic. He, nevertheless, remained in custody throughout his trial as it was difficult to meet his bail conditions. On the 19th of December, 2019, the court judgment was delivered. He was adjudged not guilty of offence of stealing and was discharged and acquitted after a lengthy period in custody.

Furthermore, there is also the case of one *Alexander Michael Suit No. Charge No.: HC/234/2023*, the defendant was arrested and has been in the custody since 23rd of August, 2020 for an allegation of conspiracy to commit armed robbery and armed robbery around the Luba area of Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The defendant, who did not write a confessional statement, was arrested when he passed through a scene/place where the robbery of a Motorcycle had taken place one hour earlier. Two men, armed with knives, had, about one hour earlier, attacked a commercial Motorcycle rider, dispossessed him of his Motorcycle, jumped on it, and sped away with it. When the defendant passed through the scene one hour later, someone had fingered him as one of the robbers. He was mobbed, arrested, and handed over to the Police. Ever since he has been in custody and his matter had just come up in court for mention on the 27th of January, 2023, and still currently going through the trial.

The above characterized the injustice often suffered by a suspect in the Nigerian justice system. Hence, facilitating access to justice has been the crux of clinical legal education. Currently, the Olabisi Onabanjo University's Law Clinic and Edo State University are seeking justice for over seventy-five pre-trial inmates, some of them have since been discharged and acquitted by courts after judgment

entered in their favour and their innocence, was eventually, established.

5. Challenges concerning accessing Justice by Victims of Human Right Abuses in Nigeria

It is, however disheartening that in Nigeria, this important human rights provision is being gradually reduced to a mere myth, a folk tale nor supported by the actual application. This is due to some institutional, administrative, and systemic factors and deficiencies forming a barrier to the enjoyment of the right of a person to be presumed and treated as innocent while facing a criminal charge.

However, some of the challenges concerning access to justice by victims of human rights abuses in Nigeria include but are not limited to the following:

Poverty: In a place like Nigeria, as is the case in most African countries, where the vicious cycle of poverty ravages to the extent that the majority of the citizens cannot afford three square meals per day, the fundamental right to personal liberty, including the right to life, rule of law, equality before the law, the equitable criminal justice system as well as the right of access to justice do not mean so much. This is concerning the fact that the vast majority of Nigerian citizens are illiterates, dwelling in rural communities. They are completely unperturbed by the complexity of the state's system and rules they hardly comprehend (Afolabi, 1987). Justice Oputa was concerned that, while some Africans are poor at one time or another during their lives, the majority are poor all of their lives (Oputa, 1989). In this regard, it suffices to state that, what fair hearing can a poor person hope to have when he cannot even boast of a square meal a day? If he is cheated of his right, he would certainly prefer to leave the matter in the hands of God than risk death through starvation as a result of investing all that he and his family can boast of as the total of their worldly possession in trying to assert an illusory right to a fair hearing, including the right to personal liberty (Akinola, 1989). Some may, even prefer to trade their right to liberty for regular meals in government custody.

Bureaucratic and Complex Procedure in Commencement of Criminal Suit in Nigeria: The procedure in the criminal justice system in Nigeria, just as it is the case with most other African countries, starts with a complainant laying a complaint at a police station of a particular person. Sometimes, such a complaint may be in respect of a particular occurrence that constitutes an offence against the State. Where no

particular person is involved as a suspect, the law enforcement agency of the State, before which the complaint has been laid, will ask the complainant if he suspects anyone as responsible for the occurrence or matter complained of after which arrest and investigation will follow; and this signifies the commencement of the ordeal of the suspect. Furthermore, it is apt to state that most times, even the suspect is unable to comprehend, sufficiently, the charges drawn against them. In this regard, the suspect may be thrown into confusion on how to diligently prosecute or defend a claim against them. What is hearing worth to an accused person who does not know the rules of procedure, and who cannot properly present his case?

Also, the following serve as challenges concerning access to justice by victims of human rights abuses in Nigeria:

- Corruption in the judiciary
- Want of seriousness in the investigation of a complaint
- Undue delay in the release of legal advice by the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP)
- Delay in the trial process, given the technicalities, manipulations, and antics of the legal practitioners, and of course, the presiding magistrates or even judges
- Lack of conducive rights protection environment

The above, constitute the betrayers of the human family in the enjoyment of vital rights and quality access to justice, they are, no doubt, the Judas in Nigeria's justice system.

6. Presentation and Analysis of Data

The data gathered and obtained in this study through the use of a survey questionnaire is therefore analysed as follows:

6.1 Sample Size and Techniques

The study utilizes a sample size of 321 legal practitioners (as respondents) who practice law in Nigeria and are residents within the six geopolitical zone in Nigeria.

Furthermore, it suffices to state that concerning the sampling method of identifying the respondent to respond to the questionnaire, the study also adopts the simple random method of sampling. This is concerning the fact that the simple random sampling techniques or method of identifying respondents have

to be considered a better method (Edetalehn and Aidonojie, 2023; Imoisi et al., 2023; Aidonojie et al., 2023; Aidonojie et al., 2023; Majekudumi et al., 2023; Aidonojie and francis; 2022; Aidonojie et al., 2022), most especially where the respondents are from a heterogeneous population (Aidonojie et al., 2024; Obisesan et al., 2024; Ekpenisi et al., 2024). Furthermore, a simple random sampling technique is also said to have the following advantage or relevancies (Aidonojie; 2022; Aidonojie et al., 2022; Aidonojie et al., 2022; Aidonojie, 2023) as follows:

- That the method is more authentic in gathering or collating an unbiased result from a questionnaire issued to respondents
- That it is a hassle-free or easy or simple method of obtaining a result from a large population of different cultural heritage or background
- That such method is more preferable and suitable when embarking on non-doctrinal legal research

6.2 Data Analysis

Concerning the data gathered in this study through the use of a questionnaire, it, therefore, analysed as follows:

6.3 Research Question One

Which of the following Geopolitical Zone in Nigeria do you reside?

321 responses

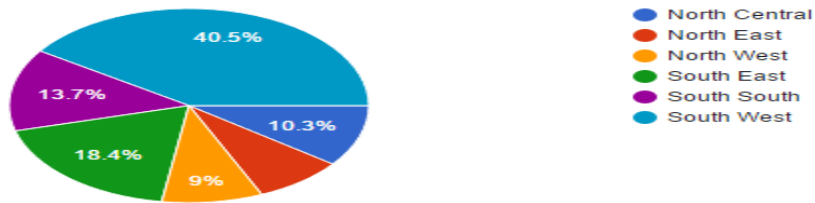


Figure 1: Identification of geopolitical zone or region resided by respondents

S/N	Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria	Responses of Respondents	Percent
1	North Central	33	10.3%
2	North East	28	8.1%
3	North West	29	9%
4	South East	59	18.4%
5	South South	44	13.7%
6	South West	130	40.5%
	TOTAL	321	100%

Table 1: Identification of geopolitical zone or region resided by respondents

Figure 1 and Table 1 represent the valid identification of the various geopolitical zone in Nigeria resided by the respondents.

Research Question Two

Is there denial of right of an accused person and challenges in access to justice in Nigeria?

321 responses

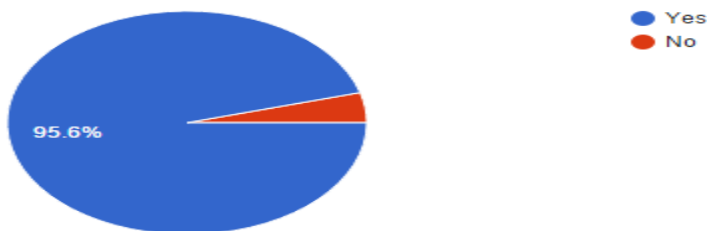


Figure 2: Verification of if there is an abuse of the right of an accused person and challenges to accessing justice in Nigeria

	Response	Percent
Valid Yes	307	95.6%
Valid No	14	4.4%
Total	321	100%

Table 2: A valid Verification of if there is an abuse of the right of an accused person and a challenge to access to justice in Nigeria

Figure 2 and Table 2 above are valid identification or confirmations concerning if there are incidences of abuse of the right of an accused person and challenges in access to justice by an accused person in Nigeria.

Research Question Three

Which of the following constitute challenges of denial of right of an accused person and challenges in access to justice in Nigeria? You can tick more than one option

320 responses

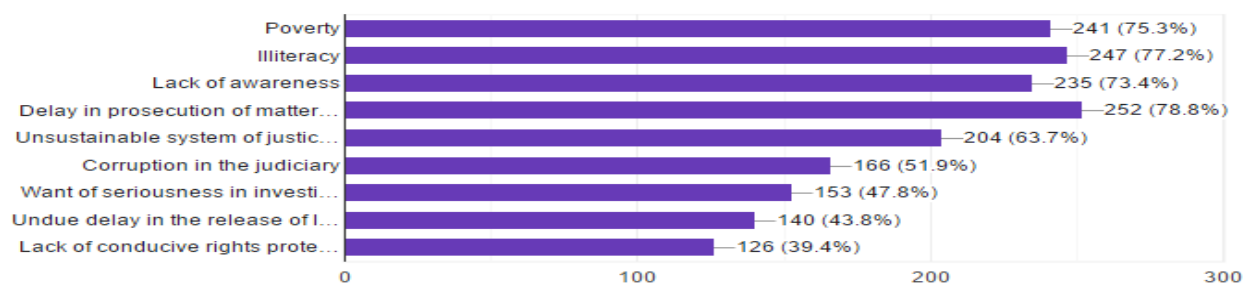


Figure 3: identification of challenges in accessing justice in Nigeria and if there denial of the right of an accused person

Challenges in accessing justice in Nigeria	Cluster of Response	Percentage
Poverty	241	75.3%
Illiteracy	247	77.2%
Lack of awareness	235	73.4%
Delay in the prosecution of matters in court	252	78.8%
Unsustainable system of justice administration	204	63.7%
Corruption in the judiciary	166	51.9%
Want of seriousness in the investigation of the complaint	153	47.8%
Undue delay in the release of legal advice by the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP)	140	43.8%
Lack of conducive rights protection environment	126	39.4%

Table 3: Valid Cluster identification of challenges in accessing justice in Nigeria and denial of the right of an accused person

Figure 3 and Table 3 are a cluster of responses by the respondents in identifying the challenges in accessing justice in Nigeria and if there are denial of rights of an accused person in Nigeria.

Research Question Four

Do you agree that clinical legal education, as it is practiced in Nigeria, is relevant in expanding access to justice in Nigeria?

318 responses

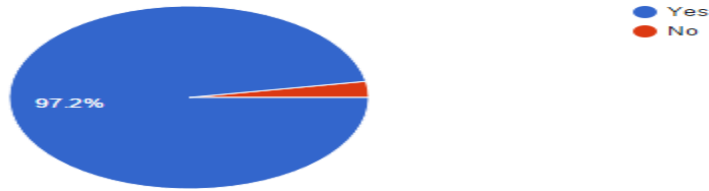


Figure 4: Identifying if clinical legal education is relevant in the justice system in Nigeria

	Response	Percent
Valid Yes	309	97.2%
Valid No	9	2.8%
Total	318	100%

Table 4: Valid confirmation of clinical legal education is relevant in the justice system in Nigeria
Figure 4 and Table 4 are valid identification of responses by the respondents in confirming if clinical legal education is relevant to the expansion of justice in Nigeria.

Research Question Five

In Nigeria's administration of justice system, in which of the following areas is clinical legal education relevant?

321 responses

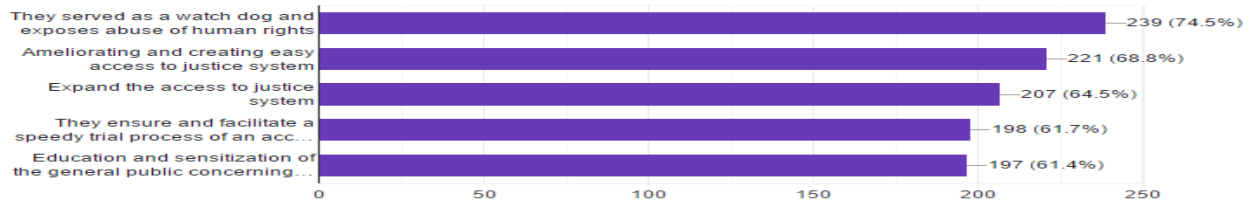


Figure 5: Identification of the relevances of clinical legal education to Nigeria justice system

Relevances of clinical legal education in Nigeria	Cluster of Responses	Percentage
They served as a watchdog and exposes abuse of human rights	239	74.5%
Ameliorating and creating easy access to the justice system	221	68.8%
Expand access to the justice system	207	64.5%
They ensure and facilitate a speedy trial process for an accused person	198	61.7%
Education and sensitization of the general public concerning their rights	197	61.4%

Table 5: Valid cluster of identification of the relevances of clinical legal education to Nigeria's justice system

Figure 5 and Table 5 are valid identification of the relevance of clinical legal education to the Nigerian justice system.

Research Question Six:

Which of the following could aid and enhance clinical legal education in Nigeria as it concern access to justice and protection of human right? You can tick more one option

321 responses

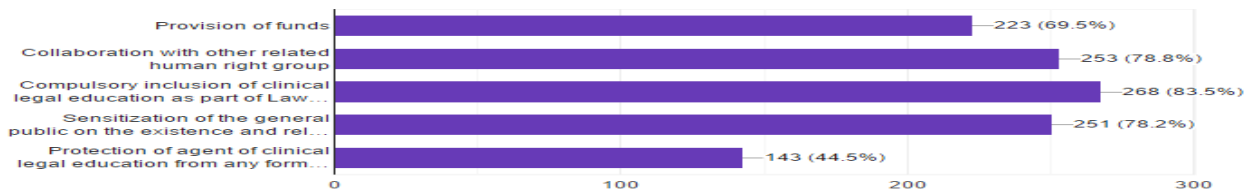


Figure 5: Identification of ways of enhancing clinical legal education in Nigeria

ways of enhancing clinical legal education in Nigeria	Cluster of Responses	Percentage
Provision of funds	223	69.5%
Collaboration with other related human right group	253	78.8%
Compulsory inclusion of clinical legal education as part of Law undergraduate curriculum	268	83.5%
Sensitization of the general public on the existence and relevance of clinical legal education	251	78.2%
Protection of agent of clinical legal education from any form of abuse	143	44.5%

Table 6: Valid cluster of identifying the various ways clinical legal education could be enhanced

Figure 6 and Table 6 are valid confirmations or identification of the various ways clinical legal education can be enhanced in Nigeria for improved and better access to justice.

7. Discussion of Findings

Concerning the data presented above which reveal the findings of this study, figure 1 and table 1 reflect the fact that 321 of the respondents are residents of Nigeria. The essence of figure 1 and table 1 is aimed at ensuring that respondents are residents of Nigeria to enable them to possess the knowledge and are well informed concerning access to and its challenges in Nigeria. In this regard, in figure 2 and table 2, 95.6% of the respondents were able to identify that there exists a denial of rights of an accused person in Nigeria and that there are challenges in accessing justice for an accused person. However, in figure 3 and table 3, the respondent was able to identify some of the acts that constitute challenges in accessing justice for an accused person in Nigeria as follows:

75.3% and 77.2% of the respondents identify poverty and stated that there is a high level of illiteracy respectively

73.4% and 78.8% identified a lack of awareness and delay in the prosecution of matters in court respectively

63.7% and 51.9% stated that an unsustainable system of justice administration and corruption in the judiciary respectively constitute challenges in accessing justice in Nigeria

47.8% of the respondents stated that there is a want of seriousness in the investigation of a complaint

43.8% agreed that there is undue delay in the release of legal advice by the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP)

Furthermore, 39.4% of the respondents identified lack of a conducive rights protection environment could cause a challenge in accessing justice in Nigeria.

However, concerning the above challenge in accessing justice in Nigeria as identified, in figure 4 and table 4, 97.2% of the respondents further identify that clinical legal education could aid in expanding access to justice in Nigeria. In this regard, in figure 5 and table 5, the respondents in a cluster of responses identify the relevance of clinical legal education to Nigeria's justice system as follows:

74.5% of the respondents stated that clinical legal education served as a watchdog and exposes abuse of human rights

68.8% identify that it ameliorates and creates easy access to the justice system

64.5% stated that it expands access to the justice system

61.7% also stated that clinical legal education facilitates a speedy trial process for an accused person

61.4% identify that clinical legal education as practice in Nigeria embarks on educating and sensitization of the general public concerning their rights

In this regard, given the relevance of clinical legal education in securing the rights of an accused person and expanding access to justice, in figure 6 and table 6, the respondents further identify ways of enhancing clinical legal education in Nigeria as follows:

69.5% of the respondents stated that there is a need for government to provide funds for the enhancement and effective clinical legal education in Nigeria

78.8% identify collaboration with other related human right group will aid in enhancing clinical legal education in Nigeria

83.5% stated that there is a need for compulsory inclusion of clinical legal education as part of the Law undergraduate curriculum

78.2% identify that there is a need for sensitization of the general public on the existence and relevance of clinical legal education

Furthermore, 44.5% of the respondent stated that government must guarantee the protection of agents or personnel of clinical legal education from any form of abuse

8. Conclusion

The study has been able to highlight the activities and concept of clinical legal education (Law Clinic) in expanding access to justice. At the same time, have, hugely, exposed the denial of the right of an accused person to be presumed and treated as innocent while standing trial in Nigeria. In this regard, the study was able to identify that, the criminal justice system in Nigeria is running contrary to the spirit of the constitutional provisions, especially, as regards the protection and promotion of the fundamental right to the dignity of the human person. This is concerning the fact that several individuals are serving as an inmate for several years in Nigeria correctional centres without trial.

Furthermore, the study further found that several challenges often result in the denial of a suspect of their rights to access justice in Nigeria. Some of the identified challenges include; poverty, a cumbersome and bureaucratic procedure in instituting criminal suits, corruption in the criminal justice system, and several others identified above in this study.

It is concerning the above that this study, therefore, concludes and recommends that, to curtail the incessant deprivation of the right of a suspect to justice and expand the scope of access to justice, there is a need to intensify and improve on clinical legal education (Law Clinic) in Nigeria. In this regard, all necessary aid that is needed to equip clinical legal education in Nigeria must be provided by the Nigerian government and concerned stakeholders in the Nigerian Justice system. This is concerning the fact that equipping and intensifying clinical legal education (Law Clinic) in Nigeria will enhance and expand access to justice.

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