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Editorial

This edition of NIU *Journal of Humanities* touches on Development Administration, Educational Psychology as well as Language and Literary Studies.

The first part of the Journal focuses on Development Administration. Using Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election as a case study, one of the papers in this section empirically argues that ethnicity significantly influenced voter decisions and highlights the challenges posed by ethnic-driven voting patterns. To mitigate the negative effects of ethnic polarization in elections, the study recommends targeted civic education initiatives led by the Nigerian government, the National Orientation Agency (NOA), and educational institutions. Implementing a civic education curriculum that fosters national unity and encourages policy-driven electoral choices will be critical to strengthening democratic process.

Papers in the second section are on Educational Psychology. Using Secondary School Students in Lagos State, Nigeria as case studies, one of the papers in these sections argues theoretically and demonstrates empirically that there is a significant relationship between formative evaluation feedback and students' academic achievement in Economics. It is therefore recommended that school teachers should acquire updated skills and best practices in using diagnostic evaluation to enhance students' academic performance, not only in Economics but across all subjects.

One of the papers, in the last section on Language and Literary Studies, examines the roles of musical artistes who use their songs as a tool for protest and activism against the government. The study is anchored on the theory of relative derivation, which is defined as the perceived lack of resources required to maintain quality life in a society.

This issue of *NIU Journal of Humanities* features many empirical and theoretical based articles which can be of great benefit to every reader.

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Part One
Development Administration

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The Influence of Ethnicity on Electoral Decisions: A Study of Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election

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Abstract. Voting behavior in democracies has long been a subject of interest for political scientists, sociologists, and researchers. It not only determines the composition of governments but also reflects the political dynamics of a nation. In Nigeria, ethnicity has historically played a crucial role in shaping electoral choices, influencing democratic representation and political stability. This study examines the extent to which ethnicity influenced the voting behavior of the electorate during the 2023 Presidential Elections in Nigeria. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. The findings reveal that ethnicity significantly influenced voter decisions, with approximately 75% of respondents acknowledging its impact. Many interview participants highlighted the lack of comprehensive civic education as a major challenge, advocating for voter education programs that emphasize candidate qualifications over ethnic affiliations. This study contributes to the discourse on identity politics and democratic governance in Nigeria by highlighting the challenges posed by ethnic-driven voting patterns. To mitigate the negative effects of ethnic polarization in elections, the study recommends targeted civic education initiatives led by the Nigerian government, the National Orientation Agency (NOA), and educational institutions. Implementing a civic education curriculum that fosters national unity and encourages policy-driven electoral choices will be critical to strengthening Nigeria's democratic process.

Keywords: Voting, Election, & ethnicity

1. Introduction

Voting behavior in democracies has long been a topic of interest and research for political scientists, sociologists, and researchers worldwide. The way citizens cast their votes in elections not only determines the composition of governments but also reflects the pulse of a nation's political dynamics. From early investigations into the influence of religion and social class on voting patterns to contemporary inquiries into the impact of social media and identity politics, the field has continuously evolved. In democratic nations, understanding how and it is crucial to understand why individuals vote the way they do to maintain the integrity of the democratic system. There is a widespread impact of ethnicity on voting behavior and multifaceted issues within the realm of political science and democratic governance. Ethnicity and regionalism have historically played significant roles in shaping voting preferences in Nigeria. Assessing how these identity-based factors affect electoral choices in the 2023 election can provide insights into the enduring power of identity politics and its impact on democratic representation.

While diversity is a hallmark of many modern democracies, the impact of ethnicity on voting behavior often raises concerns and challenges the core principles of political equality, representation, and the collective decision-making process. Ethnic divisions have led to the polarization of voting behavior, where individuals predominantly vote for candidates or parties that align with their ethnic background. Such polarization can create a fragmented and less cohesive society, hampering national unity and social cohesion. Towoju, A. J., & Abdullahi, A. (2023). The exploitation of ethnic identities for political gain often results in candidates and parties appealing to ethnic interests rather than broader societal concerns. This can lead to the prioritization of ethnic issues at the expense of broader policy considerations. In some instances, ethnic minorities face barriers to voting, such as voter ID laws or gerrymandering, which disproportionately affect their participation in the democratic process, which was experienced in the last

Presidential Election in Nigeria. The equal representation principle may be compromised by certain practices, negative preconceptions and prejudices associated with certain ethnic groups affect the perception of voters. Such stigmatization influences voting behavior and results in the exclusion of marginalized ethnic communities from the political mainstream. The focus of this research however is to comprehensively determine the extent to which ethnicity Influence voting behavior of Electorates in Nigeria during the 2023 Presidential Elections.

2. The Concept of Ethnicity in Politics

In politics, ethnicity is a strong and persistent influence. Identity manipulation as a weapon of governance has been stressed by African political identities. Matshanda, N., and D. Thompson (2023). It is crucial in determining political systems, voting patterns, the creation of policies, conflicts, and the establishment of peace. The idea of ethnicity in politics is broad and intricate, including a variety of topics including identity, representation, and government. Results show that identity negotiations are based on how people see their occupation and the meaning that is associated with it. Towoju, A. J., & Asiyanbi, K. A. (2022). This paper critically develops the idea of ethnicity in politics by looking at its definition, historical foundations, function in political processes, difficulties it presents, and effects on governments and society. Similarly, because of the unique relationships political parties form with these groups, ethnicity also serves as a barrier. Towoju, A. J., & Asiyanbi, K. A. (2022).

The concept of ethnicity is intricate and multidimensional, including several facets of human identity and culture. When viewed in terms of political mobilization against racial oppression, the concept of transnational minority gains greater normative consistency than when it is justified in terms of cultural acknowledgment. S. Latour (2023).
It speaks about the social and cultural characteristics that set one group of people apart from another and characterize them. Drawing on the finding that nations in eastern Europe without organized ethnic minorities have seen a dramatic decline in democratic norms J. Rovny (2023). Shared language, religion, traditions, customs, and a feeling of shared history are a few examples of these characteristics. An individual's ethnicity is a crucial component of who they are and frequently influences their political, social, and cultural connections.

Many of the notions that are now the outcome of empirical research on ethnic ethnocultural identity are the result of reflections that are not always able to be applied to the correct degree, according to an examination of trends in the evolution of this contemporary problem. E. Fursova (2023). Cultural traits that set one group apart from another are intimately linked to ethnicity, and belonging to an ethnic minority is a marker for a number of disadvantages. Jones, S., AlRubaye, N., McCann, L., Amati, F., Green, J., Kitchin, L., Watt, H., & Greenfield, G. (2023).

This can include distinct cultural customs, rituals, and practices as well as the language, dialects, and accents used within the community. Certain holiday customs, traditional attire, and food preferences, for instance, might be significant components of ethnic identity. Depending on one's race and ethnicity, political problems might reflect either threat or contempt in different ways. Jin, R., Gonzalez, F., and Wang, I. (2023). A shared narrative or historical context may serve as an ethnic identity marker. There may be a need for required race and ethnicity fields if race and ethnicity documentation is incomplete, as this could result in a lack of awareness of equity concerns within a system. B. Weston (2023). Stories of migration, settlement, hardships, and victories that are passed down through the generations are frequently a part of this common past. The idea of citizenship in multicultural citizenship ought to be stronger in its political foundations and free from metaphysical presumptions. Gianni, M. (2023). It contributes to the development of a shared memory among ethnic group members and advances our knowledge of the brain mechanisms behind discriminatory and prejudiced ethnic attitudes as well as the perception and cognition of ethnicity. Keltikangas-Järvinen, L., Saarinen, A., and Ravaja, N. (2023).

While socioeconomic and political factors seem to have less of an impact, ethnicity might be associated with a specific geographic location or place of origin. Regional effects and voter participation rates for ethnic minorities also seem to be significant drivers. A. Clark (2023).

People who identify as belonging to the same ethnic group frequently have historical ties to a particular region or homeland, and they may view it as an essential component of who they are. For this reason, identity group stratification must be formally included as a pillar alongside political and economic understandings of any political economy framework. Green, A., Chelwa, G., and Hamilton, D. (2023).

Political ideology is shaped by semantic representations of political concepts processed in an

environment free of any polarizing agenda, and these representations bias how real-world political information is construed into a polarized perspective. These geographic ties can be a source of cultural pride and connection. Baar, J., Rodriguez, P., Bruin, D., and FeldmanHall, O. (2023). Ethnicity can also have a big influence from religion. Religious organizations, rituals, and beliefs may be shared among ethnic groups. Additionally, the results demonstrate that racial, gender, and political ideologies are determinants of agreement. Grayer, M., and Barnes, A. (2023). give new insights into the roles of peers and families as significant socializing agents during the negotiation of ethnic and national identities among immigrant youth. In certain cases, religion and ethnicity are closely entwined, and people may identify with an ethnic group based on their religious affiliation. Karataş, S., Rubini, M., Crocetti, E., and Schwartz, S. (2023). Belief in kinship or common ancestry can also characterize ethnically perceived deservingness; these characteristics are important to comprehend potential prejudice when ethnic minority in the welfare state are confronted by street-level bureaucrats. Terum, L., Øverbye, E., and Fekjaer, S. (2023).

This could be following one's ancestors to a shared ancestral line or viewing the ethnic group as "one big family." Family trees and genealogical data frequently show ancestry; ethnic identification is closely linked to the demand for closure and cultural acuity. In 2023, Olonisakin, T. Social identification, or the sensation that oneself and others identify as belonging to a specific ethnic group, is frequently associated with ethnicity. Put another way, when a particular political party is in power, people are more inclined to understand democracy in illiberal terms, such as stressing the need of deferring to authority. J. Bryan (2023).

This identity, which can be self-defined or assigned by society, influences how people interact with one another and create group attachments. It also sheds light on the dynamics of political representation in civilizations that have experienced war. J. Barceló and M. BarÍn (2023). The old traditions of governance can offer a political formula that democratically chooses leaders and organizes governance, overriding the influence of political parties and ethnicity. This formula is based on societal interests and concerns and is supported by non-governmental organizations, trade unions, and professional associations.

Language is a crucial aspect of ethnicity. Fanso, V. (2023). An ethnic group's common language or dialect can act as a unifying factor, enabling members to communicate and express their identity. Nevertheless, religious institutions belonging to ethnic minorities engage in political activities and support their demands for self-governance. L. Csáji (2023). Various languages can represent various ethnic groups. In general, the city's population settlement patterns appear to be more shaped by the class dimension than the ethnic dimension. Russo, A., Benassi, D., and Consolazio, D. (2023). Majority youth use cultural repertoires of ethnic purity and "normal" youthfulness to manage their shifting social positions, but this also begs the question of whether they can use cultural repertoires that do not imply nativist white identity politics. A sense of belonging and loyalty to the ethnic group is essential to ethnicity. Verschraegen, G., Clycq, N., and Driezen, A. (2023).

A sense of solidarity, a sense of belonging to a distinct community, and a dedication to maintaining their cultural legacy are common among members of an ethnic group. Moreover, ethnic lobbying groups can employ normative and strategic framing techniques in their lobbying campaigns to further their particular goals. DemiÑr, T. (2023). We find that a set of attachments often called civic nationalism—including patriotism, national identity, and respect for one's country's institutions—are connected with better citizenship on virtually all of our outcomes, whereas ethnic nationalism is frequently connected with worse citizenship. It's important to note that ethnicity is not a fixed or universally defined concept. Roberts, A., and L. Dražanová (2023).

It may be pliable and susceptible to alter throughout time. People may identify more with more than one ethnic group or believe that other aspects of their identity, such as nationality or personal beliefs, are more important. However, dividing benefits fairly among stakeholders, planning public spaces in the village rationally, and preserving the collective memory and cultural identity of the village as a tourist destination are all effective ways to realize the governance of ethnic-minority villages. Li, X., and Fan, H. (2023). The results of this dynamics study emphasize the significance of the family as a variable in political analysis. Ethnicity can have a substantial impact on a number of elements of life, including political representation, social interactions, access to resources, and group dynamics. Bellettini, G., Schafer, J., Ceroni, C., Cantoni, E., and Monfardini, C. (2023). In a multicultural and diverse culture, it can also affect how people see themselves and how others see them. A key concept in social science and anthropology is the idea of ethnicity as a social construct. Trends in the contemporary issue of ethnic ethnocultural identity demonstrate that many of the constructed concepts are

still the product of reflections that are sometimes difficult to apply to the right extent rather than being the outcome of empirical research. E. Fursova (2023).

It highlights that human social interactions and how societies define and classify the sociocultural foundations of ethnic relations in the context of migration and integration, as well as identifying potential areas of social exclusion between or cultural division within groups, are what produce ethnicity rather than being an innate or biologically determined trait. In 2023, Segersven, O., Arminen, I., and Simonen, M. Genetics and biology do not determine one's ethnicity. Apart from the positive approach of showcasing the discourses of good neighborliness and coexistence as represented by a unique local identity, they also suggest a de-ethnicizing approach to undermine the figures that contradict the former. Ö. Cetin (2023). In contrast to physical traits like blood type or skin color, ethnicity is not a set quality that a person has from birth.

They identify as "permanent sojourners"; they are eclectic but tend to maintain a cultural cognition ordered around their homeland culture; they have multiple contacts across ethnic groups and reserve cultural differences in social interactions. Rather, it is shaped and defined by cultural, social, and historical factors. Chen, S., and Liu, J. (2023). Ethnicity is fluid and subject to change. The setting provided by the curriculum, opportunities for discussion, peer interaction, and the perception of representation from one's own racial or ethnic group were all factors in fostering a sense of belonging. Usher, E., Han, J., Abney, J., Cole, A., DiGiacomo, D., & Patterson, J. (2023). It is not a category that is constant or stagnant. expands the growing body of empirical evidence on the relationship between parental ethnicity and adolescent development and is conducive to policy recommendations for interventions in the development of adolescents with ethnic minority parents. People's perceptions and definitions of their ethnic identity can change as societies evolve, interactions occur, and cultural elements shift. Sheng, D., Chen, Y., Bai, Y., & Lyu, L. (2023). Since ethnicity is subject to social meanings and classifications, these findings offer fresh perspectives on the socialization roles that families and peers play when young immigrants negotiate their national and ethnic identities. Karataş, S., Rubini, M., Crocetti, E., and Schwartz, S. (2023). It's not a term that is accepted by all societies, and what is regarded as an ethnic group in one may not be in another. In actuality, it's a very vague idea, and it's far from having an objective equivalent to race or ethnicity. Neale, B., Panofsky, A., Sohail, M., Zhang, S., Dauda, B., Molina, S., Allen, D., Fuentes, A., Ghosh, N., Mauro, M., Neale, B., & Lewis, A. (2023). Ethnic groupings are defined and classified by societies and institutions according to common cultural markers, which can differ from location to location.

The necessity for required race and ethnicity fields is suggested by the variable completion of race and ethnicity paperwork, which can result in a poor understanding of equity concerns within a system. B. Weston (2023). Language, religion, customs, traditions, and cultural practices all have a significant impact on ethnicity. This emphasizes the significance of taking internal factors like the desire to learn one's ancestral language into account when analyzing ethnic identity. In 2023, Tram, J., Huang, A., and Lopez, J. Understanding the neural processes involved in ethnicity perception and cognition, as well as ethnic prejudices and discrimination, is enhanced by these cultural traits, which are acquired and transmitted through socialization and interaction with one's cultural environment rather than being predetermined by one's genetics. Keltikangas-Järvinen, L., Saarinen, A., and Ravaja, N. (2023). An individual's social identity is greatly influenced by their ethnicity, and being a member of an ethnic minority is a marker for a number of disadvantages. Jones, S., AlRubaye, N., McCann, L., Amati, F., Green, J., Kitchin, L., Watt, H., & Greenfield, G. (2023). The class dimension appears to predominate over the ethnic dimension in determining population settlement patterns inside the city. It is frequently a component of an individual's self-concept and can impact how they relate to others both inside and outside of their ethnic group. Russo, A., Benassi, D., and Consolazio, D. (2023).

Ethnic identification is closely associated with the need for closure and cultural intelligence, since people frequently identify with their ethnic group as a means of expressing their shared cultural heritage and experiences. In 2023, Olonisakin, T. Perceived differences are frequently used to define ethnicity, although these distinctions can be very subjective and change depending on the multidimensional trust measure and the generational status and ethnicity interaction. Murphy, K., Sargeant, E., and Ali, M. (2023). It is maintained that the concept of citizenship in multicultural citizenship should be independent of metaphysical assumptions and stronger in its political underpinnings. What one society may consider a distinct ethnic group; another may view as a subgroup or regional variation of a larger ethnic category. Gianni, M. (2023). People's interactions and the environment in which they live might influence their ethnicity. Ethnic identity formation and maintenance can be influenced by historical events, political boundaries, migratory patterns, and urbanization. For

individualized, multidisciplinary treatment, considerations related to ethnicity and place of birth must be taken into account. The following people are listed in the same order: Sheikh, J., Khalil, H., Shaikh, S., Hebbar, M., Zia, N., Wicks, S., Jayaprakash, S., Narendran, A., Subramanian, A., Malhotra, K., Chapman, R., Gillett, C., Gleeson, H., Robinson, L., Chu, J., Lathia, T., Selvan, C., O'Reilly, M., Manolopoulos, K., Arlt, W., & Kempegowda, P. (2023). Identity politics, in which groups organize around a common ethnic identity to fight for rights, interests, or political objectives, frequently revolves around ethnicity. This suggests that, in a situation where parents and the community have low socioeconomic status, ethnic capital can play a significant role in influencing their children's educational opportunities. Modood, T., and K. Iqbal (2023).

The social construction of ethnicity and the need to affirm or defend ethnic identity in the contemporary environment are the driving forces behind these movements; the realization of multiculturalism is demonstrated by the rise in students' ethnic identification. Li (2023). Individuals frequently fall into more than one social category at the same time, such as belonging to a nationality and an ethnic group. This is because politically engaged ethnic minority give voters with deep-rooted social identities a nearly existential need for civil liberties and political rights. J. Rovny (2023). The way these various identities interact and intersect complicates the social construction of ethnicity since ethnic stereotypes are "fragments of contacts" between peoples, and it is timely and necessary to evaluate them in light of historical and cultural interaction. Tarasova, E., Makoeva, F., Morozova, L., Zotov, V., and Pozdnyakova, A. (2023). Understanding ethnicity as a social construct is essential to understanding that it is not a fixed or objective classification.The study draws attention to the covert ways in which being classified as a "religious/ethnic minority" could encourage secularization. S. Kheir (2023). It is subject to change over time and differs among communities. This viewpoint also emphasizes how social interactions, politics, and culture shape ethnic identities and how they impact other facets of life, such as politics, social relationships, and cultural practices. Characteristics are essential for comprehending potential discrimination when street-level bureaucrats in the welfare state interact with ethnic minorities. Terum, L., Øverbye, E., and Fekjaer, S. (2023). A person's sense of self and sense of belonging to a specific group are greatly influenced by their ethnic identity, which is a complicated and multidimensional concept. An ethnic community's collective identity is also significant because it affects how opportunities are recognized and pursued. Pinto, L., Xinyan, L., and Fernandes, E. (2023).

It has a strong connection to the idea of group membership, is a basic component of human social and cultural development, and offers fresh perspectives on the important socializing roles that families and peers play as young people negotiate their ethnic and national identities. Karataş, S., Rubini, M., Crocetti, E., and Schwartz, S. (2023). A person's subjective perception of their ethnic heritage, which may include common cultural, historical, linguistic, and perhaps even genetic characteristics, is referred to as their ethnic identity. Rich cultural identity expression has the power to elevate the status perceptions, feelings of intimacy, and sense of possibility for learning of minority groups among members of the majority group. Arnett, R. (2023).

In addition to providing an identity group stratification lens to economic thought, we present an Inclusive Economic Rights policy framework as a crucial foundational element of human rights, emphasizing political economic tendencies toward identity group stratifications as a means of achieving a "moral political economy." Ethnic identity is the way people perceive and understand their affiliation with a particular ethnic group. Green, A., Chelwa, G., and Hamilton, D. (2023). Ethnic identification is more than just admitting one's heritage; it entails a strong emotional and psychological bond with that group. Ethnic identity is closely linked to cultural acuity and the urge for closure. In 2023, Olonisakin, T. Numerous factors, such as family, cultural experiences, religion, language, and societal expectations that emphasize individual differences in experiences, values, and worldviews, can influence one's identity. These factors are linked to identity-focused infrastructure and increase the demand for racialized equity labor. In 2023, Hamilton, L., Nielsen, K., and Lerma, V. The various interconnected elements that make up ethnic identity are directly impacted by colonial conceptions of race, identity, and nationalism. C. Devadoss (2023).

Children investigated their racial identity in a variety of contexts, from their body to classroom materials and passports to their familial roots. This includes shared traditions, customs, rituals, and cultural activities that bind individuals to their ethnic group. Meacham, S., Wee, S., and Kim, J. (2023). In civilizations where race plays a large role in social dynamics, ethnic minority status is a marker for numerous disadvantages. For certain people, therefore, racial identity may constitute a considerable portion of their ethnic identity. Jones, S., AlRubaye, N., McCann, L., Amati, F., Green, J., Kitchin, L.,

Watt, H., & Greenfield, G. (2023). People frequently choose to identify with one or more ethnic groups, and this self-identification can change over time. Trends in the evolution of the contemporary issue of ethnic ethnocultural identity reveal that many of the constructed concepts are the result of reflections that are sometimes difficult to apply to the right extent rather than being the product of empirical research. E. Fursova (2023). An essential component of ethnic identity is group membership. Current legislation establishes favorable conditions for the protection of national minorities' rights, aids in the preservation of their identity, and fosters the development of their culture. This involves a sense of unity and belonging to the ethnic group. Lebedintseva, L., and Starovoitova, S. (2023).

Over an individual's lifetime, their ethnic identity changes and is not static. Numerous things, including familial upbringing, social contacts, educational experiences, and historical events, have an impact on it. Individuals may experience phases of discovery and assimilation when they grow and comprehend their ethnic identity. Students are informed by repeated organizational representations of diversity in monoracial terms that multiracial identities are both difficult to accommodate and potentially useful to institutions trying to project a varied image. Giebel, S. (2023). Being a part of a group is essential to ethnic identity. There may be a need for required race and ethnicity fields if race and ethnicity documentation is incomplete, as this could result in a lack of awareness of equity concerns within a system. B. Weston (2023). It has to do with feeling included and at home in a specific ethnic community.

A better understanding of the TCKs' identity paradigm resulted from group membership, which gives people a network of support, access to shared cultural practices, and a sense of connection to their heritage. Multicultural identity integration was also highlighted as being essential to TCKs' well-being because it affects self-consistency and self-efficacy. Kwiatkowska, A., and Mosanya, M. (2023). The necessity of taking into account internal variables, such the desire to acquire a heritage language, while studying ethnic identity is further reinforced by the fact that it frequently comes with a common past and a collective memory that binds the group together. In 2023, Tram, J., Huang, A., and Lopez, J. White majority youth manage their shifting social position by drawing upon cultural repertoires of ethnic purity and "normal" youthfulness, but this also raises the question of whether they can draw upon cultural repertoires that do not imply nativist white identity politics. Ethnic identity plays a significant role in shaping an individual's social interactions, worldview, and self-esteem. Verschraegen, G., Clycq, N., and Driezen, A. (2023). It is a step in the right direction for ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups to be better represented in population genetic assessments since it can foster a sense of pride, preserve cultural traditions, and provide a source of resilience in the face of persecution or misfortune. Vilà-Valls, L., Font-Porterias, N., Flores-Bello, A., Aizpurua-Iraola, J., Casinge, S., Bojs, K., & Comas, D. (2023). But when it becomes ethnocentrism and exclusivity, it can also be a source of conflict and division since mobilized ethnic minority give socially embedded electorates a nearly existential demand for civil freedoms and political rights. J. Rovny (2023).

While ethnic identity can contribute to cultural diversity, it can also present difficulties. People with dual identities strengthen their sense of national identity and support members of their own group more when their collective sense of national identity is threatened by biased broadcast news. H. Kim (2023). Because people or groups with various ethnic identities are occasionally placed against one another, it may result in bias, stereotyping, and discrimination. However, research also reveals that voluntary disclosure is positively and significantly correlated with ethnic diversity. In 2023, Kabara, A., Bazhair, A., Khatib, S., Abdullah, D., and Amosh, H.

The magnitude of these associations was consistent across grades 5 through 11, suggesting that maternal cultural socialization messages are necessary to maintain ethnic-racial pride throughout adolescence. As a result, families must continuously support their youth's development of ethnic-racial pride in order to counteract the effects of discrimination. Striking a balance between preserving one's ethnic identity and fostering a sense of unity and understanding with other ethnic groups is essential. Alvarado, C., Schilo, L., Stein, G., Christophe, N., & Robins, R. (2023). Ethnic identity has become more flexible due to globalization and increased mobility. Complex violence, especially when conducted by state forces and among members of an ethnic group that has historically been targeted collectively, also enhances ethnic identification and ethnic grievances. For F. Villamil (2023).

A greater understanding of the Mien ethnic group's culture and their assimilation into the dominant society are significantly impacted by the fact that many people today identify with various ethnic backgrounds or feel cut off from conventional ethnic affiliations. Alwi, A., and Tongdhamachart, N. (2023). Because ethnic identity is dynamic, inclusive and adaptable definitions of identity are essential. Using the game of imitation as a novel approach, it is possible to identify

potential areas of social exclusion or cultural divide within groups as well as the sociocultural underpinnings of ethnic relations in the context of migration and integration. In 2023, Segersven, O., Arminen, I., and Simonen, M. The human experience is intricately linked to ethnic identification and group membership. Stressors encountered during migration and cultural identity conflict are linked to psychological disorders in newly arrived people. Boelen, P., Laceulle, O., Chung, J., Mooren, T., Knipscheer, J., Brink, F., & Rahim, H. (2023). In an increasingly interconnected and diverse world, acknowledging and valuing the diversity of ethnic identities is crucial for fostering inclusivity, social cohesion, and mutual understanding. It also highlights the significance of the social and economic factors that influence an individual's choice of racial identity. Duncan, B., and F. Antman (2023). The impact of interpersonal and intergroup relative leader-member exchange on members' behaviors may differ depending on the subgroup identities, and it is crucial to acknowledge that ethnic identity, like any other form of identity, is a personal and subjective experience that should be honored and celebrated as part of the rich tapestry of human culture. Huang, S., Li, H., and Jiang, J. (2023).

Ethnicity in politics is a complex and enduring phenomenon that significantly influences political systems, voter behavior, and governance structures. Its historical roots, contemporary challenges, and implications for societies and governments are multifaceted.

The key to managing ethnicity in politics lies in recognizing its importance while addressing the challenges it poses to political stability, governance, and development. As the world evolves, adapting policies and strategies to accommodate the changing dynamics of ethnicity will be essential in building more inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous societies.

3. Methodology

A mixed methods approach was adopted, the researcher combined both quantitative and qualitative research, to back up quantitative facts with qualitative knowledge. Both structured and unstructured methods, such as one-on-one interviews and structured questionnaires created specifically for the purpose of gathering data from the study population, were employed in this research to collect data.

4. Findings

My ethnic background influenced my voting decisions					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	30	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Disagreed	73	18.3	18.3	25.8
	Agreed	162	40.5	40.5	66.3
	Strongly Agreed	135	33.8	33.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data Obtained, (2024)
Key: SD (Strongly Disagreed) D (Disagreed) (Agreed) SA (Strongly Agreed)

The table provided outlines respondents' responses regarding the influence of their ethnic background on their voting decisions. Among the 400 respondents surveyed, 30 individuals, constituting 7.5% of the total, strongly disagreed that their ethnic background played a role in shaping their voting decisions. Additionally, 73 respondents, representing 18.3% of the total, expressed disagreement with this notion.

Conversely, a significant proportion of respondents acknowledged the influence of their ethnic background on their voting decisions. Specifically, 162 respondents, comprising 40.5% of the total, agreed that their ethnic background influenced their voting decisions. Moreover, 135 respondents, accounting for 33.8% of the total, strongly agreed with this statement.

Upon analyzing the percentage distribution of responses, it is evident that approximately 75% of respondents provided positive responses, indicating that the majority agreed that their ethnic background indeed influenced their voting decisions.

5. Research Question in Corroboration with the Responses of the Interview

The interview responses underscore the need for a multifaceted approach to reduce the influence of ethnicity on voting behavior, addressing both societal attitudes and systemic issues.
Most respondents, including noted that the lack of comprehensive civic education programs was a major challenge in the last general elections. These programs should emphasize evaluating candidates based on their policies, qualifications, and track records rather than ethnic backgrounds. Respondents believe that

effective civic education can significantly change the electorate's mindset in future elections. This view aligns with quantitative findings, where over 70% of respondents acknowledged the significance of ethnic identity in shaping their overall sense of identity.

6. Discussion of findings

Ethnicity has been a longstanding and influential factor in shaping voting behavior in Nigeria. S. Latour (2023). As a country with over 250 ethnic groups, ethnic identity often plays a crucial role in political dynamics and electoral choices. Ethnicity has long been considered a dominant factor in Nigerian politics, often thought to heavily influence voting behavior. However, recent analyses suggest that its impact may not be as significant as traditionally assumed. The roots of ethnic-based politics in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era, Bryan (2023). When British colonial administrators used a divide-and-rule strategy, fostering divisions along ethnic lines. This legacy has persisted, influencing political alignments and party formations Fanso, V. (2023). In Nigeria's political history, many political parties have been formed along ethnic lines S Latour (2023), often aligning with the major ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the southwest, and Igbo in the southeast. This alignment has reinforced ethnic identities as a basis for political support.

7. Conclusion

The assessment of voting behavior during the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria offers valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of electoral participation in Nigeria. The 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria offers a crucial opportunity to analyze and understand the evolving voting behavior of the Nigerian electorate. This study has highlighted the influence of ethnicity on voter decisions, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of electoral participation and the broader implications for democratic governance in Nigeria.

8. Recommendations

The Nigerian government, through the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with the ministries of education at the states level working in conjunction with the Universal basic education commission (UBEC), should implement a targeted civic education initiative. As stakeholders in the Nigerian project the federal ministry of education should inculcate educational modules into the civic education curriculum reflecting the need for a more nationalistic idea and thoughts. This will help to reshape voter behavior towards policy-driven choices when citizens attain voting age. The National Orientation agency on its part should work closely with civil society organizations in the information space to project the same Nationalistic ideals Abinitio.

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Inequality Issues and Their Effects on Social Relations in Society: A Philosophical Perspective

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Abstract. Humanity is still plagued by inequality. In line with J. J. Rousseau, this article aims to investigate how social relationships in society have been impacted by existing inequality. The purpose of this paper is to show how inequality was the basis for human society's modernity, civilization, and political advancement. We argue that nature itself has produced inequality among humans since each person is born with their own unique set of potential. Despite this, we also argue that a number of measures, such as the creation of legislation and universal access to opportunities, should be taken by individuals to lessen these differences. As a result, the threat of inequality in our social relationships will change. Rousseau's theory of inequality will be discussed, with both its advantages and disadvantages noted. The subject of inequality is contextualized through the experience of Nigeria. This work's insightful analysis allows us to illustrate, within the framework of Rousseau's postulate, the tremendous threat that inequality has presented to our society.

Keywords: Inequality, Social Relations, Rousseau, Corruption

1. Introduction

A significant issue in human civilization for a long time has been inequality. This leads to chaos, corruption, greed, poverty, abuse, and a devaluation of individuals as human beings. People have started to consider their social surroundings and question what caused the disparity in society as a result. The aim of this article is to investigate the reasons for inequality and determine if natural law allows it. Rousseau tries to demonstrate that moral inequality in the modern world is abnormal and unconnected to the core nature of humanity. It is the result of a men's agreement.

According to Rousseau, human nature and how it has evolved over time to create modern man and modern society must be considered in order to assess natural law. He does this by beginning with a fictitious natural condition that predates civilization and the development of reason. Rousseau rejects the biblical account of human creation and evolution in favor of speculating or making an informed guess as to what man may be like in this stage. He examines the mental and physical characteristics of humans and finds that they are all animals with two primary motivations: self-preservation and sympathy.

Man's perfectibility, which is essential to the process Rousseau explains, is the one thing that truly distinguishes him from the animals. In his natural state, man has few desires, little sense of right and wrong, and little social engagement. Still, he's happy. Rousseau's theory of inequality, which will be discussed in this article, holds that environmental factors and imperfections contribute to social injustice. According to him, the wealthiest keep becoming richer while the poor keep getting poorer. Inequality, which arises from want, greed, and competition, prevents people from being treated like human beings. As Charles Darwin famously stated, "survival of the fittest" dictates that only the strong and capable compete and may even trample on others in order to succeed (Gregory, 2000:223), leaving the majority of people behind. Rousseau sought to address the problems of inequality by attempting to establish a political system that allowed free and equal citizens to coexist in a society where they were the only ones making decisions. These and other concerns related to inequality in Rousseau are the concern, objective, and goal of this research endeavor. In this article, an analytical method will be employed. This strategy breaks down phrases, thoughts, and concepts into understandable groups of linked concepts (Ukpokolo, 2015:37). In order to provide a better understanding, this research will examine the main concerns, including inequality. Moreover, it will examine different philosophical perspectives on inequality and define the boundaries of equality and difference. Once the basics of inequality have been established, it will discuss the

strategies Rousseau suggested avoiding disparity in society. After the work has been examined, the conclusion will come next.

2. Rousseau's Perspective on Inequality

In his discourse on the basis of inequality, Rousseau argues that human societies are fundamentally characterized by inequality. "How can humans live freely within society?" Rousseau then queries (UNHCR, 1991). His conception of human nature serves as the foundation for his beliefs. Unlike some of his predecessors and contemporaries (like Montesquieu and Thomas Hobbes), he believes that people are naturally inclined toward goodness and that caring for oneself does not negate concern for the welfare of others. Owing to Rousseau, ball men are socially equal. The notion of human rights is strongly supported by Rousseau's ideas, and his insistence on the basic freedom of humans in their unaltered state has influenced the current idea that persons have unalienable rights, independent of their position in society. He argues that inequality is the result of the artificial construction of a social structure based on private property and an organized labor system, which leads to the dominance and exploitation of some individuals by others. He is well-known and has particular viewpoints that others ought to follow and supports direct democracy, where each individual has an equal obligation to decide on the rules that govern them (UNHCR, 1991).

Since Rousseau insists that dependence is the cause of all conflict and injustice in general, it would seem at first that he wants the states to remain as independent of one another as possible. In wartime, he had doubts about the objectives of leaders. According to the UN Refugee Agency, "Since Rousseau's time until now, the world has changed significantly, and his ideals of internal unity and the independence of states feel outdated" in a globalized world characterized by mass migration, diaspora populations, and transnational social movements (UNHCR, 1991). As a result, it is unknown if Rousseau would have been in favor of organizations or global government. Rousseau had no idea what humanitarian participation was. However, he remains steadfast in his trust in humanity's innate capacity for compassion and in people's desire to ease the suffering of others. That is why Rousseau's life and work are so important today.

The first to criticize Rousseau's arguments for his theory of inequality were his fellow thinkers, especially Voltaire. Rousseau's second talk enraged Voltaire, who had already been annoyed by his first. Johnson Bill, quoting Voltaire and Barzun, claims that Rousseau "would like his readers to walk on all four like animals, behaving as savages, and believing them to be creatures of perfection" (Johnston, 1946). Barzun, in contrast to popular opinion, maintains that Rousseau was not a primitive; in his opinion, "the model man is the independent farmer, free of superiors and self-governing" (Johnson, 1996), and that this was enough to make the philosopher angry with their former friend (Rousseau), who rejected the luxuries and comforts of a civilized life, which they believe was his unforgivable crime.

3. Inequality from a Philosophical Perspective

Since individuals began to consider the social environments in which they lived, the issue of inequality has occupied a central place in human consciousness. The problem of hierarchy, equality, and inequality is present anywhere social interactions bring individuals together. The perspectives of different thinkers on inequality will be examined in this part, taking into account both its supporters and critics. Scholars like Simon Shaapera are interested in Jean Jacques Rousseau's social contract theory and its potential applications in contemporary society. He went into some depth in his article, "Evaluating the Social Contract Theoretical Ideas of Jean Jacque Rousseau: An Analytical Perspective on the State and Relevance to Contemporary Society," detailing his views. He suggests using Rousseau's ideas to enhance the way the state is now run and governed. There are several reasons why he thinks Rousseau's social contract theory is important. In addition to giving rise to the contemporary referendum and direct popular legislation, it serves as the basis for democracy and the impetus for revolt against an unjust government (Shaapera, 2014:39–40).

Although Rousseau's theory exposes a blueprint, it cannot be maintained that this model is complete enough for people or society to follow. The author pointed out that his political proposals were inadequate in the area of the unbridled will of the people, which may lead to absolutism. Despite his assertion that "all men are equal by nature," John Locke asserted that "I cannot be supposed to understand all sorts of equality" (Voegelin, 1999:150). In his works, he cites a variety of circumstances as legitimate sources of inequality, such as birth, advantages received, exceptional parts and virtues, age, and virtue. Despite the fact that men may not be equal in every aspect, the iron premise that permeates the entire book is that they are equal in the protection that they receive for that disparity (Slomp, 2000:26). Stated differently, the government

will use divine justice to preserve the riches of both the rich and the poor. Both Locke and Rousseau's majority rule theories are compatible. This idea of Locke's is that there is a wealth discrepancy. This suggests that some of the levels of inequality in Locke's society are positions that Rousseau disagrees with. Rousseau argued that natural or physical disparities, as well as moral and political injustice, should never be accepted.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of the social contract and its potential to enhance our society also piques Woolner's interest. He expressed his opinions in an essay titled "To What Extent Can Jean Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract and John Berger's be said to show democracy as the best political model for a society?" Woolner claims that the democratic theory is the best theoretical framework for society since it aligns with Rousseau's ideas about the sovereign and the collective will (Woolner, 2009:308). However, in his writings, Rousseau articulated basic principles that a society must adhere to rather than outlining a strict governmental model that he considers ideal. This results in varying interpretations of his work among individuals. One of the main arguments in favor of Rousseau's contention that democracy requires a low level of security is because democracy is based on the confidence of the populace, according to Woolner. Respectable gatherings with open invitations for everyone to join and share their opinions are possible in a tiny state. Unlike Rousseau, who considers that democracy is the greatest option, Woolner understands that the aristocracy is the best type of government. This clearly demonstrates the differences between Rousseau's and Woolner's works. To illustrate its applicability to contemporary issues of inequality, Fredrick Neuhouser attempts to rebuild Rousseau's philosophical viewpoint on the legitimacy of social inequality, especially economic inequality. He focused on the reasons of inequality in the conversation, but ideas from The Social Contract are necessary to comprehend his viewpoint completely. The author claims that Rousseau only uses economic equality as a tool to advance people' freedom and ensure the social circumstances necessary for everyone to have access to sufficient recognition, which is a necessary element of human well-being (Neuhouser, 2008:15). He contends that Rousseau's stance is firmly egalitarian as it sets boundaries for acceptable income disparities.
According to James Conyers's article "Radical Inequality, "Emphasis on Explanations," there are three types of theories about racial disparity: insufficiency theories, bias theories, and structural discrimination theories (Conyer, 2002:249). Conyers defines social equality as the state of having equal access to desirable resources, services, and social positions. The basis of Conyers's deficiency thesis is the belief that the decline in the economic, social, and political status of racial minorities is due to some kind of defect within the minority groups. Conyers attempted to group several theories under racial inequality, which he views as the single most important form of social inequality, despite the fact that the structural discrimination theories of racial disparity place the explanation of racial inequality in the structure of society rather than in people's minds, bodies, or sub-cultural groupings (Conyers, 2002:250). Rousseau, on the other hand, rejects inequality and advocates for social equality, which indicates that all people would have access to equal chances in society.

He considers inequality to be unjust. Extremely possessive and greedy, an unjust person desires more honor and property- benefits of fortune- than are reasonable. Additionally, he argues for gender inequity, arguing that children should be ruled by kings rather than women, even if both groups should be subject to political governance. Men are naturally better at exerting leadership than women, which explains this. Justice is equality, according to Aristotle, which is true—but only for those who are equal, not for everyone. Inequality is also seen as being justified, which is true- but only for the people who are unequal (Barnes, 1995:53–54). Finally, Nancy Birdsall, who also expressed interest in inequality, proposed that disparity is likely to spur growth by concentrating money among the rich, who are more likely to save and invest, as well as by giving individuals the motivation they need to put in extra effort (Birdsall, 2001:64). Income disparity, she argues, is significant if individuals and countries are worried about their relative income position. Both individuals at the bottom of the income spectrum, who may despise the wealthier, and those at the top, who may find it more difficult to appreciate their own prosperity if others are obviously less fortunate, may find absolute income disparity annoying. Reduced inequality may therefore be a goal in and of itself for certain people and cultures (Birdsall, 2001:64). Inequality is significant for three reasons, according to her:
Inequality often undermines the democratic system and might lead to an insufficient social compact. Additionally, inequality can trigger flawed economic policies that have detrimental effects on poverty alleviation, growth, and human development. The third reason is that inequality may promote self-justifying tolerance at the societal level, sustaining the current state of high inequality despite possible

negative effects on the economy and politics. It may also hinder certain forms of group decision-making and be harmful to civic, social, and political life (Birdsall, 2001:65). Instead of examining the detrimental effects of inequality like others have done, she was able to pinpoint the reasons why inequality should be significant in our society, which is what her research would concentrate on.

4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Theory of Inequality and Its Effect on Society: A Critical Examination

Individuals are created equal, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and equality only exists in its most basic form (Rousseau (2007). However, when he traced the origins of inequality, he claimed that men are physically and fundamentally different. Thus, we are presented with two ways to understand the true meaning of Rousseau. In what way can a man who was once equal suddenly lose his equality? We disagree with his first premise, which holds that all men are created equal. All men are unique from birth, regardless of how similar they may appear; hence, their DNA and IQ will vary. They are not equal since they have different ways of thinking. One of them may be smarter than the other in some way. In his writings, Rousseau explained inequality by demonstrating how individuals who were initially healthy, good, and roughly equal to one another became sickly evil, intelligent, and highly unequal when they entered society. This helps to clarify the extent to which Rousseau opposes modernity and civilization.

According to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, the worst problem in contemporary society is its tremendous disparity. (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 1999:219) Humans had the ability to be perfect in order to escape the state of nature, but in the process, they created an imbalance between demands and civilization's inability to meet them. Civil society members were badly unequal and unhappy as a result of the increasing desires brought about by civilization (Gauba, 2003:45). So, according to Rousseau, society was terrible and corrupt. The contemporary civilization and the state of nature are clearly at odds with one another. Humans have limitless needs, according to the economist. Because men are inherently curious, they are always eager to learn more. If man had remained in the condition of nature, he would not have gained any further knowledge. Even if a man had not set off a piece of land for himself, men would surely have realized that they are not equal. In a free world, people need to be allowed to move about regardless of their socioeconomic status or sexual orientation. This will lead to further human advancement. I do, however, still believe in Rousseau's theory of social equality, which holds that all members of society should have equal access to opportunities.

In contrast to Rousseau's explanation for the origins of inequality, property and society have only improved our standard of living. Man just needed to eat, sleep, and have sex in its natural state. But as cooperation and civilization developed, men developed new desires that governed their lives and made them reliant on others. Rousseau believed that modern inequality was rooted in this unnecessary need (Simon, 2014:39). This illustrates that while disparity has facilitated advancements in development, legislation, and living conditions, it cannot be totally eradicated from society. Since the natural state did not permit human evolution or bring out the best and worst in people, we cannot say that it is the best. Humans must evolve because only change is constant. Human development and potential would not be realized if all men had equal access to opportunities and living conditions. Several social classes will be established as a result of this development. Envy, greed, poverty, corruption, and destitution can evoke the best and worst in people.

Rousseau attempts to demonstrate that the current moral disparity resulting from a man-to-man agreement is a fabrication and has nothing to do with the intrinsic nature of man. In assessing natural law, Rousseau argues that it is crucial to take into account human nature and how it has evolved over time to create modern man and modern society. In order to do this, he begins with an idealistic view of nature that predates civilization and the development of reason. The biblical story of human origin and evolution is ignored as Rousseau attempts to conjecture or envision what man may be like at this point. In his analysis of man's physical and mental characteristics, he finds that he is an animal like all others, motivated by two primary motives: self-preservation and pity; the only thing that really makes him different from the animals is his perfectibility, which is the only real quality that makes him unique and is essential to the process Rousseau describes. In his natural state, man has few needs, little sense of right and wrong, and no social interaction, but he is content. However, because of his perfectibility, which allows him to adapt to and be shaped by his environment, the human race is not static. Naturally, natural disasters like earthquakes and floods force people to live everywhere on Earth, necessitating the acquisition of languages and other skills. As the human intellect develops, man begins

to have a variety of new demands as he grows more socially conscious.

The evolution of reason and society are related, but this relationship is a bad one. With males starting to live in communities, amour-propre (self-love and self-esteem) replaces pity and self-preservation. Men compare themselves to others as a result, believing that they need to control others to be happy. The establishment of property and the division of labor were the first steps toward moral inequality. The affluent are able to control and exploit the poor because of property. The rich deceive the poor into forming a political party in an attempt to put an end to the dangerous and unstable relationships between the rich and the poor, which first creates a warlike condition of armed conflict. The poor consider that this development will ensure their freedom and safety, but in fact, it only reinforces the existing relations of dominance by enacting laws that create inequality. When physical inequality is replaced by moral disparity, which is now more or less unrelated to the fundamental character of man, Rousseau highlights the various stages of society.

Rousseau's social contract opposes liberalism, which has the individual's individuality at its core and supports collectivism or communitarianism instead. He sees society as increasing in inequality from the deception of the wealthy to its final stage, tyranny, or the unjust domination of everyone by one man. This development is not inevitable, but it is very likely to occur. A social contract proposed by the wealthy from a political social order aims to resolve the terrible conflict in the transition from the state of nature to civil society. The main idea of such an argument is that society as a whole usurps a person's capacity to exercise independence or free choice in the context of the social compact through a variety of actions. However, this analysis ignores both Rousseau's historical context and the fundamental goal of his writing, which was to explain how a man, who is by nature an individualist, can simultaneously want the security and benefits of living in a civil society and be able to do so without having to give up his freedom. Rousseau presents a beautiful natural state and places all the blame on social structures, the state, education, and cultural organizations. The rich are misleading the poor with this deal, leading them to believe that they will be protected and their freedom will be preserved by approving the establishment of a political society. Rousseau's argument about inequality has left us with a paradox.

Society is to blame for all of our issues; civilization's progress is the cause. Even Rousseau's radical stance has flaws that affect all of our rights to the public will. How do we know that the collective will is always the right and authentic will? Rousseau rarely acknowledged that the unbridled power of the public will may lead to absolutism in the community. According to a saying, total power corrupts entirely. Critics assert that "it is always right to grant the phase when we ask for a solution because the general will is always the disinterested will of society for the common good." The interests of the entire community may not always be served by the communities. The latter only takes into account the common interest and is the sum of the individual wills; however, if the pluses and minuses of the same will are subtracted, they cancel each other out. This is often a stark contrast. Humans are naturally self-centered and can only consider their own needs before acting. It may be for certain individuals, particularly those who are forced to give up their rights, but it is most definitely not for everyone. Any demand for something in return is nullified once freedom is abandoned, along with all rights.

The idea that the general will is the common good of all men is actually what protects the individual because, according to Rousseau, the individual and the collective are inextricably linked and cannot be separated without returning to the state of nature. However, in the sense that every man has the ability to have a specific will that is incompatible or even at odds with the general will that he possesses as a citizen, Rousseau did acknowledge the existence of such individual (private) wills (Appadorai, 1974:27). All of the philosophers who examined at the underlying principles of society have felt the need to go all the way back to the state of nature, but none of them have done so. Rousseau asserts in The Confessions that his Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men is the work in which his views are most boldly and audaciously expressed (Rousseau, 2007:4). He picks up on the issue of the state of nature and responds to Hobbes and Locke, who both made the idea the focal point of their political teachings. Rousseau accepts Hobbes' anti-Aristotelian claim that humans are not political animals by nature, and he rejects Hobbes' description of the state of nature, arguing that Hobbes and others are projecting onto natural man the vices and psychological traits of man already present in society. In contrast to Hobbes' claim that the state is a battle of all against all, Rousseau believed that man was inherently good in this pure state of nature because he was self-sufficient and nature provided for his needs, with his wants never surpassing his needs (Bloom, 1987:23). Rousseau believed that man was an immoral, even foolish, animal in his natural state

rather than the magnificent savage that is popularly believed, and that he lived alone and rarely depended on women to raise his children.

Rousseau acknowledges that man does not always know what he wants or what is best for him in order to aid in the formation of the social contract. He thus needs the direction of experience and wisdom in the form of these organizations. If this is done, public illumination leads to the union of will and understanding in the social body: the whole is raised to its maximum power and its components are made to work perfectly together. There must be a legislator for this. Rousseau thus portrays a figure who is not a descendant of popular sovereignty and is therefore neither superior (a master) nor inferior to the community; he attempts to determine the collective will by influence and, consequently, by deduction that is solely motivated by the preservation of individual liberty and freedom. In addition to all of these, we might grant man moral liberty, which is the only thing that truly makes him the master of himself. Following a law that we establish for ourselves is liberty, while merely he is a slave. Rousseau does not deny the individual the right to free will; in fact, he considers that man will use the same free will that he uses to make individual decisions to choose the general will in the social contract. Rousseau contends that justice develops through the concept of the civic state, so that man forms a civil community or state and learns to respect the freedom of others living in that community, which is self-protective; this moral intelligence man develops is more advantageous to individual freedom and autonomy than his very same (absolute) freedom in the state of nature.

5. Conclusion

Given that he was concerned not only with happiness or unity but also with the vital nature and role of ethics within the conduct of politics, Jean-Jacques Rousseau made an extraordinary attempt to secure individual freedom in an attempt to create a rational social environment, and as a result, his philosophy reached its pinnacle. Many of Rousseau's concepts were put into reality during the latter, worsening stages of the revolution. According to Rousseau, the primary goal of the state is to free the individual from the ambiguities, contradictions, and hypocrisies of conventional society and even civil society after the contract. The state is regarded as the source of community, freedom, and morality. Hobbes' and Locke's ideas in The Leviathan and the two treatises on government are very different from Rousseau's. He made an attempt to grasp human nature, which is akin to comprehending man in his unadulterated natural state. He seeks to show how individuals have changed over history and how it has influenced society presently. In his first analysis, Rousseau looks at man in his natural state. In accordance with Rousseau, following a natural experience, he projected that the basis of inequality lay in a social compact between people. Before the development of private property, which brought about inequality and required the establishment of an organized or civil society, his state of nature initially guaranteed the freedom and a pleasant living for the residents. He understood that property was the source of injustice and inequality, which ultimately led to a person losing his freedom. Rousseau believed that the two concepts of pity and preservation are what drive man in his natural state.

Rousseau proposed that in order to restore man's freedom and liberty in civil society, property had to be governed by the general will, which was the universal law. He considered participation and people sovereignty to be fundamental elements of liberty, and he held that both the state and the individual were simultaneously sovereign and necessary for the establishment of a just social and political system. All things considered, Rousseau was promoting a simple and unrestricted way of life for everyone, one in which there would be no hardships, no war, and no need to worry about hunger or suffering. Since we live in a world full of advancements in the twenty-first century, we have progressed far beyond that, and living a life that is similar to how it was originally lived in the state of nature will not work in our modern society. Therefore, property and society have encouraged human inequality in addition to enabling a greater standard of life. However, in contemporary societies, inequality is the consequence of human development, which has corrupted man's character and made him subject to property and norms, both of which encourage a new, unwarranted kind of inequality called moral inequality. Rousseau's thesis remains relevant today. It remains the sole source of support for the state's survival and the creator of the goals it can pursue. In order to accomplish this, this article shows that inequality is a reality in our society and cannot be eradicated because it has led to the establishment of an orderly society through the enactment of laws. Eliminating cruelty, educating the oppressed, and acting based on human reason rather than our emotions are all necessary to prevent abuse and the negative consequences of inequality.

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The Supply of Staple Foodstuffs to the Armed Forces in Nigeria during the Inter-War Years

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Abstract. This research explored the critical role of staple foodstuff supply in sustaining the Nigerian Armed Forces during the inter-war years (1919-1939). It investigated the challenges and strategies employed by the colonial government to ensure adequate provision of essential food items to troops stationed across the vast Nigerian territory. The study relied essentially on primary archival sources for its analysis. Files of the Central Secretary's Office (CSO) on the colonial Nigeria war-economy and the armed forces deposited in the National Archives at Ibadan (NAI), Enugu and Kaduna provided the data for the historical analysis. The study of this phenomenon in West Africa will contribute towards a more global perspective of the history of the Great War. By examining factors such as agricultural production, transportation infrastructure, storage facilities, and procurement policies, the study threw light on the complex logistical operations involved in feeding the military during this period. Additionally, it analyzed the impact of food shortages, economic fluctuations, and global events on the supply chain and its consequences for the morale and effectiveness of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

Keywords: Armed Forces, Strategy, Government, Infrastructure, Fluctuations.

1. Introduction

In 1918, the First World War ended, and peace agreements with the defeated countries set in, starting with the Treaty of Versailles signed in 1919 between the Allies and Germany to those of Sevres (1920) and Lausanne (1923) signed with Turkey. The acceptance of the terms of the Treaty by Weimer Germany (albeit reluctantly) as well as the formation of the League of Nations once again created a peaceful atmosphere in the post war international environment. For instance, the Covenant of the League required it to encourage members to cooperate in the areas of commerce and trade.

This new state of affairs had palpable implications for the international economy. Bottlenecks to trade engendered by the war such as shipping shortages and other restrictions on overseas demand were being removed. In the case of Nigeria, various war time policies of the government were revisited, amended, modified and relaxed. For instance, Aliens Restriction Ordinance, 1914, which proscribed all aliens, including persons naturalized as British citizens in British Possessions, was abrogated in 1919. Trading with the Enemy Act, 1914 and Trading with the Enemy (Extension of Power) Act, 1915 which prohibited trade with firms of enemy nationality or association with them in non-enemy countries were also relaxed. Receivers Offices were established in order to consider claims made against enemy firms liquidated during the war. All these Post-War developments had implications for the movement of foodstuffs across the global market. This chapter deals with the food provisioning of the Armed Forces in Nigeria during the Inter-War years. By so doing, it looks at the Nigeria Regiment, its post-war structure and engagements. It also deals with world food situation after the First World War and throughout the Inter-War period. This will be interspersed with the Nigerian case study. Information on the food provisioning of the Armed Forces in the Inter-War years is very scarce and scrappy. This could be due to the relaxation that attended the Post-War period. Although there was periodic shortage of food in the Inter-War years, it did not attract the same magnitude of attention and organization that was the case during the war.

2. The Nigeria Regiment in the Inter-War Years

The full units of the Nigerian Regiment during the First World War were as follows:

No 1 Battery Artillery	Zaria.
No 2 Battery Artillery	Calabar
1st Battalion Nigeria Regiment	Kaduna North
2nd Battalion Nigeria Regiment	Lokoja
3rd Battalion Nigeria Regiment	Calabar

4th Battalion Nigeria Regiment Lagos
While training Centres at Zungeru and Kaduna were disbanded after the Great War as from January 1919, in 1921, the formation of two new units to the Regiment was effected, namely, Machine Gun Platoon, Nigeria Regiment, Kaduna North, and Signaling School, Nigeria Regiment, Kaduna North, Northern Nigeria.

Towards the end of the First World War in 1918, so many changes took place in the Nigeria Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel F. Jenkins C.M.G. was administering the Regiment as Acting Commandant. There was attention on winding up the overseas contingent in April 1918, the establishment of the Emergency Force in May 1918 and subsequently the formation and demolition of the 1st (Nigerian) West African Service Brigade.

On January 1, 1919, General Cunliffe reassumed personal direction of the Regiment as Commandant. By 1919, the establishment remained the same as in 1917, so that duties and employment reduced the number available for training to approximately 1900. The number of rank and file employed on patrols or escorts, exclusive of specie and Small arm ammunition escorts were 1381. The provisional establishment of the Regiment was increased to 124 officers, 78 British non-Commissioned Officers and 3328 rank and file in July when the Service Brigade received orders for overseas and recruiting was opened. The strength of the garrison on 31 December, 1918, was 96 officers, 73 British non-commissioned officers and 2807 rank and file.

After the war, there followed the demobilization of the West African Service Brigade and the re-organization of the Nigeria Regiment so as to bring it up to its pre-war establishment. On 19 November, 1918, the secretary for the colonies telegraphed that the Regiment would revert to pre-war establishment (as broad basis) from 1st January, 1919. The question arose where the various units of the two Battalions allotted to the Southern provinces were to be stationed. As far as the 4th Battalion, Lagos, was concerned, the distribution was as follows:
Lagos—Headquarters, one Service Company, Depot Company
Ibadan—three Service Companies
Abeokuta—one Service Company (temporary)
Agbor—one Service Company

Source: NAI N.699/1919 or CSO 19/7/502, "Annual Report on Nigeria Regiment, 1918", p.1

The redistribution of the 3rd Battalion with headquarters at Calabar proved less difficult and in the main the stations where troops had been retained during the War were adhered to. In those cases, quarters already exist. The garrison at Bamenda had been increased to two Companies and provision of quarters was necessary. It was proposed to station one company at Enugu on the eastern railway as soon as quarters could be erected.

The outstanding feature of the year was the uprising in the Egba District. Operations, so far as the Regiment was concerned, commenced with the dispatch of a company under Major Frazer Ist N. Regt., to Abeokuta on the Ist June. This company was subsequently reinforced by a further half company which brought the strength up to 155. About the middle of June, the rising assumed such a grave appearance that the General Officer Commanding the Service Brigade assumed control and Major Frazer's company was placed under his orders and remained in the district throughout the operations and after they were over.

Excluding those operations, 9 patrols and 16 escorts were carried out, involving the employment of 36 officers, 15 British non-commissioned officers and 1381 rank and file Infantry, and 1 officer and 30 rank and file No. 2 Battery. These do not include specie and small arms and ammunition escorts.
The more important were the Ekwi patrol in the Abakaliki District, and the Udi-Okigwe patrol. The latter had become a 'hardy annual'.

In 1921, a party of French native troops, consisting of fifty rank and file, in charge of one Officer, coming down from Zinder was to be accommodated at the West African Frontier Force barracks in Lagos from the evening of the 9th to the afternoon of the 11th of February.

In 1922, there was a subject of a training grant to enable companies and other units of the West African Frontier Force to carry out a short period of collective training annually under service conditions. The training was to take place during the months of January, February, or March, 1924-25, and £2,000 was budgeted for it. Battalion concentrations were as follows:

Three companies and headquarters, Ist Battalion, at Farnisau (5 miles from Kano). One company marched from Sokoto to Kano. The other two and Battalion headquarters marched from Kaduna to Kano.

Three companies and headquarters, 2nd Battalion, at Keffi. Headquarters and one company marching from

Lokoja and proceeding to Kano after the camp. One company marching from Ankpa. The third company was stationed at Keffi.
Three companies and headquarters, 3rd Battalion, at Enugu. Headquarters and two companies from Calabar by march route from Aba. One company marching from Okigwe.

Headquarters and three companies, 4th Battalion, at Ede.
One company, 1st Battalion remained at Maiduguri;
One company, 2nd Battalion, at Yola, carrying out collective training at Song.
One company, 3rd Battalion, at Abakiliki, has two platoons on escort duty. The other two standing by if required.
Half company, 4th Battalion, at Agbor.
The Artillery marched from Zaria to Karre.
Royal West African Frontier Force by 1931. King's African Rifles (KAR)

Source: NAI 26771/II, RWAFF Pay of Officers and OWAND NC. P.10

3. World Food Situation in the Inter-War Years

The First World War destabilised the food supply chain across the world. In accordance with the reconstruction initiatives, the big scale food aid operation took place in 1919 when the United States shipped more than six million tons of food commodities to Europe. It was aimed at alleviating the war affected European populace from hunger and malnutrition problems due to shortage of food production and supply. There was also high cost of living after the war, due to the scarcity of food and basic necessities of life, whose production was affected by the war.

However, as capacity grew faster than demand in the mid-1920s, both local and international agricultural prices dropped totally. Demand was slow to develop because agricultural product consumption was price and income inelastic, and the European population was growing at a far slower rate than before the war. Because of the excess production, which was either stored or financed with a short-term loan, and because of the poor elasticity of food demand, agricultural product prices fell well before the Great Depression.

By the end of the First World War, Korea had experienced Rice riots, and as a result of Japan's takeover of Korea, the country began to look to its colonies for food. Beginning in 1920, the Japanese government responded to the situation by launching a series of Rice Production Development Programs. These strategies attempted to increase rice output by introducing superior seed varieties, boosting fertilizer input, and ensuring a steady supply of water. As a result, Korean agricultural output increased by 1.6 percent every year from 1920 to 1930. Rice production, in particular, expanded at a quick rate of 2.1 percent each year, accounting for almost half of overall output in real terms.

The agricultural downturn that lasted two decades, from 1920 to the early 1940s, is notable for its low prices in most years. The impact of global price volatility on the prices obtained by producers in developing nations has been demonstrated. 'Despite the fact that there was a boom in the mid-1925, it was predominately an industrial boom,' according to Lionel Robins. The increase in profitability of certain food production lines was modest. The relative fall of agriculture was causing considerable political strain around the world, as well as desperate attempts to avoid the repercussions of technological advancement through pools and restriction programs. Export prices declined by 69 percent between 1926 and 1927, while producer prices plummeted by 75 percent.

4. The Effects of the First World War on Nigerian Foodstuffs

In the specific case of Nigeria, there was shortage of food and rise in prices of foodstuffs. The prioritisation of the military food provisioning led to the shortage of food for the civilian population. This shortage was experienced throughout the war period and the post-war period. By 1914, there had been a great shortage of food in the northern provinces of Nigeria, such that it was cheaper to import rice than to attempt to buy guinea corn locally. In 1918, the food situation was very acute. Rice was unobtainable except in small quantities. The food shortage of 1918 also affected corn. It was difficult to obtain and forward corn rapidly in the then existent conditions. Corn was practicably untouchable at the time. The local population was asked to economise in every way in the use of wheat flour, in order to assist in a small way in the conduct of the War.

The food deficit persisted a year after the war ended, in 1919. For instance, a telegram from Secretary of State dated 10 November, 1919 noted that there was the danger of shortage of local foodstuffs; and that merchants were pressing for permission to export further supply of rice to West Africa for their native employees. Because of the severe shortage of local foodstuffs in Nigeria as a result of the First World War, the Oyo Native Authority enacted restrictions

prohibiting the shipment of yams and other commodities from Oyo. The offenders were liable to £5 fine or three months imprisonment.

As has been seen, the price of garri in Lagos rose from 2/6d to 2/9 a measure, of which the pre-war price was 6d. The white-capped chiefs expressed a wish that government should control the price and fix it at 1/-. Due to this high cost of garri, its export and transportation into French Territories was prohibited. As a result, permissions were required to take foodstuffs out of Nigeria. Archival materials contain such requests for permission to take certain foodstuffs (beans, corn, egwusi, garri, sheep, rams) to Accra, Ghana and other parts of West Africa.

In the case of rice, there was the danger of shortage of local foodstuffs. Merchants were pressing for permission to export further supply of rice to West Africa for their native employee. Annual rice ration almost exhaust additional supplies from United Kingdom could be allowed only in case of necessity telegram minimum requirements in 1920 for colony. In April 1920, the Central Secretary Lagos circulated information to the Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce, noting that rice, other than Burma rice, would be shipped to Nigeria from the United Kingdom up to a maximum of 35,000 cwts. Similarly, on 8 May, 1920, the Imports and Exports Licensing Section of the Board of Trade, London, noted, contrary to the April message, that the Ministry of Food had now agreed to the export of a maximum quantity of 20,000 tons of Burma rice to the West African colonies, the British West Africa and Liberia in respect of the 1920 requirements.

Lord Milner had received representation to the effect that the supply of locally grown foodstuffs in the West African colonies might be deficient and that more rice might, therefore, be required for consumption. However, supply from the United Kingdom could not be increased except in case of necessity, but if the reports of the shortage of local foodstuffs were substantiated, it might be necessary to revise the allocation.

The Royal Commission on wheat supplies and the Secretary of State for India were now prepared to agree to the shipment of 10,000 tons. The requirements of the West African colonies have been revised owing to local scarcity in the Gambia and the Gold Coast, as follows:

Gambia 2,800 tons (in addition to rice being obtained from other sources
Sierra Leone 1,000 tons
Gold Coast 6,000 tons
Nigeria 1,750 tons

Source: NAI N121/1920 OR CSO 19/8/7, "Rice Supply for Nigeria'',

The Governor of Nigeria, Hugh Clifford, wanted to know how much of the 10,000 tons of Burma rice would be allotted to Nigeria, noting that no efficient means of controlling retail price in Nigeria. He suggested that the allocation to firms should be made in England with stipulation attached providing details of allocation.

In 1919, there was a modification of Order in Council made under the Customs Ordinance of 1916 with respect to exports from Nigeria to foreign destinations. The modification Order came as a consequence of relaxation of war-time restrictions on exports. This development occasioned an open general license issued which allowed for the free exportation of some certain foodstuffs by freight from Nigeria to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Switzerland. This permission was allowed on the following grounds. For Norway and Sweden, individual guarantees in respect of exports were no longer required but the goods must be consigned to appropriate imports association. Shippers were expected to forward to the Custom shipping bills or specifications and if the guarantee had previously sent to this department, the reference number of the relative papers should be furnished.

In the case of Denmark, the usual certificates form of the Danish Associations must be produced to the customs at the time of shipment. Where goods covered by one certificate were to be shipped in instalments, special arrangement had to be made with the custom at the time of shipment. For Holland, all goods might be consigned to the Netherlands Overseas Trust for account of the sub-consignee without the prior production of an N.O.T certificate, through exporters who actually had certificates were ordered to hand them over to the customs at the time of shipment. The procedure was applied to other outstanding licenses. Lastly, for Switzerland, all consignable goods must be consigned to the Societe Suisse de Survelliance Economique for account of the sub-consignee without prior production of any form of certificate, through exporters who actually held certificates were instructed to hand over to the customs at the time of shipment.

By 1926, there was the introduction of 'produce export regulation' for principal export products from Nigeria. This was to apply to all produce exported from the port of Lagos. All palm oil inspected and graded was

forthwith to be displayed in casks or other suitable receptacles which would be effectively closed to the satisfaction of an inspector or examiner. The amount of 1 d. per ton was to be collected by the customs department on the palm produce exported to cover the cost of the inspection of produce. As a result of pot-war adulteration of produce by producers, a rigorous inspection of produce was started. Equally, any person who was to ship or attempt to ship export produce which was not inspected or graded was liable to pay a fine of £50 or imprisonment for 3 months. The inspection of the produce must take place before the sale irrespective of the quantity offered or purchased. In the event not reaching the standard of purity at least 10% for oil, it would not be removed until when cleaned and brought up to the standard.

With the approval of the Honourable Treasurer, the Lieutenant Governor of Northern Provinces opened and administered 'Grain Accounts' in Jos and Bukuru in 1927. This development was started as a result of the good grain harvest in the Northern Provinces during this time period, and for the benefit of the public workers. This was also intended for the acquisition of grain stocks to be sold to Public Works Department employees. For these accounts, the maximum advance authorized increased from £250 in 1920 to £500 in 1926. The 'Jos Grain Account' increased the maximum advance amount from £500 to £800 in 1927. Furthermore, under the direction of the Director of Public Works, grain consumption altered by the end of 1927.

Furthermore, from the end of 1926-1927 until 1930, over 400 tons of paddy rice from the northern provinces were brought in at 42d per pounds Due to unavoidable delays in the production of the parboiled rice plant, the milling and selling of the 1920-1930 purchases had to be postponed until the dry weather of 1929-1930. Unfortunately, the extremely bad weather affected the selling of rice in Zaria and Kano. There were products which were difficult to sell, for instance, forty tons of rice was sold at Zaria and Kano at 2d, instead of per pound, a price which only covered overhead expenses, depreciation. But the sales demanded that the prices had to be reduced to 1½ d. per pound. By implication, this only covered out-of-pocket expenses.

The world-wide fall in the prices of goods began to make itself felt in 1929 and became intensified during the 1930s. The markets registered prices which had never been so low for decades even prior to this period. This adverse condition affected Nigeria trade severely. In 1929, overall imports amounted to £12007, 301 and in 1930; it decreased to £11,691,949 (as compared to £14,062,194 in 1928). It should be noted, however, that the validity of these data for comparison purposes was heavily influenced by the steady decline in prices of practically all goods (including groceries) that began in 1924. Therefore, the comparisons could not be true of the volume of imports.

Table 1.1: Foods and Drinks

Food	1927	1928	1929	Total
Beer	1,043,306	1,126,235	867,063	3,036,640
Wines	182,047	163,387	109,106	454,540
Bread & Biscuits	34,041	42,310	55,598	131,949
Flour	65,531	83,844	80,719	230,094
Fish	301,075	358,529	352,511	1,012,115
Rice	184,873	186,390	221,145	592,408
Salt	1,113,591	1,066,149	1,048,719	3,228,459

Sources: *Blue Book 1930, Annual Report on the Agricultural Department of Nigeria 1930*

The table above showcases the quantity of irregular importation of foodstuffs into Nigeria during the period of 1927 to 1929. Such irregular importations were quite negligible. Precisely in 1930, Nigeria imported various food items from different countries of the world. The quantities of food items Nigeria imported in the year 1930 from different countries included: biscuits, bread, cake, confectionery, cheese, rice, corn meal tea, sugar, egg, fish, milk, butter. The total quantity of food items imported into Nigeria at this period amounted to 6,855,692 tons, while the total value amounted to £557,106.

Nigeria, on the other hand, exported a variety of foods to other countries in the world in 1930. The food items exported by Nigeria were groundnuts, palm oil, palm kernels, benniseeds, potatoes, rice and millets.

In 1936, some parts of Nigeria, especially the southern provinces witnessed shortage of food due to poor rainfall (drought). These provinces were Ogoja, Owerri, Benin, Warri, and Onitsha. In Onitsha province, there was an estimation of low harvest that was beyond normal harvest during this period. Yam crop was adversely affected. This situation was the same in Abakaliki Division, Owerri, Ogoja and Calabar. The same was the situation in Oyo and

Abeokuta provinces. The residents of Ijebu province also experienced food shortage with exorbitant prices as a result of lack of rainfall. Abeokuta rainfall in 1935 and in 1936 was 27 and 21 inches, respectively. This brought about poor production of maize, rice and yams with 50 to 100 per cent price increase. In Ondo and Benin provinces, rain shortage generally caused crops backwardness. The poor rain negatively affected crop yields and caused increase in prices of food.

In the northern provinces, there was severe drought in 1935 and 1936 between the early rains and general rains. These affected crops yield in some areas. The drought, however, broke in good time and some food crops yielded very satisfactory as far as one could envisage. This was witnessed in Zaria, Sokoto, Ilorin, Bauchi, and Kano provinces. In 1936, 1937 and 1938 Nigeria imported several foodstuffs from various countries.

Food supply was not at all satisfactory; prices being very high and almost out of reach of the pocket of the average soldier. The position in the northern provinces was very acute at the moment and the Commandant asked for the immediate increase in the per diem as a temporary relief. It was known that prices also reigned very high comparatively in the southern provinces.

5. Conclusion

The focus of this write up was on the food provisioning of the Armed Forces in Nigeria during the Inter-War years. It looked at the Nigeria Regiment, its Post-War structure and engagements. The world food situation after the First World War and throughout the Inter-War period was closely monitored and interspersed with Nigeria as the case study. It was averred that although there was periodic shortage of food in the Inter-War years, yet, it did not attract the same magnitude of attention and organisation that was the case during the First World War.

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Painting as an Investment Opportunity in a Developing Economy

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Abstract. This paper discusses the potentials of painting as a form of investment opportunities in Nigeria. Painting as an aspect of creativity has emerged since 20th-21st century as a major means of generating income opportunities for art collectors, foreign enthusiast, culture lovers, investors, active business men and future projectors in the business world. However, this business potential in painting is not limited to only business mogul and entrepreneurs, but also to some working middle class-civil servants have acute mercantile acumen engage in buying paintings to secure their future after retirement. Prominent artists are often commissioned to produce quality and interesting paintings that appeals to the public taste in painting which also stands the test of time thus earning unprecedented returns at public auctions, exhibitions, and public bazaars in many parts of the world. Therefore, this paper also mentioned and discussed in details the values found in paintings as artwork - as it relates to investment in a mono economy like Nigeria. It is worthy to note, however, that there is great value in collecting paintings as alternative source of income thereby creating wealth for business men who understands the intrinsic pleasure from creativity of Nigerian cultural traditions in expanding personal and collective prosperity. On the other hand, the paper will also highlight the challenges facing the art industry - which includes low patronage, lack of funding to the artist and the limited sponsor/ art patrons, cost of materials and low public awareness, and the absence of a well-structured art market to engage art lovers and viewers. It further highlights the success stories of notable Nigerian artists and galleries, showcasing the opportunities for economic growth through the art sector. However, it is noteworthy in showcasing the practices of foreign countries where there is need for strategic investment, institutional support, and public-private collaboration to reveal the economic value of painting in Nigeria as well as other climes. Ultimately, the paper interrogates market potentials in arts through the instrument of painting as a tangible asset of cultural prosperity, propagation and appreciation. In the midst of high inflation and unfavorable economic climate, Nigeria can transform its art industry into a significant driver of wealth creation, employment, and cultural preservation. This paper aims to contribute to the discourse on art's economic potential, particularly painting in inspiring policies and initiatives that position painting as a sustainable investment avenue for populace of Lagos, Nigerians and Sub region of West Africa.

Keyword: Visual Art, Art Industry, Wealth creation, Economy challenges, Investment

1. Introduction

utilization of painting-artwork-as a form of investment opportunity in Nigeria especially amongst art collectors, art enthusiast and foreign investors became noticeable to the Nigerian audience in the late 20th century. This mercantilist trends whereby paintings is bought for the purpose of investment - are sold at auctions at biennales/art exhibitions private viewing inclusive became noticeable to prominent Artpreneur and Nigerians who lives in exclusive and elitist areas such GRA of Lagos State. Notable personalities conversant with great business acumen abandoned stock exchange and tied their money to creativity for long time investment through commissioning of artists or outright purchase of paintings –artworks- of serious hardworking painters/artists. Filani (2015) argues that the dynamics of change in the 20th century Africa, particularly, Lagos has considerably transformed the art landscape to a financially healthy and robust one – which thus enlarge the art market into global and lucrative enterprise. Interestingly, most art collectors and gallery owners presently, finds profitable in mass acquisition of different specialty in painting to create avenue for auctioning of paintings that also synonymously promote culture. It is instructive note that lovers and consumers of art desire tastefully painted indigenous artistic traditions found in the various creative cultures that constitute modern statecraft of the present-day Nigeria. The internal

purchase of art rather than encourage capital flight abroad promote the gross domestic product of our economy. It also promotes the entire value chain of painting materials such as brushes, oil colors of different hues, frames, linseed oil, turpentine and so on. In this sense, art works-paintings thus command medium and high prices not only for aesthetics purposes but also invest money for the future in the form art collection (Filani, 2015). Despite the staggered beginnings of contemporary (art) paintings as a form of investment in Nigeria, to be specific, Lagos State, a more systematic classification and articulation of formal and contextual approach to painting as means of generating income and retaining wealth among others cannot be overlooked. Paradoxically, the situation in Nigeria –Lagos and other economically viable states are in throes of inflationary challenge which leaves most of the citizens with little hope of survival and future economic stability. This is due to mono directional focus of the resources which is crude oil and also the mismanagement of the country's natural resources, from both past and current group of leaders/politicians. The citizens by extension also lack the creative initiative to utilize and harness the country's potentials to the optimum (Iyama and Chukwuka 2024). Over the years, it is evident that Nigeria solely relies on the oil sector as a primary source of wealth and economic sustenance, while neglecting other areas that could significantly contribute to investment and generation of wealth for the nation. The elites understand the value of art which increases value even better than real estate business as such they massively invest in paintings to secure their future and those of their offspring yet unborn children. The activity of these elites is also to forecast and to forestall any eventuality that may arise as a result of global crash in Nigeria oil industry (Naira).

2. Painting and its Types

Painting is a creative work done in two-dimensional art forms expressed in colour pigments in various sizes and types that connote different functions and meaning. It is a product of years of practice in colour usage that is aesthetically superior which has visual appeal or beauty. For the purpose of this paper, a good deal of discussion and analysis is necessary to draw us more into interrogating the concept of painting. The philosophy of visual art fits into the realm of intellection and at the same time cultural capital which aligns with painting. In this instance then, the paper recognizes that – there are some underlying facts that need to be recognized underpinning the appreciation of paintings addressed to the aim of putting the reader to understand what buyers and art collectors needs search for when buying quality artwork [painting]. One fact particularly is the acceptability of indigenous aesthetics inherent in painting to the consuming public and other audience who could be made to comprehend value of art as investment opportunity. Painting is classified into two types – abstract and realism. According to Kandinsky (1910) abstract art does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead uses shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect. Most African art which includes Nigeria favors expressionism which aligns with stories and vivid imagery. However, informed modern buyers of African painting still find it profitable to invest in abstractions. Find below example of abstract painting – fig 1

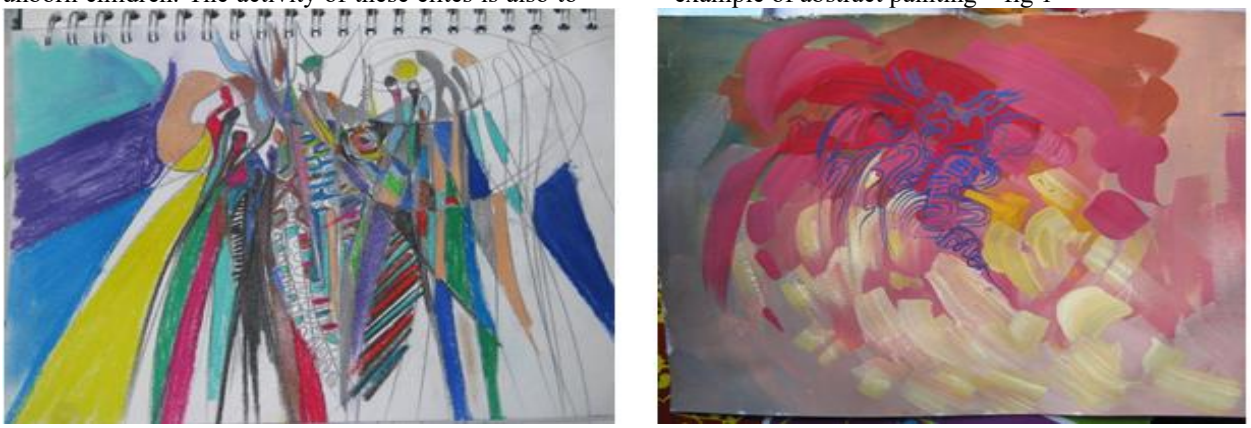

Fig 1: *Artist Abiodun Kafaru: Abstract Representation on Paper Year of production (2012)*

3. Medium Acrylic on Paper and colored pencil

This is an example of abstract painting rendered with colour pigment acrylic and pencil on paper which shows the cultural tradition of the Yoruba sub-ethnic group. According to Dantos, aesthetic theory of art leads us to the

understanding that not all forms of creativity need to be aesthetically beautiful, meaningful or interesting to look at before gaining acceptability for investment. However, the argument is anchored on the fact that public acceptability of painting is deeply rooted within the frame work of preference, trend or marketability of such creative enterprise. In the figure above, the artwork is comfortably located within interpretive theory – which defines its value within the context of acceptability that is widely acceptable to both the artist and the audience based on private and individualistic interpretation. Based on the explanation, art lovers, art collectors and art enthusiasts can make informed investment in abstraction by collecting, warehousing and sales of painting to secure a financially stable future.

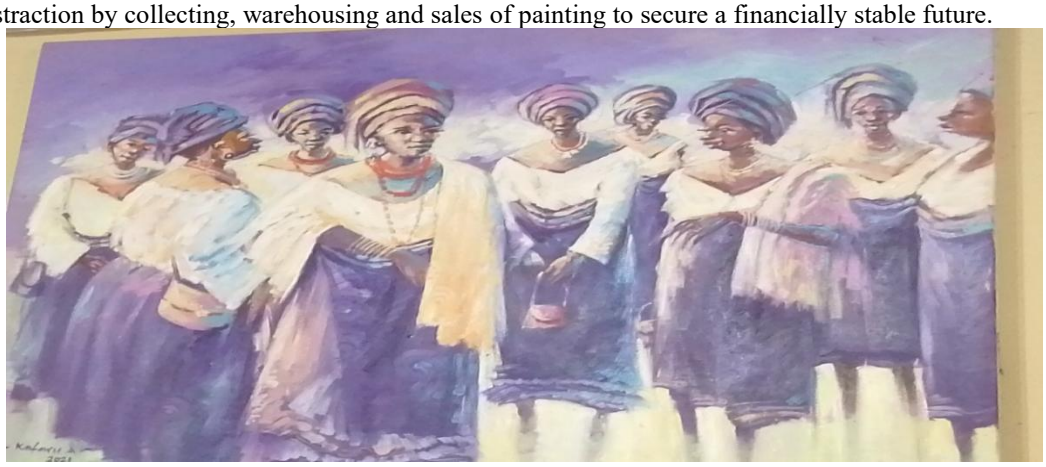

Fig 2: *Abiodun Kafaru Title Collective Gesture, Year of production 2021*

Secondly, from the perspective of realism, the taste of African buyers and collectors seem tied to emotion and consciousness of lived experiences. Realism in the art is the accurate, detailed, unembellished depiction of nature or contemporary life. The above painted form is a realistic rendition painting in oil colour pigment that captures Yoruba traditional setting in celebration of togetherness in a social situation. The central importance of this painting is purely to reveal forms/humans showing western skill rendition of figurative objects that is definitive of what most understand as real art object but captured within African aesthetics. Interestingly, the embrace of cross-cultural form, context and content is geared towards universal appeal to investors in art whose interest is to sell their creative merchandise for profit. On another hand, the placement of common interest is a skill that's paramount as a form of critical judgment on when investors in painting are subject of interest. Figure 2 painting is difference to the one above because – the first is interpretive artwork while the second image is based within the frame work of institutional theory which shears ideas at instance of historical coherence of interpretation (Vogel, 2005).

4. How DO We Define Painting As Investment?

This is a means of acquiring good quality piece of any artwork – painting for business, aesthetics and making gain - money. It can even be more profitable if the artist whose work is bought gains popularity, importance and serious market value for his art in the long run. Often times, most art collectors and art enthusiast buy/collect artworks paintings especially for re-sale. Some others collect painting for the purpose of appreciating beauty/aesthetics or to even build a gallery of their own. It is sufficed to stress here that art investment is not new to Nigeria and to some Nigerian audience since 21st century – it has been a real business amongst the elites who lives in big metropolis all over Nigeria. More often, it is part of the post-colonial inheritance or cultural legacy of the British colonizers that modern exquisite living requires us to value art for safe keeping and obviously for sale. However, for Africans collecting arts in the former times is strongly tied to rituals worship or a particular societal function. Today, there is a paradigmatic shift in the value of painting wherein the elites keep art in the long term to sell for money and in the process promoting the artist. Art collection is a major point of concern in this paper because it considers art for not just its sake but a means of preserving generational wealth for their collectors in the face of corruption and dwindling fortune of the Nigerian currency. This trend actually came to bear amongst art collectors, art enthusiasts and art promoters in Nigeria at the early turn of the nineteen century. Paintings and sculptures are acquired/bought at the open show, direct from the artists, or at the art market or during exhibitions for sole purpose of appreciation, aesthetics or safe keeping and in turn sell it in form of investment. Unfortunately, most of the work or artists of Nigerian descent oftentimes do not command the right price in the western world. Proceeds made from the sales of their efforts when

collectors who bought them early in their active stage of practice bought the art pieces for ridiculous prices due to their lack of recognition. Unlike most of the works of elite artists purchased profitably at auctions for instance the works of Picasso, Van Gogh and Leonardo Da Vinci to mention just a few. It is interesting to say here again that investing art is equally like investing into one life because compels you to look into the future. The value of art does not only look at the financial gains only but rather it preservation of the presents for the future and it means you believe the artists.

5. Why invest in painting?

Investing in painting/artwork is not new in Nigeria since the beginning of the 20th century. Lots of art auctions in the form of investment have been taking place amongst prominent art collectors such people like, Yemisi Shylon, Rasheed Gbadamosi, Sam Olagbaju and Chief Torch Taire to mention a just few of them - where paintings of Professor Ben Enwowu, Bruce Onabrakpeye, Ablade Glover and Yusuf Grillo paintings were sold at high prices to a willing audience who can afford to pay. This trend has been a pointer to the advantages one can derive in investing money into art collections, particularly painting. This has equally created an ample opportunity for active art collectors, art lovers and businessmen to look inward to start investing into collection of artworks, specifically painting for business or keeping money for the future. The art market is often managed by private individual without any interference of the government which invariably means that it is devoid of any security issue or economic fluctuations of the exchange naira rate. As painting gets older in the custody of collectors the more the value increases and in turn also adds value to the artist who produces the artwork. The act of investing in artwork is different from re-selling for survival, it is a means retaining wealth, and this is equally the same practice all over the world for business men who wanted to keep on preserving their hard-earn money without losing value. Globally, there is no concrete evidence or statistics that measures the levels at which one can invest or buy artworks that can earn such collectors the quality of how much he/she can generate when buying any artist products for the future re-sale perhaps.

6. Economic implication of Investing in Art - Painting

Acquiring artworks – paintings in the form of investment has lots of gains and advantages. Art sales are thriving in Nigeria most especially in cosmopolitan state of Lagos. Art collectors and art-lovers and art enthusiasts who understand the market as means of making money, gathering wealth's and short-term survival among others. There are some financial benefits in investing in painting [arts] investment:

Appreciation – Art [painting] pieces can appreciate in value over time, providing a potential long-time investment return. This appreciation goes beyond monetary gains, rather it gives an apparent denigration in the contemporary art world of the idea of seeing 'visual intelligence,' whether we can still consider this aspect of arts painting a viable business//explanation – that reveals knowledge through the lens of painting [two-dimensional surface]. If we are to argue that an artwork – painting or practical visual research outcome can stand alone as a form of business, an embodiment of knowledge, and as product of appreciation then we need more exhaustive study into how this may possible. The fact also further tells that at present we are not in a position to explain how the practical outcomes we produce actually embody knowledge has an enormous implication for an activity such as investment [research], in which the contribution to knowledge is of paramount concern.

Diversification – Adding art to a diversified investment portfolio can reduce risk and increase potential returns. Reflecting on painting [artwork] as means of making money and survival has been a key factor in creating wealth, job and avenue for human convenience.

Liquidity – Art Pieces can be sold or traded providing liquidity when needed. However, to see the art object as embodying and conveying knowledge is an outdated conception of art within the contemporary art world. When considering about investing in painting it is difficult to avoid the text becoming instrumental to see the usefulness in acquiring painting to reserve money in form of liquid cash.

7. Emotional and Personal Benefits

Aesthetic Pleasure – Owing a piece of art – painting can bring joy and personal satisfaction. In the same vein, not every work of art – painting are beautiful or even interesting to look at, but it will be a work of art if it is implicitly interpreted in the idea that reveals the principle of practice that is founded within an art-historical tradition. At least its characteristics feel also bear the hallmarks of modernity that gives pleasure and entertainment in one sense to the owner or viewer.

Cultural Significance – Investing in art – painting can support emerging artists, as well as promote cultural institutions, and preservation of cultural heritage. Cultural strands was a key factor in any society who

uses organized natural materials in creating embellishments which in turn serves as means of generating revenue.

Personal Legacy – Art collections can be passed down to future generations, creating a lasting legacy. In an efforts by artists and philosophers to expound, their horizon on issues pertaining to individual legacy from generation to generations and intentions on types of arts or themes of paintings, in the English speaking world some notable critics as Roger Fry – a Briton; who at the beginning of the twentieth century decided to lunch a platform starting fully with his first Solo art exploits [Exhibition] from collections of paintings/drawing he had acquired of the years titled - "Bloomsbury" indeed, this gesture by implication inspired lots of art collectors, artists and critics, while all this event enhanced the formation of other well-known activities which of course this action spur the series of crafts design technology in creating revenue among other (Kafaru, 2015) cited in Staff (2005).

8. Tax Benefits

Tax Deductions: Donating art to charitable organizations can provide tax deductions. Most of the paintings donated to NGO's are good means extending the personal worth and value placed on creative piece by adding to the monetary gains of the art collectors and value placed on the real artists in general.

Capital Gains Tax: In some countries, art investments may be excepted from capital gains tax or have reduce tax rates. Which also need to be exemplified in Nigeria setting? A change in the administration of Nigeria government after 2015 for example would certainly have an impact among the speed of comodification and may also affect the change we all opted for re-working it into more politically accepted forms for a new lift of life for young artists/ adults

Other Benefits

Social Status: Ownership of a valuable art collection can convey social status and prestige to the collectors and the creator of the artistic pieces.

Networking Opportunities: Investing in art can provide opportunities to connect with other art collectors, dealers and industry professionals.

Educational Opportunities: Investing in art can provide a unique opportunity to learn about art history, techniques, and market trends.

It is essential to note that investing in art also comes with heavy risk, such as market fluctuations, forgery, and deterioration issues which arises from artists not using the right kinds of materials, without considering the life-span of the artwork before sale. It is crucial to conduct thorough research; one should locate reputable dealers, and consider seeking professional advice before investing in art – painting. It is worthy of note, that the real essence of acquiring artworks is profitable outcome before considering exoteric framework of the painting. However, art collectors should consider taste, preference and quality to ensure it is worth its while to invest in such painting to secure the future. Towards a lasting solution to the prevailing downturn in Nigeria's economy, it is important for Nigerian citizens and government to adopt an alternative economic innovation by looking towards the arts and its hidden economic potentials to create clean wealth. Ikwuegbu (2010) states that one of many the many forms of human development which could yield advancement in Nigeria's economy is venturing into the creative/entertainment industry. Today, Nigeria's creative and entertainment industry is rapidly growing, and it is massively recognized in the global stage, with an immense significant potential to generate income. As the most populous black nation in the world, the vast array of ethic creativity displayed by the Nigeria entertainment industry are flourishing and could boast of numerous unique achievement and global recognition which encompasses various areas of disciplines such as music, film, art, fashion, digital content creation etc. Unfortunately, one of the most overlooked and underexplored branches of the creative industry is the 'visual art' particularly painting which holds skills that can create pathway to self-discovery, self-sustenance and financial independence.

The uniqueness of the Nigerian painting is influenced by its exciting admixture of culture and tradition it practiced over the centuries. This has accounted for its rapid spread into the global market. The painting exhibition by iconic artists such as Ben Enwonwu, Bruce Onobrakpeya, and Yusuf Grillo has fetched record-breaking prices at international auctions and spread its fame to the utmost end of the earth. The thirst and demand for the Nigerian paintings has broadened its financial potential and consolidated its popularity as a marketable artwork worthy of investment. Therefore, the practice of visual arts particularly (painting) is one that could command better pricing, economic prosperity and preserve our ancient ways. (Chukwuma and Imide, 2024).

9. Painting as an Asset, Investment and means of Income Generation

Painting has proven to be unique form of profitable business and investment - assets within the frame work of building wealth. Over the years, painting has been a creative item serving as a means of income for

artists, art enthusiasts, and art collectors in Nigeria and across the world. Artists, art collectors and some non-artist alike believe that painting/artwork is a form of investment can stand the test of time when it comes to making profitable return in the future. An evergreen example is, the painting by Leonardo da Vinci (1503) titled "*Mona Lisa*" which is arguably one of the most famous paintings in history, considered priceless, experts have estimated it's valued at over $900 million. Another one is Pablo Picasso's "*Les Femmes d'Alger"* was sold for $179.4 million in 2015.In recent years, the financial value of these artworks has been increasing, making them one of the most valuable assets in the art world. Clearly, these investments are yielding good returns for art collectors, and it is hereby yielding appreciation of artworks as time goes. However, it is important that Nigerian policy makers consider and explore the economic potentials of painting and the role of art in terms of wealth creation for the nation. Global events have shown evidence that the market value of painting was and is transforming the lives of many notable and contemporary artists in Nigeria and across the world. Today in Nigeria, the art scene has witnessed a remarkable growth, with several contemporary artists attaining international fame and financial progress. Joshua (2015) posed a question that how can it be imagined that a single painting in Nigeria could worth $300million? For example, Ben Enwowu's painting titled "*Tutu*" which is dubbed as the "*African Monalisa*", the painting was found to have reemerged on the global stage after several years it went underground and was sold for €1.2 million in 2018.Joshua (2015) further posited that the worth of a single painting, could cater for the constructions of roads such as *Ore* or Lekki-Epe express road, which was a hazard to road users particularly motorists. As the art market grows, so does the potential for painting serve as a lucrative means of attaining international fame and financial progress. Joshua (2015) posed a question that how can it be imagined that a single painting in Nigeria could worth $300million? For example, Ben Enwowu's painting titled "*Tutu*" which is dubbed as the "*African Monalisa*", the painting was found to have reemerged on the global stage after several years it went underground and was sold for €1.2 million in 2018.Joshua (2015) further posited that the worth of a single painting, could cater for the constructions of roads such as *Ore* or Lekki-Epe express road, which was a hazard to road users particularly motorists. As the art market grows, so does the potential for painting serve as a lucrative means.

Tutu by Ben Enwonwu, 1974 sourced: www. Obeliks

Art History this is a painting done by Ben Enwowu in a blue schema. This painting is relevant to the main essence of why artwork serve as wealth creation. It is worthy to say that this is one of the foremost among the kinds of paintings placed at auctions in the early stage of promoting art for investment. Ben Enwowu as artist educator, their narratives about their lives as teachers were partitioned from their discourses about their lives as an artist and about their art works. The work – painting reflects basically Yoruba tradition, rather than reflecting on the skill, values and meanings which underpin artists art practices – which invariably falls within the purview of romantic rhetoric about the nature of creativity, or, on the other means of generating wealth among other.

10. Contextual Discourse on the use of Painting as Investment

There are, however, a number of difficulties thrown up by developing this parallel between knowledge in general artwork/painting and investment as interrelated in business world. In part, these derive from problems that are arguably already germane to the philosophical arguments in them. Ryle's (2019) discussions of "knowing how," for example, emphasizes that there is no necessary connection

between the success of an artist's outcome and while linking the reasoning process behind making investing or selling artwork – painting for survival. As Ryle argued that:

"there need be no visible or audible differences between an action done with skill and one done from sheer habit, blind impulse or in a fit of absence of mind", from the foregoing, there is clear indication that for one to interpret or verify an action invoke into a painting as intelligent/aesthetical or beautiful, one needs some way of checking that it was underscored by creativity injected in one sense. This, in turn, implies a need for practical reasoning to be formalized – or symbolically articulated in a way or format than that of the artwork/painting.

11. Conclusion

The musing of this paper has been able to reveal and articulate some points that painting can be used as a source of investment opportunity for people who desire to eradicate poverty. Globally and locally, the function of art as paraphernalia of self-sustenance has assumed the position of immense proportion capable of elevating people with poor background and also propelling the elites who are already socially established. Investment in art, particularly painting is a lucrative business venture that can help us reveal a new boundary between business management and the arts marketing particularly in painting. It is instructive to note that beyond material advantages art sales can expound and expand the level of intuition of both the artist and the art collectors respectively. The collection of quality artworks or paintings combines the aesthetics of modernity and post-modernity which serves as a scaffolding for employability for the artist, artpreneurship for businessmen and prosperity for the nation. This paper further serves as a template or platform for articulating importance of art collections and harnessing its massive potential as means of creating wealth and stocking up generational wealth for future investment.

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Forensic Accounting Techniques and Fraud Prevention in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria

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Abstract. Studies have shown that, the manufacturing sector in Nigeria has experienced difficulties over the years due to fraudulent activities under different conditions and that led to a decline and fluctuations in the financial performance. This study therefore investigates forensic accounting techniques and fraud prevention in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria. The study adopted research survey design. The population of study comprised 20 food and beverage manufacturing firms listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) as at December 31st, 2023. Fourteen (14) food and beverage manufacturing firms were selected using purposive sampling technique. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse data collected. The results revealed that forensic accounting techniques had a significant effect and positive on fraud prevention (whistle blowing practices (Adj. $R^2 = 0.506$, F 64.555 = 0.000, $P < 0.05$) and continuous monitoring (Adj. $R^2 = 0.605$, F 65.556 = 0.000, $P < 0.05$) of listed food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study concludes that the application of forensic accounting techniques has effect on financial integrity and fraud prevention; and strategies such as computer aided auditing techniques and trend analysis techniques improve organization's capacity to stop fraudulent activities. The study recommends that management should integrate forensic accounting techniques in the company to prevent fraud and enhance overall financial integrity.

Keywords: Assets usage, continuous monitoring, data mining, forensic accounting, fraud prevention, manufacturing, financial performance, trend analysis, fraudulent activities, and financial integrity

1. Introduction

In recent years, cases of financial and economic fraud have been on the rise. But the phenomenon of fraud is not static and every day new methods and methods of defrauding individuals, corporate bodies arise, and even social habits and the environment as a whole (Horsfall, 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to adopt important security and fraud detection measures capable of detecting and preventing any fraud type, no matter how complex. One of these measures is a forensic audit. This is developed above all in the field of public and private finances and is one of the types of audits that are mainly responsible for the investigation of fraud. According to Haruna and Emmanuel (2022), fraud in modern organizations is causing traditional auditing and investigation to be inefficient and ineffective. The incidence of fraud increases globally, particularly in developing countries, and has become an endemic issue. It is so worrisome that the ability of auditors (both internal and external) and traditional auditing methods meant to checkmate these maladies called fraud and corruption has attracted public concern over the unqualified audit report and manipulation of financial statements not being satisfied certified by external auditors, which in turn are found to lead to serious economic crisis resulting to bankruptcy and most times liquidation, thereby thrive investors lost.

Forensic accounting deals with the integration of accounting, auditing, and investigative skills. It is a field that handles potential fraudulent and unlawful financial activities. Explaining engagements that arise from actual or future conflicts or litigation is a specialty area of accounting (Haruna et al., 2021). Forensic accounting combines accounting, auditing, and investigative skills. This field focuses on preventing and detecting fraudulent financial

transactions. This area of accounting focuses on explaining engagements caused by actual or anticipated conflicts or litigation. Forensic accounting is unusual because it mixes accounting and investigation. According to Oyedokun, Enyi and Dada (2019), forensic accounting is a specialized field that combines accounting, auditing, and investigative skills.

Golden, Skalak, and Clayton (2006) cited by Okoye (2019) stated that all acts of fraud can be reduced to four fundamental components: a materially false representation; knowledge of the falsehood of the representation, or reckless disregard for the truth; the recipient of the representation reasonably and justifiably relied on it to make decisions; and financial damages as a result of all of those as mentioned earlier. Therefore, fraud is an intentional attempt to mislead people who rely on the information, and victims would typically suffer loss, particularly financial loss.

In Nigerian food and beverage industries, forensic accounting methods are essential for both preventing and identifying fraudulent activity. These businesses are vulnerable to asset theft, embezzlement, and financial statement fraud, among other forms of financial fraud. Associations should combat deceitful activities in the current economy, while business experts may accept extortion. Measuring bookkeeping can verify any swelled resources and benefits (Horsfall, 2023). In entity practices, budget report extortion is a significant economic expense, affecting corporate administration, financial reports, and review capacities. The increasing use of innovation has exacerbated the problem, allowing crimes to be committed globally. This issue, known as fiscal summary misrepresentation, is caused by deliberate errors in accounting books. According to Nwanaka (2022), the public is concerned about auditors' ability to check fraud and corruption, leading to unqualified audit reports and financial manipulation. This results in serious financial crises, bankruptcy, and liquidation, causing investors to lose wealth. Forensic accounting is used to identify such misrepresentations. Further stressed that there is a general desire that forensic accounting might be the option to stem the tide of monetary misstatements witnessed in the major sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Okoye and Ndah (2019) investigated the relationship between forensic accounting practices and the prevention of fraud in manufacturing companies in Nigeria. Forensic accounting was proxy by fraud litigation practices, while the dependent variable remained prevention of fraud. Data were collected from primary sources through the use of a structured questionnaire to the accounting staff of the manufacturing companies. The findings of the research showed that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between fraud investigation practices and the prevention of fraud in manufacturing companies. The findings also showed that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between fraud litigation practices and the prevention of fraud in manufacturing companies. Lastly, to stop fraud before it starts, it is advised that manufacturing organizations hire certified forensic accountants who are experienced in applying the right fraud deterrence techniques.

According to Handoko, Hendra, and Anandita (2019), managers engage in misuse or misappropriation to mislead owners or shareholders about the true state of the company by looking at its financial statements, which makes it difficult for them to understand what is going on inside the company through data or figures. The stability of a company's financial situation can be determined by looking at the condition of its assets. Accounting theory explained that assets are future-possible economic gains that are acquired or under the control of a certain business as a consequence of past transactions or events (Handoko et al., 2019).

Addressing the above issues therefore is important to safeguarding the integrity and sustainability of quoted food and beverages companies, promoting investor confidence and bolstering the economic contribution of this critical sector of Nigerian economy.

The main objective of this study therefore was to investigate the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and fraud prevention in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- To evaluate the impact of forensic accounting techniques on whistle blowing practice in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria,
- To examine the impact of forensic accounting techniques on continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria,

In achieving above objectives, the following research questions were answered:

- What is the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and whistle blowing practice in the prevention of fraud in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria?

- What is the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria?

To provide answers to the research questions, these hypotheses were presented for testing:

Ho_1: There is no significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on whistle blowing practice in the prevention of fraud in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria.
Ho_2: There is no significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Fraud management is the process of identifying and preventing any potential fraudulent actions toward a business or its customers. This consists of reviewing transaction activities, users, accounts, and entities to avoid fraudulent behavior. Fraud management implies a strong commitment to prevention and to implementing fraud management solutions that avoid the risk brought by unplanned situations. Fraud risk management limits the fraud risk that may arise from the company's normal activities and operations and reduces its harmful consequences (Ejembi, Ijeoma, Amahalu & Obi, 2022).

According to Halbouni, (2015), fraud detection is a set of processes and techniques for detecting, monitoring, and preventing fraud. Fraud, scams, and bad agents are all detrimental to the online business world (Imo-Ter Nyam, 2021). Companies must take steps to detect and prevent fraud before it has an impact on their operations. Fraud detection entails detecting fraud as soon as possible after it has occurred. When fraud prevention fails, fraud detection steps in. In practice, fraud detection must be utilized consistently, because most people are unaware that fraud prevention has failed. Credit card fraud can be prevented by closely guarding the PIN of the cards.

Lewis, (2011) opined that whistleblowing is the lawful disclosure of information a discloser reasonably believes evidences wrongdoing to an authorized recipient. It is the mechanism to get the right information to the right people to counter wrongdoing and promote proper, effective, and efficient operation of IC functions. Whistleblowing can be internal, the reporting of concerns as an act of trust and loyalty in drawing the employer's attention to wrongdoing withing an organization. Equally, external whistleblowing may result from a worker's belief that he or she also has a loyalty to the wider society. Given that the interests of employees do not necessarily coincide with those of their employer and that whistleblowers sometimes suffer reprisals, the author concludes that it is inappropriate to impose a contractual duty to report concerns. Instead, employers should endeavour to promote a culture of openness and create confidence in the mechanisms they provide for whistleblowing. Mamahit & Urumsah (2018) posited that whistle-blowing activities assist the forensic audit process and investigation audit in detecting fraud, other researchers state that whistle-blowing is an effective factor to assist the implementation of forensic audits.

2.2 Forensic Accounting

Forensic accounting is a specialized form of accounting that focuses on investigating and documenting financial matters for use in legal proceedings or forensic investigations. This field covers a wide range of activities, including detecting and preventing fraud, assessing damages in civil cases, providing financial expertise in court, and assisting in criminal investigations related to financial matters (Florea & Florea, 2023). Forensic accounting is an approach to accounting that utilizes accounting, auditing, and investigative skills to examine the finances of an individual or business (Okenwa & Abiola, 2023).

Forensic accounting is the area of accounting practice wherein the accounts are examined by independent accounts with the pre-notion objective of determining financial misconduct and reporting fraud. It is usually conducted by independent accounting and auditing firms appointed by regulators, the management, or sometimes the government agencies to check alleged wrongdoing in the financial accounting system of the organization under the scrutiny of misconduct (Nwafor & Amahalu, 2021). Forensic accounting is a special practice of accounting where a financial professional, known as a forensic accountant, audits and investigates information and prepares it to be used in court.
Among the forensic accounting techniques employed by forensic accountants to carry out investigation, detailed examination, analysis and diagnosis of financial transactions to give expert advice include:

2.3 Computer-Assisted Auditing Technique

Computer-assisted Assisted Auditing Techniques (CAATs) are auditing methods involving computer software tools for analyzing business data and reporting to enhance the audit scope and transparency. Computer-assisted audit techniques (CAAT) are a method of gathering and reviewing electronic records. CAAT is used to simplify or automate the data analysis and audit process, and it involves using computer software to analyze large volumes of electronic data for anomalies (Pedrosa, Costa, & Aparicio, 2020).

2.4 Information Availability

According to Guan and Gu (2021), Ciuhureannu (2018), information availability refers to the accessibility of information when needed. It is the extent to which information is presented and assessable for use at the right time and place it is required. Information availability can be affected by various factors, including the quality of the information, the format in which it is presented, the location of the information, and the speed at which it can be retrieved (Obaidat, 2016). Organizations must ensure that accounting information is organized, secured and easily accessible to ensure its availability in the digital age (Bansal, Aggarwal, & Aggarwal, 2022; Zhelenkov, Safonova, Goldovsky, Abramov, & Tsyganova, 2023). Ensuring information availability is critical for many fields, including healthcare, finance, and emergency response.

2.5 Trend Analysis

Trend analysis is one of the important forensic accounting techniques that can be deployed to identify fraud. Emphasis is on focusing on the exceptional transactions. It may be difficult to identify certain transaction. Finding patterns, correlations, and variances in the way financial data changes over time is known as trend analysis. Accountants can use it to assess a company's performance, profitability, and risk. It can also be used to predict future trends and assist in decision-making. Adelakun, Onwubuariri, Adeniran & Ntiakoh (2024) submitted that in order to develop sophisticated methods for obtaining significant insights from textual data in financial records, that are accurate and efficient, trends of activities could be deployed by combining natural language processing and machine learning techniques.

2.6 Theoretical Review

2.6.1 Agency Theory

Jensen and Meckling created the concept of agency in 1976, (Jensen, & Meckling, 1998; Dierksmeier, 2020). They proposed a hypothesis explaining how conflicts of interest between a company's owners (shareholders), management, and significant debt financiers form the foundation of the organization's governance. Every one of these teams has distinct goals and interests. According to Dierksmeier (2020), the agency theory provides richer and more meaningful research in the audit discipline. Agency theory assumes that principals and agents act rationally and use contracting to increase their wealth.

Agency theory is an influential framework for understanding organizational behavior and decision-making (Waldman, Putnam, Miron-Spektor, & Siegel, 2019). The agency theory states the relationship or dependency between an agent and a principal. It argued that agents should act in the interest of their employers (shareholders). It assumes that there is a separation of ownership and control in organizations, which creates potential conflicts of interest between the principals and agents (Braun, Di Carlo, Diessner & Düsterhöft, (2024). Agents are rational and self-interested, and there may be information asymmetry between the principals and agents. Additionally, there are costs associated with managing the agency relationship, such as monitoring, bonding, and residual loss costs. These costs can be minimized by designing contracts that align the interests of the principals and selecting agents who act in the best interests of the principals.

Agency theory can be used to understand the causes and potential solutions to the audit expectation gap and fraud detection challenges (Budiarto, 2022; Ghandour, 2019). It suggests that auditors should be incentivized to act in the best interests of the shareholders, even in the face of pressure from management. Additionally, auditors can play a role in detecting and reporting potential fraud through rigorous testing and assessment of internal controls and financial transactions (Ghandour, 2023). Overall, agency theory can provide a useful framework for understanding the causes and potential solutions to the audit expectation gap and fraud detection challenges.

2.6.2 Stakeholder's Theory

Stakeholder Theory was introduced in 1984 by Freeman and is widely accepted as a key concept in management and corporate social responsibility, used

by businesses and organizations to guide decision-making and operations. The stakeholder theory is based on the assumption that businesses have a social responsibility to consider the interests of all stakeholders, not just shareholders (Dmytriyev, Freeman & Hörisch, 2021).
The stakeholder theory has gained support from a range of individuals and organizations, including business leaders, non-profit organizations, academic researchers, government agencies, and investors. These stakeholders believe that it can lead to more ethical and sustainable business practices and create long-term value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders; Stakeholder theory assumes that businesses function in an ecosystem of many stakeholders, each of whom contributes to the business's long-term viability and ability to provide value for any stakeholder group (Langrafe, Barakat, Stocker & Boaventura, 2020).

The stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of considering the interests of all stakeholders, not just shareholders (Goyal, 2022), (Freudenreich, Lüdeke-Freund, & Schaltegger, 2020). This can lead auditors to expand their scope of audits to include non-financial performance metrics and social and environmental impacts. Additionally, they should consider the impact of corporate actions on all stakeholders, such as employees, customers, and suppliers, and consider reputational and legal risks. This can help to aid fraud detection.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework on which this study is hinged on is the Stake Holders Theory propounded by Freeman's Stakeholders and stewardship theory. Stakeholders' theory was introduced in 1984 and is widely accepted as a key concept in management and corporate social responsibility, used by businesses and organizations to guide decision-making and operations. It addressed both the demand and the supply for forensic accounting services. This demand is the direct consequence of the participation of all parties (interested parties of a company) in the company. These parties demand accountability from the management, in return for their investments in the company. Accountability is realized through the issuance of periodic financial reports. However, since this information provided by the management may be biased, and outside parties have no direct means of monitoring including the government, a forensic investigation using techniques is required to ensure the reliability of this information.

Stewardship theory on the other hand helps managers to render accounts of performance to it owners, forensic accounting techniques will help managers to safeguard an entity and its assets, hence, manager is motivated to work in the interests of owners

These theories collectively support the idea that forensic auditing is not just a regulatory requirement but a strategic tool that can enhance the financial performance of quoted food and beverage firms in Nigeria. It aligns interests, reduces information asymmetry, promotes responsible stewardship, contributes to risk management, strengthens corporate governance, and supports market efficiency.

2.8 Empirical Review

2.8.1 Forensic Accounting Techniques and Whistleblowing

Priyadi, Hanifah & Muchlish (2022), in the effect of whistleblowing system toward fraud detection with forensic audit and investigative audit as mediating variable. The study focused to determine the effect of whistleblowing system toward fraud detection with forensic audit and investigative audit as a mediating variable. The result of this study indicated that first, whistleblowing system partially have a positive significant effect on the forensic audit. Secondly, whistleblowing system partially has a positive significant effect on the investigative audit. Third, whistleblowing system partially has a positive significant effect on the fraud detection. Forth, investigative audit partially has a positive significant effect on the fraud detection. Fifth, forensic audit partially has a positive significant effect on the fraud detection. The study concluded that the implementation of a whistleblowing system will encourage and increase employee participation in reporting violations that affect the fraud detection in the organization. The study recommended whistleblowing system by all entities.

Ulimsyah (2021) examined wwhistleblowing's effectiveness in preventing fraud through forensic audit and investigative audit. The research aimed to analyze and examine the impact on the Forensic Audit of the efficiency of the Whistleblowing system. The results showed that the effectiveness of the whistleblowing system had a substantial positive direct effect on the forensic audit. There is a significant positive immediate impact on investigative auditing at the point of the whistleblowing system. The study recommended whistleblowing scheme as an important and direct effect through investigative auditing on fraud prevention.

Ramadhan (2022) examined the effect of forensic audits, investigative audits, and whistleblowing on fraud detection during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study discovered that the characteristics of a forensic audit consisting of independence, objectivity, and professional skepticism can influence fraud detection. In addition, investigative audits consisting of experience and capabilities as well as whistleblowing variables have also been shown to influence fraud detection during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study concluded that fraud detection during the COVID-19 pandemic improved by various strategies including whistleblowing especially from the internal side. The study recommended from a theoretical point of view, quantitative research to detect fraud related to forensic audits and whistleblowing during the COVID-19 pandemic is still very potent.

2.8.2 Forensic Accounting Techniques and Continuous Monitoring

Edeh, Nduka & Isong (2024) examined the effect of forensic accounting on fraud prevention of microfinance banks in Abuja Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the effect of forensic investigation on internal control of microfinance banks in Abuja and examined the effect of litigation support on internal control of microfinance banks in Abuja. The study made use of correlation and multiple regression analysis to analyze the data sourced for the study. The correlations analysis showed that fraud investigation and litigation support have positive effect on internal control which implies that all the forensic accounting were found to have a positive effect with internal control. The study recommended that managers, assistant managers and supervisors of these organizations should enhance the used of forensic investigation techniques in ensuring internal control in their organizations.

Adelakun, *et al.* (2024) submitted that in order to develop sophisticated methods for obtaining significant insights from textual data in financial records, that are accurate and efficient, trends of activities could be deployed by combining natural language processing and machine learning techniques. According to Hashem, Ali and Haider, (2024), certified accountants in Syria have benefited from the use of forensic accounting techniques, notably trend analysis, in order to uncover financial wrongdoing.

Oyedokun (2024), in forensic accounting and financial reporting quality of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. He opined the existence of economic volatility and stakeholder dissatisfaction such as inadequate regulatory monitoring, public sector inefficiency, corporate governance issue, financial reporting irregularities, weakness in traditional auditing widespread corruption and financial mismanagement have led requests for improved financial system protection, necessitating the implementation of forensic accounting. The research concluded that forensic accounting assist to improve financial reporting quality. It was recommended that the adoption and implementation of forensic accounting practices should be a priority and continuous monitoring of financial activities is a must.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design to examine the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and fraud prevention in quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria. Primary data was collected using a well-structured questionnaire; the population of the study consists of all the twenty quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria which is made of 250 respondents (i.e. Economists, Auditors, Accountants and IT specialists). These were selected because they have the required knowledge on fraud detection and audit expectation gaps. To arrive at representative sample for the study, Yamane Formula was used to determine the sample size. The Yamane Formula for determining the sample size is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N\,(e)^2}$$

Where:
n= sample size
N = Population size
e =Margin of error (it could be 0.10, 0.05 or 0.01)

$n = 250/ (1+250\ (0.05)^2$
$n = 250 / (1+250\ (0.0025)$
$n = 250/ (1+0.625)$
$n = 250/1.625$
$n = 154.$

Thus, the sample size is 154.

Model Specification

To achieve the objective of this study, a regression analysis model was formulated to investigate the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and fraud prevention in quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria. The model is stated below:

$Y=f(X)$
Where Y= Fraud Prevention (FP) i.e., Dependent Variable
X = Forensic Accounting Techniques (FAT) Independent Variable
$Y= y_1, y_2$

Where:
y_1 = Whistle Blowing Practices (WBP)
y_2 = Continuous Monitoring (CM)
X= x_1, x_2
Where:
x_1 = Computer Assisted Auditing Technique (CAAT)
x_2 = Trend Analysis Technique (TAT)

Functional Relationship
FP = f(FAT)
Functional Relationship
WBP = f(DMT, RAT, CAAT, TAT)……..Equation (i)
CM = f(DMT, RAT, CAAT, TAT)…… Equation (ii)

The model is specified as:
$WBP_t = \beta_o + B_1$ DMT + B_2 RAT + B_3 CAAT +B_4 TAT + U…….. Model 1
$CM_t = \beta_o + B_1$ DMT + B_2 RAT + B_3 CAAT +B_4 TAT + U...…….. Model 2
Where:
β = Parameters to be estimated
B_1 - B_2 = Coefficient of explanatory
β_o = Constant
U = Error term of the proxies

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This study investigated forensic accounting techniques and fraud prevention in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected.

4.2 Response Rate

One hundred and fifty-four (154) questionnaires were administered to the respondents. After sorting, coding and checking for accuracy in the data, 150 questionnaires were found to fully filled. This gave a response rate of 97%. The information from these questionnaires was used for analysis.

4.3 Result

Hypothesis One

Objective One: To evaluate the impact of forensic accounting techniques on whistle blowing practice in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria.

Research Question One: What is the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and whistle blowing practice in the prevention of fraud in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on whistle blowing practice in the prevention of fraud in Quoted Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria.

Table 1: Regression Estimate 1

	MODEL 1						
Variables	*Coefficient*	*t-stat*	*Sig.*	*F*(6,140)	R^2	Adj.R^2	F(Sig)
(Constant)	12.176	6.786	.000	64.555	.717[a]	.506	0.000[b]
Computer Assisted Auditing Technique	.190	3.627	.000				
Communication of Information	.180	2.627	0.000				

Dependent Variable: ASE

Model 1
WB = $\alpha + \alpha_1 CAAT_i + \alpha_2 TAT_i + \varepsilon i$
WB = $0.190CAAT_i + 0.180TAT$

The correlation between forensic accounting techniques and whistle blowing practice in the prevention of fraud was demonstrated by the Model 1 regression analysis results, which are displayed in Table 1. The findings revealed that computer assisted auditing technique (α = 0.190, *t* = 3.67, *p* = 0.000) and trend analysis technique (α = 0.180, *t* = 2.67, *p* = 0.000) have a positive and significant effect on whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud. This implies that a 1% increase in computer assisted auditing technique will lead to an increase in whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud by 19% and 1% increase in trend analysis technique will lead to an increase in whistle blowing

practices in the prevention of fraud by 18%. The results further revealed that forensic accounting practices explained 50.6% of the variation in whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud (*Adj.* R^2 = 0.506). However, the model did not explain 49.4% of the variation, implying that there are other factors associated whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud that were not captured in the model.

Decision

Based on the probability, F-stat (64.555) = 0.000 from Table 1 is significant at $p < 0.05$. This indicates that whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud is influenced by forensic accounting techniques. All things considered; the study's model does a noticeably good job of explaining the variance in the dependent variable. As a result, the independent variables' simultaneous effect is noteworthy. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis, "There is a significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria," was accepted and the null hypothesis for Model 1, "There is no significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud s in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria" is rejected.

Hypothesis Two

Objective Two: To examine the impact of Forensic Accounting Techniques on continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria.

Table 2: Regression Estimate 2

	MAIN MODEL 2						
Variables	*Coefficient*	*t-stat*	*Sig.*	*F*(6,140)	R^2	Adj. R^2	F(Sig)
(Constant)	12.174	6.785	.000	65.556	.716[a]	.605	0.000[b]
Computer Assisted Auditing Technique	.256	4.555	.000				
Trend Analysis Technique	.156	3.455	0.000				

Dependent Variable: ADI

Model 4

$CM = \alpha + \alpha_1 CAAT_i + \alpha_2 TAT_i + \varepsilon i$

$CM = 12.174 + 0.256 CAAT_i + 0.156 TAT$

The correlation between forensic accounting techniques and continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud was demonstrated by the Model 2 regression analysis results, which are displayed in Table 2. The findings revealed that computer assisted auditing technique ($\alpha = 0.256$, $t = 4.555$, $p = 0.000$) and trend analysis technique ($\alpha = 0.156$, $t = 3.455$, $p = 0.000$) have a positive and significant effect on continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud. This implies that a 1% increase in computer assisted auditing technique will lead to an increase in continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud by 26% and 1% increase in trend analysis technique will lead to an increase in continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud by 16%. The results further revealed that forensic accounting practices explained 60.5% of the variation in continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud (*Adj.* R^2 = 0.605). However, the model did not explain 39.5% of the variation, implying that there are other factors associated with continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud that were not captured in the model.

Decision

Based on the probability, F-stat (65.556) = 0.000 from Table 2 is significant at $p < 0.05$. This indicates that continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud is influenced by forensic accounting techniques. All things considered; the study's model does a noticeably good job of explaining the variance in the dependent variable. As a result, the independent variables' simultaneous effect is noteworthy. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis, "There is a significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria," was accepted and the null hypothesis for Model 2, “There is no significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on continuous monitoring in the prevention of fraud in quoted food and beverage companies in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria” is rejected.

5. Discussion of findings

Hypothesis one tested the effect of forensic accounting techniques on whistle blowing practices in the prevention of fraud. The result is in line with the study of Özcan, (2019) who found that forensic accounting techniques will cause whistle blowing practices toprevent fraud.

Hypothesis two tested the effect of forensic accounting techniques on continuous monitoring practices in the prevention of fraud. The result is supported by Oyedokun and Emmanuel (2015) who found that forensic accounting techniques will cause continuous monitoring practices to prevent fraud.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examines forensic accounting techniques and fraud prevention in quoted food and beverages companies in Nigeria. The study concludes that in food and beverages manufacturing companies in Nigeria, Computer-Aided Auditing Techniques, or CAATs, have become vital instruments that have greatly improved the capacity of Nigerian food and beverage firms that are listed to identify and stop fraud. There are many benefits to incorporating CAATs into forensic accounting procedures; it creates a strong foundation for spotting fraudulent activity and guaranteeing financial integrity.

Incorporation of Communication Information Techniques (CITs) as forensic accounting instruments in Nigerian food and beverage industries that are publicly traded has shown to have a noteworthy beneficial effect on financial integrity and fraud prevention. These strategies include digital communication tools, data analytics, and automated auditing processes, among other technologies and approaches that improve an organization's capacity to identify, stop, and lessen fraudulent activity.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the study recommends that management of food and beverages companies should create a robust framework for identifying and mitigating fraud risks, ensuring financial integrity, regulatory compliance and sustained organizational trust.

By following these recommendations, companies can create a robust framework for identifying and mitigating fraud risks, ensuring financial integrity, regulatory compliance, and sustained organizational trust. Continuous improvement, collaboration, and a strong ethical foundation are essential to maximizing the benefits of ratio analysis in forensic accounting.

Management should put in place the automation of its data analysis, providing real-time monitoring, and enhancing the accuracy and efficiency of forensic accounting practices, CAATs significantly improve the ability to detect and prevent fraudulent activities.

Management should integrate Communication Information Techniques (CITs) to combat the occurrences of fraud and enhance overall financial integrity. These techniques encompass various technologies and methods such as data analytics, digital communication tools, and automated auditing processes that collectively enhance the ability of companies to detect, prevent, and mitigate fraudulent activities.

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An Assessment of The Relevance of Immanuel Kant's Conception of Moral Ethics as a Solution to Corrupt Practices in Nigerian Politics

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Abstract. The prevalence of corruption in Nigerian society is not only a hunch; rather, it has become a national disgrace. It is a significant obstacle to both sustainable growth and the democratization of Nigeria's political landscape. There have been several attempts throughout this country's history to stop the spread of this monster. Immanuel Kant's ethics' postulation and prescription on the impact of corruption on national development were the focus of the study, which used conceptual, critical, and analytical methods. According to Kant, there is a close relationship between categorical imperatives and morality; morality must be founded on the categorical imperative as it is imperative and cannot be disregarded or claimed to be irrelevant. The conclusion drawn by the article is that, given the lack of progress in Nigeria's numerous attempts to combat corruption, Nigerians must alter their behavior if the country is to experience lasting and sustainable development. Kant's Categorical Imperatives, which states that one should always act and behave as though one's course of action or line of conduct were a universal or general law, is a necessary tool for doing so.

Keywords: Kant, Categorical Imperatives, Corruption, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, Nigeria possesses a wealth of natural and human resources. However, the nation's poverty is partially caused by corruption, corrupt practices, and the fallout that follows from these issues for her growth. Using the statement that "the phenomenon of corruption seems to be the unofficial ideology, the universal language spoken and understood in all parts of Nigeria," Adefarasin (2009) encapsulates the threat posed by corruption. Corruption ranks high among the several issues Nigeria is now experiencing. Many Nigerians are still suffering from corruption, and the Christian Church in Nigeria cannot claim to be exempt from it. Corruption has been the cause of the collapse of our infrastructure, economy, and educational and health systems, among other facets of life. Where in Nigerian society is there no corruption? Is it in the State Assemblies, the Executive Arm of our Government, the Legislative (Senator and House of Representatives), the Judiciary (courts), the uniformed establishment (military, police, immigration, customs, prison, civil and administrative services, the education and health sectors, and the private sector? Unless we wish to fool ourselves, the entire country is dealing with issues that need to be resolved right away. Nigeria's corruption must be eradicated at all costs, according to the church and all Nigerians (Emenyeonu, 2007).

Shehu (2006) asserts that corruption is pernicious and frequently involves bribery and extortion instances, in

which the giver and the receiver are both reluctant to disclose the corruption. Furthermore, it is complicated, and we still don't fully grasp how much of an influence it has. Given the complexity of corruption, a comprehensive understanding of its effects must take into account both the particular circumstances surrounding it as well as the offenders. Petty or grand corruption is said to be more common in countries where the rule of law is not strictly enforced. Moreover, corruption may be active or passive. Every category has its own set of contextual effects. According to a related development, corruption is perceived by the majority of Africans as a practical problem that includes outright theft, embezzlement of funds or other forms of misappropriation of state property, nepotism, favoring personal acquaintances, and abusing public authority to demand payments and privileging. Political corruption is when someone uses their official or political position for personal benefit or profit in an unethical, unlawful, and unapproved manner. When discussing political corruption, the term "political" is meant to relate to matters of public concern. The state is a human society with organized, public institutions, and this refers to its official commodities, affairs, fortunes, agencies, resources, and institutions. So, political corruption is when someone in a position of authority commits corruption against the state or its agencies in order to further their own personal advantage. Thus, "political" refers to governmental, public (non-private), or official. Accordingly, a corrupt conduct against a private or non-governmental group will not qualify as political corruption.

According to Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index, which was made public on Tuesday, Nigeria fell five spots. Nigeria, which received 24 out of 100 points in the 2021 index, was ranked by the CPI as the second most corrupt nation in West Africa, behind Guinea. This is occurring against the backdrop of the Federal Government’s professed campaign against corruption. Examining Kawtian-Rawlsian as a remedy for political corruption in modern-day Nigeria is the study's goal. In order to propose a solution, the research will seek to apply this theory to the Nigerian situation.

1.1 A Brief Description of the History of Kant

Between 1724 till 1804, Kant, a notable moral philosopher, resided in Königsberg, East Prussia. Many people consider him to be one of the most important philosophers of contemporary Europe and an essential component of philosophical thought. One of the last major thinkers of the Enlightenment, Kant's ethical theory helped to provide the foundation for contemporary ethical traditions. The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785) is one of his main ethical writings. Moral Philosophy (1797) and the Metaphysics of Reason (1788). Kant's main writings were composed in German, but his works' depth has inspired several academics to study, translate, and edit them in various languages. The main versions of translated works that will be used in this thesis are: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (translated and edited by Mary Gregor, 1998), The Metaphysics of Morals (Mary Gregor, 1998), The Categorical Imperative; A Study of Kant's Moral Philosophy (H.J. Paton, 1964), Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory (Roger Sullivan, 1989), Creating the Kingdom of Ends (Christine Korsgard, 1996), and A Companion to Kant (Graham Bird, 2006). Kant is a prominent supporter of Kantianism in the 20th century, and the term "Kantianism" or Kantian philosophy is occasionally used to refer to modern positions in ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind that can be traced back to Kant.

In metaphysics, Kantianism involves a profound skepticism about the really real world, including questions about the existence of a God, human free will, or immortality. In epistemology, Kantianism is based on a clear distinction between what is knowable but only provisionally real and what is unknowable but actually real; these are referred to as the phenomenon and the noumenon, respectively. The phenomenal world is made up of objects of the senses that have been modified by various categories of the intellect, and is subject to laws that are synthetic propositions. Neo-Kantianism, on the other hand, refers to the varieties of Kantian philosophy that were revived or modified and associated with the nineteenth-century "back to Kant" movement. Neo Kantians' return to Kant in the latter half of the nineteenth century and far into the twentieth century was caused by two primary factors. First, the grandiose theories of the German idealists (Hegel 1966) associated with the Romantic Era's irrationalism had reached the end of their useful life and were being dismissed as idle conjecture. Second, positivism was often viewed as similarly illogical and inadequate as it resulted in the rejection of any metaphysic in favor of often-unstated reductionist materialism. When it came to philosophical research, Kant's cautiously rational approach felt like a safe haven and the ideal place to start because it wouldn't conflict with the advancement of science or confine itself to its findings. Neo-Kantianism became the dominant philosophical school of that era as a result of philosophers from a wide range of backgrounds and interests taking inspiration from Kant's ideas and methodology in Germany and throughout Europe. Kantians consider that anytime we

make a decision, we should ask ourselves two questions: (1) Is it logical for me to wish for everyone to behave as I suggest?

We cannot carry out the activity if the response is negative. (ii) Do I respect human objectives instead of just manipulating them to further my own agenda? Once more, we must not carry out the activity if the response is negative. In Kant's view, these inquiries were interchangeable. Kantians also hold that morality and categorical imperatives are closely related; it is necessary for morality to be founded on the categorical imperative as morality is such that it is required of one and cannot be disregarded or said to be irrelevant.

2. Kant's Moral Ethics Theory

In his ethics, Kant demonstrates that kindness is the only thing that is good unqualifiedly. According to Kant, goodwill is the only thing that is fundamentally good. Only goodwill is good by nature. Every other benefit needs to be qualified because improper use can have negative effects. As demonstrated by the case of using intelligence to commit a crime, intelligence can be misused and turned against its owner, despite being a valuable asset. Wealth can be beneficial, but it can also be detrimental if misused, as in the case of purchasing weapons to kill people and destroy property. A person who acts out of reverence for the moral law is said to be acting for the sake of duty, also known as acting from duty, rather than out of a desire to act or because they feel compelled to do so; in other words, it refers to acting for moral grounds alone, even when doing so could result in pecuniary loss. Kant considered the will that acts out of duty to be good. However, to act in accordance with one's obligation is to do so with careful consideration for one's own interests (Omoregbe, 1993:220).

Similar to this, Kant establishes his ethical and moral position on his ideas of moral law and the categorical imperative, according to which everyone must uphold the moral code, which is a categorical imperative; morality derives from the human will, or man's rational will, because morality is categorical and because man has free will; it is a self-imposed law, the moral code. The rational will is its foundation; if it were not, it could not be categorical and unconditional because the will is always able to say "No" to anything or any offer that comes from outside of it (Omoregbe, 1993:225). Therefore, the moral law—what Kant calls "the principle of the autonomy of the will"- is imposed on man by his rational will. The will obeys the moral rule because it is its own law, not because it is compelled to do so by something outside of itself. The categorical imperative, also known as the moral imperative, is universal, non-negotiable, and applicable to everyone; it is also known as a "apodictic practical principle" (Kant, 2002:78).

The categorical imperative is actually derived from Kant's following variations: (i) "Act only on the maximum by which you can simultaneously will that it become an international law." (ii) "I will never act in a way that would contradict my maxim and make it a universal law." (iii) "Behave as though the tenet of your deed were to become a universal law of nature through your will." (iv) Act as though you are continuously employing humanity as an aim in itself, never just as a means, in both your own and everyone else's person. (v) "Act in such a way that your will can consider itself to be simultaneously establishing universal law by virtue of its maxim." (vi) "Therefore, behave as though you were a law-making member of a universal kingdom of ends through your maxims at all times." As you can see from the above, Kant's ethics and morality are embodied in his categorical imperative. It was not possible to criticize Kant's views.

3. Political Corruption: A Philosophical Assessment

Corruption is a global problem that threatens, and no country is totally immune to its grip. According to Ochulor and Bassey (2010), the degree of corruption's prevalence and the sincere, committed willingness of the populace to eradicate it are what distinguish one nation from another on the perception of corruption index. Every sphere of Nigerian society is affected by corruption, including the public and private business and commerce sectors, politics, and civil society. The widespread nature of this corruption suggests that our moral values and ideals are eroding. The aim of ethics is to explain the moral justifications for our conduct, and the field of ethics basically encompasses every action taken by a person as long as they act morally. It depicts the futile attempt to build a democratic community without a fundamental reliance on the religious ethical ideals of fairness, openness, altruism, accountability, and a leadership centered on service. It depicts a leadership style that advances the vested interests of a select few at the expense of the greater good, which philosophers frequently hail as the cornerstone of political society (Uduigwomen, 2009).

According to Ochulor and Bassey (2010), ethical principles are based on the metaphysical premises that man is a reasoned, free, and inclined to goodness, moral self-actualization, and perfection; that he is a being with an innate teleological orientation toward

God; that he is a moral agent with an internal moral principle—an inbuilt conscience open to divine and human positive laws; and that he is a social being that can only be fully satisfied in the context of continuous social interaction. Corruption in Nigeria has existed since before colonization. As stated in a 1947 Colonial Government Report (CGR), the African's history and public morality differ significantly from those of the contemporary Briton. The African government employee looks out for his own pocketbook. Okonkwo (2007). There have been cases of government officials misusing funds for their personal financial gain prior to independence (Storey, 1953). Nigeria's wealth has been declining over time, and the standard of living for the people has not improved much. The First Republic, which was led by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister and Nnamdi Azikwe as President, was marked by widespread corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012). Ministers and Federal Representatives carelessly flaunted their wealth, and it appeared as though there were no morally upright men in the political leadership.

The political ideology of the First Republic Nigerian upper class was based on utilizing politics to further their financial interests—making money and living comfortably (Ogbeidi, 2012). Because of the First Republic's corruption, the military garnered broad support for the coup, proving that Nigerians had long been waiting for such a wave of change to lift them out of the clutches of the ruling elite. Interestingly, despite the passing of some significant First Republic leaders, there were widespread celebrations across the country (Ogbeidi, 2012). It may also be referred to as the human element that manages the administrative systems of a governed territory, which includes those in positions of power in the government and those who aspire to hold them, whether through elections, coups, appointments, election fraud, conquest, inheritance, or other means. Political leadership is the ruling class responsible for overseeing the business and financial operations of a political entity; this is accomplished by establishing and influencing the policy priorities that have an impact on the territory through various institutions and decision-making structures designed to promote the orderly development of the territory (Ogbeidi, 2012). However, in general, political leadership includes not only the governing elites who have direct control over a territory's affairs but also the whole political class that has the ability to affect how government functions, even in the background (Ogbeidi, 2012). Most definitions of corrupt behavior emphasize utilizing public positions or authority for personal gain, despite the fact that there isn't a single, definitive definition. According to Lewis (2006), the phenomenon is simply defined as "a weakening of virtue and moral ideals" in a dictionary. The misuse of public office for personal gain to the benefit of the office holder or a third party is what the World Bank and Transparency worldwide (TI), a well-known worldwide organization that monitors and combats corruption, describe as corruption. Political corruption may be widely characterized as unethical behavior that violates the laws of the political order system if these factors are taken into account (Heidenheimer and Johnston, 1993: 6). Fundamentally, political corruption may be carried out to preserve power as well as to increase individual and collective wealth. There is often a connection between these two forms of political corruption. Actually, some of the larger and more important cases of political corruption incorporate both processes (Ogbeidi, 2012).

In addition to corrupt practices involving both public and private actors, such as bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud, politicians also often commit crimes including theft and favoritism. Accordingly, corruption puts democratic processes, sustainable development, decent governance, and moral business practices at risk (Ogbeidi, 2012).

4. Politics and the Concept of Morality

Since the beginning of intellectual history, philosophers and politicians have considered the possible relationship between politics and morality. The question of where to place important concepts that are directly related to the conversation, including right, good, virtue and vice, individual liberty, and the public interest, was also expected to be addressed. However, the key question is: Should traditional moral demands and principles rule politics? Actually, there are two opposing viewpoints that have emerged from this subject. These two very different systems of thinking are shown by the Aristotelian and Machiavellian schools. Aristotle considered the goal of all human endeavors, including politics, was the pursuit of moral virtue, which would eventually guarantee the pleasure of the individual and society at large. In contrast, the Machiavellian counsel to "The Prince" was that morality in politics should not be elevated since neither human nature nor political processes require it. He urged leaders and would-be politicians to refrain from considering the possible influence of morality on politics.

Regardless of one's position, the fact remains that politics and morality seem to be connected in some manner. Morality and politics both have a role in directing and regulating human behavior. The distinction between private and public morality in social life can be found in the flexibility of the link

between these two concepts: a person is a moral agent with a private and public life; politics and morality are intertwined within each individual; and when a person moves from a private to a public life, the important relationship between politics and morals is brought into focus. Politics governs relationships between groups, various socio-political institutions, and the state with the management of state power as the center, while morality governs interpersonal relationships and exchanges between individuals and groups. It has no value if the role of individuals in political action is not defined. What these people do determines the scope and logic of politics. In significant part, people's moral status justifies the significance of political acts. The early conceptions of politics and morality made very little, if any, distinction between these two concepts. Both Plato and Aristotle did not differentiate between moral and political concepts. According to Aristotle, "ethics is at the same time politics" for political institutions and personal morality, therefore they cannot be separated. According to Aristotle's teleological theory, human actions ought to be evaluated in light of their outcomes.

The greatest good for him is the attainment of universal happiness. In "The Leviathan," Thomas Hobbes made a comparison between Aristotle's theories. According to him, individuals are inherently self-interested. His well-known concept of "war of all against all," which he thought would arise in the natural condition where there would be a catastrophic battle among people, served as an example of this. Hobbes contends that moral and fair standards have no place in such a chaotic and conflictual setting (Gareth, 2001). Samuel Clarke, Ralph Cudworth, and Henry More were among the early intuitionists who disagreed with Hobbes' viewpoint. Morality, according to them, is impartial and universal (Clarke, 1996). Hume and Hutcheson were among the other philosophers who argued that moral judgment cannot be made only on the basis of reason. According to them, rationality may help identify moral behavior, but it cannot motivate us to behave morally. Another participant in this conversation, Vassil Prodanov, asserts that our inability to determine the proper role of morality in politics is due to the "moralization of politics and politicized of morality." He said that scholars and theorists usually evaluate political concerns and moral questions in a morally ethical manner. In his view, this has contributed to a more intense discussion of the relationship between politics and morality, arguing that since politics cannot exist without morality, moral principles ought to be a major factor in how politics is conducted, or, to put it another way, that we ought to be more mindful of the moral consequences of the political decisions we make.

5. Corrupt Practices within Nigeria's Political Class

Some of the many cases of corruption in Nigeria that were perpetrated by members of the political leadership class are covered in this paper. Corruption among the political leadership class has existed since colonial times, as was previously established. Given that the nation's modern public service management was founded, Nigerian politics had been deeply embedded in a corrupt culture (Ogbeidi, 2012). In 1956, the Foster-Sutton Tribunal of Inquiry investigated Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the former Eastern Region Premier, for his role in the operations of the African Continental Bank (ACB). According to the public servant code of conduct, a government official's private business interests must be relinquished when they hold a position of public trust (Ogbeidi, 2012). The Foster-Sutton Tribunal concluded that Azikiwe had not cut his connections with the bank. Azikiwe continued to use his influence to further the bank's interests, according to the Tribunal (Report of the Foster-Sutton Tribunal of Inquiry, 1956: 42; Sklar, 2004: 185). In 1962, the Coker Commission of Inquiry investigated Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the first Premier of the Western Region, and found him guilty of corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012).

The Western Region Marketing Board had £6.2 million in 1954, but by May 1962, the company was forced to rely on overdrafts totaling over £2.5 million. Of a £6.7 million loan for construction projects given to the government-owned National Investment and Properties Co., Ltd. of the Western Region, only £500,000 of that loan was repaid (Ogbeidi, 2012). The Western Region Finance Corporation and the Western Nigeria Development Corporation also received loans totaling millions of pounds. Never were all of these loans repaid. The Coker Commission of Inquiry held Chief Awolowo accountable for the issues at the Western Region Marketing Board due to his contempt for the norms of behavior required of public servants (Coker Commission, 1962; Magid, 1976: 73). Many of Nigeria's state governors were sentenced to ludicrous jail sentences of at least 100 years and up to 340 years by the Buhari/Idiagbon military government, which came to power in 1979 after overthrowing the Shagari Administration. Following a palace coup on August 27, 1985, the military government led by General Ibrahim Babangida took control, hence the Buhari/Idiagbon rule was only in power for a short while. The corruption and financial carelessness of the Babangida dictatorship were extensively discussed in the 1994 Okigbo Panel Report (Ogbeidi, 2012). In 1994, the Okigbo Panel

Report on the Reorganization and Reform of the Central Bank of Nigeria accused former military leader General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, former head of state General Sani Abacha, and former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed of mismanaging an estimated $12.4 billion oil windfall between 1988 and 1994 (Ogbeidi, 2012). The 1994 Okigbo Panel Report on the Reorganisation and Reform of the Central Bank of Nigeria accused former military leader General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, former head of state General Sani Abacha, and former Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed of mismanaging an estimated $12.4 billion oil windfall between 1988 and 1994 (Ogbeidi, 2012). General Ibrahim Babangida's administration proposed, in consultation with top Central Bank of Nigeria officials, to use the entire amount on ineffective or questionable projects, according to a summary of the panel's evaluation that was sent to the federal government (Okigbo Panel Report, 1994). Babangida's successors persisted in embezzling the country's wealth through the use of secret accounts and other means even after he stepped down in August 1993.

The Okigbo Report states that in 1988, General Babangida approved the commitment of 65,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil to finance high-priority projects like Shiroro Hydroelectric Projects, Itakpe Iron Mining, and Ajaokuta Iron & Steel (Ogbeidi, 2012). Additionally, the account was meant to be used for the purchase of foreign debt and the building up of reserves. Later, it was increased to 105,000 barrels per day, and then to 150,000 barrels per day at the start of 1994. A Stabilization Account and a Special Account for Mining Rights and Signature Bonus were also established in order to receive the Gulf War's oil windfall profits (Ogbeidi, 2012).

During the military regimes of Babangida and Abacha in the 1990s, corruption certainly took up, but when Nigeria regained democracy in 1999, a culture of impunity spread among the political elite. In reality, corruption drove Nigerian society more than the rule of law (Mallam N. Ribadu, interviewed by Reuters, December 17, 2004). The country obviously suffered as a result. Both the late General Sani Abacha and former military president Ibrahim Babangida did no better than civilian politicians, their supporters in government agencies, and their associates in the private sector, especially financial institutions, when it came to corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012).

The main means by which political parties in Nigeria have fostered corrupt practices in the country are through extortion and godfatherism, to mention a few of examples. On the ninth floor of the Nicon Hilton Hotel in Abuja, the Obasanjo group allegedly gave out more than N1 billion in bribes to attendees of the 2003 Special Convention of the ruling People Democratic Party (PDP), which was held to choose the presidential flag bearer (Adekeye, 2003: 29). Since a corrupt governing party would inevitably result in a corrupt government, it is difficult to separate the policies of the federal, state, and municipal legislatures from the core beliefs of their respective parties.

According to Ogbeidi (2012), corruption has become legendary after democracy was restored in 1999, even if it was widespread during the 1990s. Throughout his eight years in office, President Olusegun Obasanjo maintained total control over the petroleum ministry, allowing high-level corruption to go unchecked (Ogbeidi, 2012). More than $400 million was spent on refinery repairs and Turn-Around Maintenance (TAM), but no results were obtained, and the contractors awarded the contracts were never held responsible (Adekeye, 2003: 30). Records also show that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is at the center of major corruption practices in the industry when it comes to financial management, especially with regard to the actual revenue realized from the sale of crude oil and other petroleum resources like natural gas (Ogbeidi, 2012).

Ogbeidi (2012) asserts that during the first four years of Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, federal ministers are alleged to have embezzled about N23 billion from the public treasury. According to an audit report released by Vincent Azie, acting Auditor-General of the Federation, the sum represented financial frauds ranging from embezzlement, payments for unfinished work, over-invoicing, double-debiting, inflation of contract figures, and withdrawal of funds without the approving authority's consent in ten major ministries (Ogbeidi, 2012). Instead of warning the ministers whose ministries were involved in the fraud or inviting the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to inquire further into the veracity of the alleged fraud, the Presidency hastily resigned Vincent Azie for procedural offenses (Adekeye, 2003: 31; Haruna, 2009). The National Identity Card Scandal is another well-known example of corruption by the country's political leadership elite. Because the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company (NSPMC), which had placed a lower bid for the same contract, was not obligated to accept it, the Olusegun Obasanjo administration controversially awarded the $214 million National Identity Card project to the French company SAGEM S.A. in 2001. It was stated that

SAGEM S.A. and seven well-known public officials conspired together to derail the $214 million project. The Maina Pension Scam was a pension fund probe that affected about 141,790 pensioners. Abdulrasheed Maina, the head of the Pension Reform Task Team, was accused of embezzling N195 billion. Before leaving her job as minister of aviation, Stella Oduah was embroiled in a controversy involving an armored limousine worth N255 million.

By putting pressure on a ministry-affiliated organization to buy her expensive cars, she was accused of abusing her position. As of yet, the House of Representatives has not produced a thorough report on the issue. Despite Ms. Oduah's later dismissal as a minister, the other individuals involved in the case remain in their current positions (Premium Times, 2015). Oil income missing N20 billion: Former Central Bank of Nigeria governor Lamido Sanusi said in 2013 that the NNPC had failed to transfer billions of naira in oil money to the state. As a result, there was a serious rift between President Goodluck Jonathan and the CBN governor, and the president eventually fired Mr. Sanusi (Premium Times, 2015). The Immigration Scandal of Abba Morro: Despite the deaths of more than fifteen individuals who took the Nigerian Immigration Service entrance tests on March 13, 2015, Interior Minister Abba Morro has remained in office. Before the admission exam, candidates had to pay N1, 000 for their application forms. A private business, Drexel Nig Ltd., was implicated in the recruiting fraud. Federal MPs launched an inquiry following the incident, but no further information has been released. According to Premium Times (2015), Nigerians are suspicious of a cover-up since the minister in issue, Mr. Morro, is a strong supporter of David Mark, the Senate President who also chairs the National Assembly. Malabu Oil Scandal: Among the biggest oil scams, the Malabu Oil Scandal did not receive the publicity it merited. Dan Etete, a former petroleum minister convicted of money laundering in France, is involved.

For the sale of an oil block, the Nigerian government paid his illegal company, Malabu Oil, $1.1 million. As soon as the money was received, it was given to certain individuals. The National Assembly has not yet found a solution to this problem, which involves ministries, businesses, and presidential representatives (Premium Times, 2015). Ekiti Gate: A recording that was made public and purportedly showed electoral irregularities during the Ekiti State gubernatorial election caused a great deal of controversy nationwide (Premium Times, 2015).

Iyiola Omisore, Ayo Fayose, the eventual election victor and governor of Ekiti state, Jelili Adesiyan, a former deputy governor of Osun state, and former minister of state for defense Musiliu Obanikoro were among the four main speakers discussing ways to rig the election. While his committee investigated the fuel subsidy scandal, Farouk Lawan, a member of the House of Representatives, was caught on camera taking $620,000 out of a $3 million bribe. The Presidency said it would not investigate the matter (Premium Times, 2015). The former chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum, Abdulaziz Yari, was repeatedly questioned by the EFCC for alleged illegal financial dealings and money-laundering, but he has never been brought before a judge (Premium Times, 2015). According to a story published in February 2021, Mr. Yari had a lengthy interview with detectives at the EFCC's Lagos office on an alleged attempt to move N300 billion illegally from a corporate account in a new generation bank. Willie Obiano, the former governor of Anambra State, was arrested on March 16 by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, just hours after handing over power to his successor, Charles Soludo (EFCC). Mr. Obiano was traveling to Houston, Texas, in the United States when he was apprehended by EFCC officers at Lagos' Murtala Muhammed International Airport. The anti-graft organization had been keeping an eye on him. Shortly after his arrest, the former governor was transported to the EFCC's Abuja headquarters, but he was freed a few days later (Premium Times, 2022). Theodore Orji, a senator now and a former governor of Abia State, was arrested with his son at Abuja's Nnamdi International Airport in August 2021. Nevertheless, he was released and instructed to return to the EFCC office for further interrogation. The EFCC is investigating Mr. Orji and his sons, Chinedu and Ogbonna, for alleged money laundering and misuse of public funds. The former governor of Abia, from 2007 to 2015, allegedly received N500 million in security payments a month (Premium Times, 2022). The most recent governor of Kwara State, Abdulfatah Ahmed, was arrested by the EFCC for allegedly embezzling N9 billion from the Kwara State government's funds between 2011 and 2019. He was questioned by EFCC agents at their Abuja headquarters in May, but was released on administrative bail after spending two nights there (Premium Times, 2022).

In a 2019 petition, political allies Attahiru Bafarawa and Aliyu Wamakko, former governors of Sokoto State, accused each other of stealing during their tenure in office, and the former dragged the latter, who had been his deputy for eight years, to the anti-corruption agency for alleged mismanagement and abuse of office over a N15 billion fund (Premium

Times, 2022). Ali Modu Sheriff, the former governor of Borno State, was invited by the EFCC, a story that Premium Times exclusively covered in 2015. He was later granted administrative bail. The anti-graft agency did not provide a reason for his detention, but sources informed this site that it was because he was accused of misusing N300 billion that his government received from the Federation Account between 2003 and 2011. The former governor was asked to return to the EFCC's headquarters in Abuja in 2018 to address claims that he had misused his position to the tune of $200 million in 2014 while feigning to enforce a fictitious Boko Haram truce in a neighboring country, according to the Vanguard newspaper (Premium Times, 2022).

The EFCC investigating former Senate President Bukola Saraki for alleged financial offenses, according to Ibrahim Magu, a former acting chairman of the organization. The former governor of Kwara State, who held office for two terms, questioned why the former EFCC chairman was investigating him and said it was a "witch-hunt" against him. Similar to its investigation of his successor, Mr. Ahmed Premium Times, 2022, the EFCC looked into Mr. Saraki for alleged conspiracy, abuse of power, misappropriation of public funds, theft, and money-laundering.

6. Conclusion

As the research presented here has shown, corrupt practices in politics- defined as the abuse of one's official or political position for one's own benefit in defiance of recognized moral or legal standards- is a prevalent aspect of how governments operate in all human civilizations. Although corruption is widely despised, it is a worldwide reality. It is clear that a suitable explanation for these phenomena must be sought. The majority of social scientists appear to believe that financial circumstances and the flaws in the legal and political institutions are the main causes of political corruption. In order to accomplish all of these, it was proposed that Nigeria's anti-corruption laws be harmonized in order to increase the effectiveness of the anti-corruption campaign. The country's level of life must be raised in order for the government to reduce corruption. Nigerian citizens must also get education in order to be well-equipped to comprehend, practice, and defend their moral and ethical behavior.

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Audit Quality and Financial Reporting Quality of Quoted Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria

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Abstract. The quality of financial reports has been a contemporary discuss in accounting and finance literature as it is capable of helping investors or the users of financial statement to make timely and informed economic decision. Financial statement should portray features like relevance, faithful understandability and timeliness. The reporting quality from literature is seen not to possess the relevant qualities as expected which has become worrisome for investors and stakeholders. The study investigated the effect of audit quality on the financial reporting quality of quoted manufacturing firms listed in Nigeria, employing a survey research design. The population of interest consisted of 250 auditors and accountants, with a sample size of 201 selected using the Taro Yamane Formula and purposive sampling. Data were gathered through a well-structured questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that audit quality had a significant impact on the relevance of financial reports (Adj. $R^2 = 0.766$; $F = 99.565$; $p = 0.00$) and also notably influenced the faithful representation of financial reports (Adj. $R^2 = 0.598$; $F = 47.930$; $p = 0.00$). The study concluded that audit quality plays a critical role in enhancing the financial reporting quality of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study recommended that management should prioritize the presentation of financial reports to improve their relevance to users.

Keywords: Audit Quality, Financial Reporting, Financial Statement, Faithful Representation, Relevance, Understandability

1. Introduction

Quality of financial statement has been publicly discussed as a result of it remains the major way of communication between the investors and the stakeholders. The reports shared with shareholders and stakeholders are expected to reflect the true financial position of the entity. However, whether the information in these reports is faithfully represented and the relevance of the accounting figures they contain is another matter entirely. A sure way to communicate financial information to the stakeholder is true effective and efficient financial report; this is the means of check and balance available for the managers with their agents (Shahanif et al., 2020). The standard of accounting information within an organization influences the caliber of its reports (Herath et al., 2017).

Sound decision-making depends on the quality and utility of accounting information, which is reflected in the value relevance of the data in financial statements. Soni and Imang (2019) looked at the issues related to financial report quality as a result of information gaps between the manager and stakeholders. These gaps frequently lead to mistakes and misleading expectations that result in litigation, so they pose an external factor that prevents managers from performing at their best. According to Hanna and Ivan (2021), non-financial reporting frequently causes friction with current social and environmental issues because it only enables stakeholders to make wise decisions.

As a means of check and balancing, audit services are the tools to embrace the credibility of the company's performance so as to allow the stakeholders to evaluate their performance over the years, which in return will help them to build confidence and to make future economic, investment and finance decisions (DeAngelo, 1981 as cited in Thuweba 2014). Olusegun (2016) opined that the bedrock of audit as a profession is auditor's independence, public built their trust on an audited financial statement, hence, on the

job, the independence of the auditor allows them to perform their task and to pass their professional judgment on the company under watch (Thuweba, 2014).

Financial statements speak for management of those organizations because those figures on the financial statement speak for them. Meanwhile, reporting of those figures on the financial statement are not credible until an independent auditor performs independent examination on it and certify that in his opinion, the statement passes the test of time and it is therefore, useful for the stakeholders for various finical decisions. Amanda et al., (2020) opined that audit independence aims at authenticate the reliability of fact and figures presented in the financial statement which is a process of analyzing and validating the statement of accounts and journals, vouchers and assets presented by the management to the auditor which is aiming at checking whether the books are kept and the useful and necessary accounting principles are employed.

Emmanuel and Siriyama (2016) in their opinion see auditor's independence as a matter of honesty which an auditor wear while discharging his duty. While discharging his professional duties, auditors are expected to maintain his or her independence in such a way to avoid conflict of interest whatsoever with his or her clients. Investors depend largely on the auditor's report as this show how credible the financial statement therefore, auditors are to appear independent at all times.

With the growing concerns and recent crises affecting banks, many questions have arisen regarding the quality of financial reports used and practiced by companies globally. For example, auditors may hold different views on the current laws surrounding auditor independence compared to other users of financial statements (Fredrik & Patrik, 2012). Despite these differing perspectives, it is crucial that financial statements are faithfully represented, comparable, and verifiable before being released, in order to maintain users' trust and confidence in the reports.

This study's main goal was to investigate how the quality of audits affected the financial reporting of Nigerian manufacturing companies that were quoted. Among the particular goals are:

- Assess the impact of audit quality on the applicability of financial reporting for Nigerian manufacturing companies that are listed.
- Examine the effect of audit quality on the faithful representation of financial reporting of quoted manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

The following hypotheses were formulated:

$H_0$1: Audit quality does not have significant effect on relevance of financial reporting of quoted manufacturing firms in Nigeria.
$H_0$2: There is no significant effect of audit quality on faithful representation of financial reporting of quoted manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Financial Reporting Quality

To give stakeholders a comprehensive picture of the entity's financial stewardship, financial reporting entails the collection, analysis, categorization, and summarization of financial operations over a time period, usually a year (Bastani, 2020). Jonas and Blanchet (2020) described financial reporting as the faithful transmission of accounting information. They emphasize that financial reporting outputs include not only disclosures of corporate transactions but also the selection of accounting policies and judgments. In light of this, a global benchmark has been recommended by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) for government financial reporting.

Financial analysts and stock market agents first proposed the concept of quality reporting, arguing that reported earnings could not necessarily be an accurate representation of a company's true profitability. The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) defined financial reporting quality by the faithful representation of financial data and the complete disclosure of all relevant information. These characteristics ensure that financial information is reliable for making informed investment decisions. Therefore, financial reports must be timely, verifiable, understandable, comparable, and faithfully presented.

2.1.2 Relevance

The International Accounting Standards Board (2018) defined relevance as the provision of useful information to decision-makers, which can be predictive or confirmatory depending on the context. According to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB, 2019), for information to be relevant, it must aid users in making

sound economic decisions. Financial statements, non-financial data, fair worth as opposed to historical value, and user feedback can all be used to determine relevance.

According to the Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting (2018), financial data remains relevant to decision-makers if it has the potential to influence their decisions, whether or not they decide to depend on it or have already come across it in another way. This relevance is established when the information offers forward-looking insights, validation of past events, or a synergy of both predictive and confirmatory attributes, ensuring it plays a pivotal role in guiding financial decisions.

Similarly, assets, liabilities, equity, revenue, and costs are important components of financial statements, according to the Australian Accounting Standards Board (2018). Even though acknowledging these components does not guarantee relevance, doing so does not imply that the information is not significant.

2.1.3 Faithful Representation

Ahmed et al., (2018) in their opinion said faithful representation is detailed summarized information listed on the financial statement and are faithfully represented. Abang (2017) opined that for information to be faithful and reliable it should be free from any form of biases and it should be neutral. It should be noted that the provider of financial information should provide useful and essential financial information to the users without omission or error. IASB (2018) also stated that to recognize a specific asset or liability, it must provide relevant and useful information relevant to faithful representation of asset or liability and of any resultant income, expenditure or changes in equity.

IASB (2018) stated that financial report represents economic phenomena both in words and numbers. Adding that for it to be useful, financial information is expected to faithfully represent both the relevant phenomena and material occurrence that it meant to represent. The expected features to be seeing in faithful representation are completeness, neutrality, and error free. The idea of showing and presenting the actual economic situation of a company's financial position that has been reported which explains the impact of economic resources, transactions and events which are dully represented in the financial statement (Siriyama & Norah 2017). Organizational role on the account of faithful representation cannot be underemphasized as they are controlled and directed which affects faithful presentation qualities. When there is comprehensive disclosure information on corporate governance issues in annual reports, this is in reality provided as a corporate governance component (Beest et al., 2009) as cited by (Siriyama & Norah, 2017).

2.1.4 Audit Quality

The probability that an auditor will find and disclose any anomalies in a client's accounting system is known as audit quality. This definition underscores that audit quality extends beyond technical expertise and accounting skills, emphasizing the auditor's integrity and willingness to report material irregularities. Ahmad (2012), as referenced by Gana et al., (2020), asserted that integrity is foundational to the accounting profession. The Independence Standards Board (2000) echoed this, defining auditor independence as freedom from biases that may influence an auditor's ability to make impartial judgments.

Naslmosavi et al., (2013) further highlight that timely auditor responses regarding financial statements enhance stakeholders' confidence. Auditor independence has long been recognized as an effective tool for addressing discrepancies in financial statements by ensuring objectivity, reliability, and timely reporting (Ndubuisi & Ezechukwu, 2017).

According to Ahmad (2012), the foundation of the auditing profession is integrity. The Independence Standards Board (2000) elaborated on this by noting that independence means freedom from constraints that might affect an auditor's ability to make unbiased judgments. When auditors provide timely opinions, it boosts confidence in financial reports. This independence is crucial in reducing information asymmetry by offering reliable, objective assessments of financial statements. Ndubuisi and Ezechukwu (2017) emphasized that auditor independence reflects an impartial and rational approach to financial reporting, with some scholars, like Albeksh (2017), asserting that independence is a defining characteristic of auditors.

2.1.5 Non-Audit Services

Yakubu and Williams (2020) opined that economic relationship between the management and the auditors is at increase over the time which its resultant is the length collaboration. Non audit services (NAS) has been discussed widely among the professional as well as the regulators in the industry in terms of the auditors' independence and quality of financial statement. In countries like United States and United Kingdom, there are rules in place to limit Non-Audit

Services provisions by audit firms. Several scholars, including Khasharmeh and Desoky (2018); Van Liempd et al., (2018); and Meuwissen and Quick (2019), have contended that the blending of Joint Audit Services with Non-audit Services will unavoidably undermine auditor independence. In a parallel vein, Chu and Hsu (2018) explored the connection between non-audit services and accounting conservatism in the periods preceding and following the enactment of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX). They found that non-audit services negatively impacted earnings quality prior to the enactment of SOX, but that the lack of a decisive conclusion on non-audit services delivery had an impact on audit quality. Chambers and Payne (2015) argued that when auditors provide non-audit services to their clients, it strengthens their economic relationship, which in turn could jeopardize the auditors' independence.

2.1.6 Audit Firm Size

Ye (2020) opined that the impact of firm size on audit fees is felt as a result of expansion in audit firm, division of labor set in specific ways thereby, this will enhance work efficacy, fixed cost distributed across department will be reduced, by the way, cost reduction is achieved and in the other way round, the quality of services deliverable will be enhanced, therefore, since the quality services has been discharged, the expected return will be high cost for the task which is expected to be on the high side. Summarily, the law of demand and supply will fall in: the higher the audit quality, the higher the fees charged.

Bandyopadhyay and Kao (2001) opined that in most cases, most accounting firms enjoy goodwill which attract higher audit fees quote. He further stated that most listed companies are ready to pay bit higher than average fees to audit firms with higher goodwill. Hence, the firm with higher audit quality deliverable services, the more realistic information produced to the users of financial information. Seyedhossein et al., (2013) argued in their discussion on audit independence that the quality of an audit should not be judged by the size of the audit firm. They rejected the notion that smaller firms are less capable and emphasized that larger audit firms tend to be more independent and produce more robust audit reports. On the other hand, Bakar (2005) suggested that the size of an audit firm can indeed influence auditor independence, with studies showing that larger firms are more likely to maintain their independence compared to smaller ones. The size of the audit firm sometimes enhances the auditor's reputation as it enables them to withstand any form of intimidation from managers and directors/client.

3. Theoretical Review

3.1 Signaling Theory

The widespread acceptance of signaling theory, which was first proposed by Michael Spence in 1973, can be partially attributed to its intuitive nature. When a journalist once asked Spence whether one could earn a Nobel Prize in Economics for merely observing that in some markets, certain participants lack information that others wish to communicate, Spence humorously acknowledged that the answer was likely "no." However, his work marked a significant effort to address how information flows within market structures. The theory's significance lies in assigning costs to the process of acquiring information that resolves information asymmetries across various economic and social contexts. Several scholars have critiqued this theory, pointing out that power is not equally distributed, as it often resides within institutions rather than individuals (Gray et al., 1996). Others, like Penno (1997) and Nagar (1999), suggested that non-disclosure may occur because managers lack the necessary information or are uncertain about how disclosure will impact their performance.

The theory's core premise is that information asymmetry can be minimized when those with more information signal it to others, particularly in markets where there is a separation of ownership and management. Market pressures compel managers to disclose information, as they typically know more about the company than owners and investors. This theory is relevant to the study of manufacturing firms, as it emphasizes the importance of providing information that allows stakeholders to form informed opinions about the firm's values and future direction.

3.2 Stakeholders' Theory

Building upon the foundational concepts of stakeholder theory that emerged in the 1970s, Freeman (1984) broadened its scope, advocating for a more inclusive approach to corporate accountability. He maintained that companies have responsibilities to a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, local communities, environmental concerns, upcoming generations, and customers, suppliers, and employees, in addition to their shareholders. King (2002) further underlined how important integrated sustainability reporting is to strengthening the mutually beneficial relationship between a company and its larger social context. He cautioned that disregarding the interests of these various stakeholders

might seriously harm a business's standing and jeopardize its long-term operational and financial viability.

Unlike agency theory, which centers on the relationship between shareholders and management, stakeholder theory views organizations as systems that must address the interests of multiple groups within their environment (Lawal, 2012). It suggests that companies cannot operate in isolation and must engage with their wider environment, considering the needs of various stakeholders like employees, customers, suppliers, and local communities in strategic decisions. Organizations should therefore take into consideration the expectations of other stakeholders in addition to generating shareholder value. The notion promotes sustainability reporting and practices as a means for businesses to fulfill their social and ethical obligations while simultaneously increasing shareholder income.

4. Empirical Review

Several prior studies on the effect of audit quality on financial reporting quality of quoted manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Some of the studies incorporated various cost benefit analysis tools in analyzing the impacts and effects on audit quality on financial reporting quality in Nigeria.

A study by Riccardo et al., (2020) titled "Auditor Independence and Value Relevance in the European Banking Sector: How Important Are Investor Protection and Corporate Governance?" looked at how statutory auditor independence affected value relevance while taking into account the quality of investor protection at the firm and national levels. The study examined 98 listed European financial institutions between 2009 and 2014, and the results showed that differences in corporate governance and investor protection did not always result in a decrease in the value relevance of accounting numbers, even when auditor independence was compromised. In the Netherlands, Ferdy (2019) carried out research on "Quality of Financial Reporting: Measuring Qualitative Characteristics." In order to meet a requirement issued by the FASB and IASB (2008), this study aimed to enhance the evaluation of financial reporting quality by operationalizing qualitative features.

Rahman and Tracey (2020) conducted research in Nigeria while examining "A Theoretical Approach to Auditor Independence and Audit Quality." According to their findings, audit costs frequently reflect the extra work necessary for comprehensive audits, and auditor independence improves audit quality. A study named "Financial Reporting Quality: A Literature Review" was carried out by Siriyama and Norah (2017) from Clark Atlanta University. Nevertheless, the sample size was too little to make firm judgments. Agwor and Okafor (2018) investigated "Accounting Ethics and Financial Reporting Quality in Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises in Rivers State." To improve adherence to ethical norms in financial reporting, the study suggested that corporate entities set up ethics compliance divisions.

Oyetunji et al., (2020) investigated how sustainability reporting influences the accuracy and integrity of accounting information in Nigeria's publicly traded deposit money banks. The study employed an ex post facto research approach to assess this relationship. The study analyzed data from 13 of the 21 listed banks on the Nigerian Exchange Group over a 15-year period. The results, derived from descriptive and inferential statistics (multiple regression), indicated that sustainability reporting positively influences the faithful representation of accounting information.

Joe (2020) conducted an inquiry into the nexus between audit independence and the credibility of financial reporting within the Nigerian banking sector, employing a survey-based methodology. Primary data were gathered and subjected to analysis via descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) in conjunction with inferential techniques such as regression and correlation. The study's conclusions indicated that auditor independence significantly influences the clarity, reliability, and faithful representation of financial statements within the sector. Meanwhile, Okezie and Egeolu (2019) undertook a longitudinal investigation of audit independence and financial report reliability in Nigerian banks across a five-year span (2014–2019). Utilizing data from four banks listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange, their research adopted an ex post facto design and employed multivariate linear regression. Their findings revealed that audit independence had a minimal effect on the timeliness of financial reporting.

Ogbodo and Jiagbogu (2021) conducted an empirical study on Nigerian banks, using an ex post facto research design that covered 11 years (2011-2019). Secondary data was analyzed through regression analysis using E-views version 9. The study concluded that the size of an audit firm significantly influences the timeliness of financial reports, as auditors rely on client cooperation to adjust reporting timelines. Novie and Leny (2018) investigated the impact of audit firm size on audit quality and the reputation of public accounting firms in Indonesia. Their findings

indicated that audit quality significantly affects the reputation of these firms and is also influenced by audit firm size. Aliu et al., (2018) published a study titled "Auditor's Independence and Audit Quality: An Empirical Study," conducted in Nigeria. The research highlighted the need for regulation and disclosure of all components related to audit fees to enhance public understanding of auditors' financial dependence on clients and ensure that fees align with audit complexity. The study employed correlation matrices, descriptive statistics, and binary logit regression techniques to reach its conclusions.

5. Research Methodology

In order to concentrate on the study's population and sample, the survey research design was used. 168 manufacturing companies that were quoted on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) as of December 31, 2022, make up the study's population. A systematic questionnaire with five scales was used to gather the data.

The sample strategy used was proportionate, stratified, and simple random sampling. Using the Taro Yamani methodology, the sample size from the 28 chosen firms was 201. The anticipated 201 respondents were chosen from among the senior accountants in the internal audit and bursary departments.
Taro Yamane formula:
Where:
n= sample size
N = Finite population size which is 250
e = Maximum acceptable error Margin which is 5% (0.05)
Confidence level = 95%
Therefore;
n=153.8 approximately 154
Allowing for 30% non-respondents
Sample size: 30/100 * 154= 46.2
Sample size: 46.2+ 154= 200.2 approximately 201

Model Specification
Y = f(X) ---------- (1)
Y= Dependent Variable
X = Independent Variable
Where: Y = Financial Reporting Quality (FRQ)
y_1 - Relevance (REL)
y_2 - Faithful Relevance (FR)
X = Audit Quality (AQ)
x_1 - Audit Firm Size (AFS)
x_2 - Non-Audit Services/Non-Audit Fees (NAS)
$REL_i = \beta 0 + \beta 1AFS_i + \beta 2NAS_i + ei$ -------- Model 1
$FR_i = \beta 0 + \beta 1AFS_i + \beta 2NAS_i + ei$ -------- Model 2
Where;
β0 = Constant,
β0, β1, β2, β3, β4 = Model coefficients,
i = Number of sampled firms
e = stochastic error term which is representing other variable that could cause a variation on the dependent variable which are not stated in the model.

6. Results and Discussion of Findings

Table 4.1: Descriptive Analysis

Variable		Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	102	53.7%
	Female	88	46.3
	Total	190	100
Age	10 to <20	-	
	20 to <30	-	
	30 to <40	51	26.8
	40 to <50	95	50
	50 and above	44	23.2
Total		190	100
Academic Qualification	OND/NCE	-	-
	HND/BSc	79	41.6
	MSc/MBA/PHD	111	58.4
	Others	-	-
Total		190	100
Position Occupied	Senior Manager (Upper Level)	108	56.8
	Manager (Middle Level)	-	-
	Asst. Manager (Lover Level)	-	-
	Others	82	43.2
	Total	190	100

Duration	Less than 5years	51	26.8
	5-10 years	130	68.4
	Above 10years	9	4.7
	Total	190	100

Source: *Author's Field Survey (2024)*

Table 4.1 showed that male population was 102 which amounted to 53.7% while 88 females of the respondents representing 46.3% participated in the research. This showed that many employees of the Audit, Bursary and Management staff are male.

As for the of the respondents, people within age 30-40 were 51 representing 26.8%, age 40 to 50 were 95 representing 50% and 50 years and above were 44 representing 23.2%. In addition, holders of HND and BSc were 79 respondents representing 41.6% while MSc/MBA and PHD were 111 respondents representing 58.4% of the population sampled. This means the actual targeted respondents were met.

In respect to the position held, it showed that 108 of the respondents were senior Managers (Upper Level) representing 56.8% and others were 82 respondents representing 43.2%. For the duration of years, those who are less than 5 years were 51 representing 26.8%, for 5 to 10 years, were 130 respondents representing 68.4% while for those above 10years respondents were 9 representing 4.7%.

Test of Hypothesis One

Table 4.2: Result of Regression Estimate Test for Hypothesis One

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.875[a]	.766	.758	.63102	.766	99.565	6	183	.000

Predictors: (Constant), AFIS, AFS, AT, NAS, AF

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	237.874	6	39.646	99.565	.000[b]
	Residual	72.869	183	.398		
	Total	310.742	189			

a. Dependent Variable: RL

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFIS, AFS, AT, NAS, AF

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-2.029	.660		-3.075	.002
	AT	.334	.040	.312	8.355	.000
	AF	.250	.030	.393	8.389	.000
	NAS	-.035	.021	-.064	-1.665	.098
	AFS	-.048	.025	-.082	-1.961	.051
	AFIS	.114	.038	.110	2.964	.003
	R^2	.766				
	Adjusted R^2	0.758				
	F stats	99.565				

Dependent Variable: Relevance

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

$RL = \beta 0 + \beta_1 AT + \beta_2 AF + B_3 NAS + B_4 AFS + B_5 AFIS$

RL= -2.029 + 0.334AT + 0.250AF -0.035NAS + -0.048AFS + 0.114AFIS.

Interpretation

Table 4.2 demonstrates that the relevance of financial reporting is significantly impacted by audit quality. (β=.0334, t=8.355, P=0.000) in the regression analysis. The findings revealed a comprehensive multiple regression analysis

examining the influence of audit quality on the relevance of financial reports. The results indicated that the linear relationship between audit quality and relevance positively affects financial reporting, as evidenced by the standardized coefficients and T-statistics. Additionally, the model demonstrated that relevance significantly impacts financial reports ($p<0.05=0.000$, Adj. $R^2=0.758$, $F=99.565$).

In summarizing the initial model, the adjusted coefficient of determination was found to be 0.758, suggesting that 75.8% of the variability in relevance can be attributed to the quality of financial reports, which encompasses audit tenure (AT), audit fee (AF), non-audit services (NAS), audit firm size (AFS), and audit firm industry specialization (AFIS). The remaining 24.2% of the variation in relevance is attributable to other factors not incorporated into the model.

Notably, audit tenure exhibited a significant influence on financial report quality ($\alpha=0.334$, $t=8.355$, $p=0.00$), while audit fees also had a substantial effect ($\alpha=0.250$, $t=8.389$, $p=0.000$). In contrast, non-audit services demonstrated a significant negative effect ($\alpha= -0.035$, $t=-1.665$, $p=0.98$), and audit firm size had a negligible impact ($\alpha=-0.048$, $t=-1.961$, $p=0.51$). Conversely, audit firm industry specialization was found to significantly influence financial report quality ($\alpha=0.114$, $t=2.964$, $p=0.003$).

Decision: At a significance level of 0.05, the ANOVA F-statistic is 99.565, with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold used in this study. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. This implies that audit quality has a statistically significant and positive impact on the financial reporting of listed companies in Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Table 4.3: Result of Regression Estimate Test for Hypothesis Two

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.782[a]	.611	.598	.71701	.611	47.930	6	183	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFIS, AFS, AT, NAS, AF

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	147.848	6	24.641	47.930	.000[b]
	Residual	94.082	183	.514		
	Total	241.930	189			

a. Dependent Variable: FR

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFIS, AFS, AT, NAS, AF

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.092	.750		14.790	.000
	AT	-.161	.045	-.170	-3.534	.001
	AF	-.253	.034	-.450	-7.463	.000
	NAS	-.062	.024	-.128	-2.596	.010
	AFS	.045	.028	.087	1.619	.107
	AFIS	-.408	.044	-.446	-9.371	.000
	R^2	0.611				
	Adjusted R^2	0.598				
	F stats	47.930				

a. Dependent Variable: FR

Dependent Variable: Faithful representation

Source: Author's Computation (2024)

$FR= \beta 0 + \beta_1 AT + \beta_2 AF + B_4 NAS + B_5 AFS + B_6 AFIS$

$FR= 11.092+ -0.161AT + -0.253AF -0.062NAS + 0.045AFS + -0.408AFIS$

Interpretation
Table 4.3 shows that audit quality has a significant effect on faithful representation of financial reporting. The regression analysis indicated a significant relationship between audit quality and the faithful representation of financial reports (β = -0.161, t = -3.534, p = 0.001). This suggests that the combination of audit quality and faithful representation positively affects financial reporting, as evidenced by the standardized coefficients and t-statistics. Furthermore, the model demonstrates that faithful representation significantly enhances financial report quality in public universities ($p < 0.05$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.598$, F = 47.930).

From Table 4.2.2, the model summary shows that the adjusted R^2 is 0.598, indicating that 59.8% of the variation in faithful representation can be attributed to audit quality, while the remaining 40.2% is due to other unmeasured variables. The analysis reveals significant effects of various factors on audit tenure:
Audit quality (α = -0.161, t = -3.534, p = 0.001), Audit fee (α = -0.253, t = -7.463, p = 0.000) Non-audit services (α = -0.062, t = -2.596, p = 0.010). Audit firm size (α = -0.045, t = -1.619, p = 0.107) Audit firm industry specialization (α = 0.408, t = -0.446, p = 0.000)

These results suggest that an increase in audit fees correlates positively with audit quality.

Decision: With a significance level of 0.05, the ANOVA F-statistic of 47.930 yields a p-value of 0.000, which falls below the established threshold of 0.05 for this study. Consequently, the null hypothesis is dismissed, and the alternative hypothesis is affirmed. This finding suggests that audit quality exerts a meaningful and positive influence on the financial reporting quality of publicly traded firms in Nigeria.

7. Discussion of Findings

In Model 1, the results indicate that relevance substantially influences non-audit services, which in turn has a marked impact on audit tenure (α = -0.035, t = -1.665, p = 0.98). Furthermore, audit firm size significantly contributes to audit tenure (α = -0.048, t = -1.961, p = 0.51), suggesting that extended audit tenure enhances audit quality in public universities across southwest Nigeria. In a parallel study, Riccardo et al., (2020) explored the interplay between audit quality and value relevance in the European banking sector, with a particular focus on the influence of investor protection mechanisms and corporate governance structures on the observed outcomes. Their research assessed the degree to which statutory auditor independence affects value relevance by comparing it to the quality of investor protection at the national level and corporate governance at the firm level. This analysis was based on a sample of 98 publicly listed European financial institutions over the period from 2009 to 2014.

In Model 2, the summary shows an adjusted coefficient of determination of 0.611, meaning that 61.1% of the variation in faithful representation is attributed to financial reporting quality, while the remaining 38.9% is explained by other factors not included in the model. Non-audit services significantly impact financial reporting quality (α = -0.062, t = -2.596, p = 0.010), while audit firm size also has a notable effect (α = -0.045, t = 1.619, p = 0.107). Novie and Leny (2018) investigated the effect of audit firm size on audit quality and the reputation of public accounting firms in Indonesia. Their findings suggest that audit quality significantly influences the reputation of public accounting firms and also has a considerable impact on audit firm size.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that audit quality significantly enhances the financial reporting quality of publicly listed firms in Nigeria.
Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:
In order to facilitate better economic decision-making, management should guarantee that users receive financial information in a timely manner. The timely release of financial statements must therefore be a top priority for businesses.
Firms' management should present financial reports in a way that increases their relevance and utility to the intended audience, ensuring they are clear, accessible, and actionable.
The management should ensure that those preparing the financial statement should present it in an easy way that will be understood by the users. Manufacturing firms should imbibe the culture of presenting the financial statement in such a way to show transparency to the users of financial statement.

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Cooperation, Competition and Conflict: A Historical Analysis of the Religious and Socio-Political Relations of Pentecostal Churches in Kaduna Metropolis, 1970-2020

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Abstract. The focus of this article is the religious pluralism of the Kaduna Metropolis, and its socio-political implications on inter- and –intra –faith relations in a rapidly changing urban context. It examines the relationship between Pentecostal churches, other Christian denominations, non-Christians, and the institution of the state between 1970 and 2020. Against this background, it investigates the factors that have necessitated Christian collaboration such as the shared objectives of proselytization, common socio-political concerns, and joint initiatives such as such as crusades and community development projects in the metropolis. It also analyses the elements that have fuelled inter and intra-religious tensions, especially the pursuit of followership, as well as the regulatory roles of the Kaduna State Government which has been a subject of debate. On the strength of largely primary sources, research findings reveal that Pentecostalism's growth in Kaduna Metropolis has engendered complex relationships with religious and secular institutions. Initial interdenominational tensions within Christianity evolved into cooperation and cross-denominational influence. Simultaneously, Pentecostal churches navigated interreligious (Christian-Muslim) dynamics and contributed to both peacebuilding and conflict. The article concludes that their relationship with the Kaduna State Government is also marked by cooperation and tension, fueled by concerns regarding religious freedom and perceived marginalization, which underscores the need for interfaith dialogue and collaborative governance.

Keywords: Cooperation, Competition, Conflict, Pentecostalism, Relations

1. Introduction

Kaduna Metropolis is located between latitude 9^0N and 12^0N of the equator and longitude 6^0E and 9^0E of the prime meridian. Apart from being the capital city of Kaduna State, the area is also one of the major urban centers of Nigeria. Generally, the metropolis consists of four Local Government Areas (LGAs), with Kaduna North and Kaduna South LGAs being the most cosmopolitan in terms of religious and ethnic diversity. Chikun LGAs to the South and Igabi to the North, form the expanding parts of the metropolis. In specific terms, it is composed of the entire Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Governments, some parts of Igabi LGA (the whole of Rigachikun and Rigasa up to the Kaduna International Airport, parts of Chikun LG (including Sabon Tasha to the Kaduna Refinery and environs, as well as the Kaduna Millennium City). As a whole, Kaduna State is bordered to the South-West by Abuja and Niger, to the North West by Katsina and Zamfara, to the North-East by Kano and Bauchi, and to the South East by Plateau and Nasarawa.

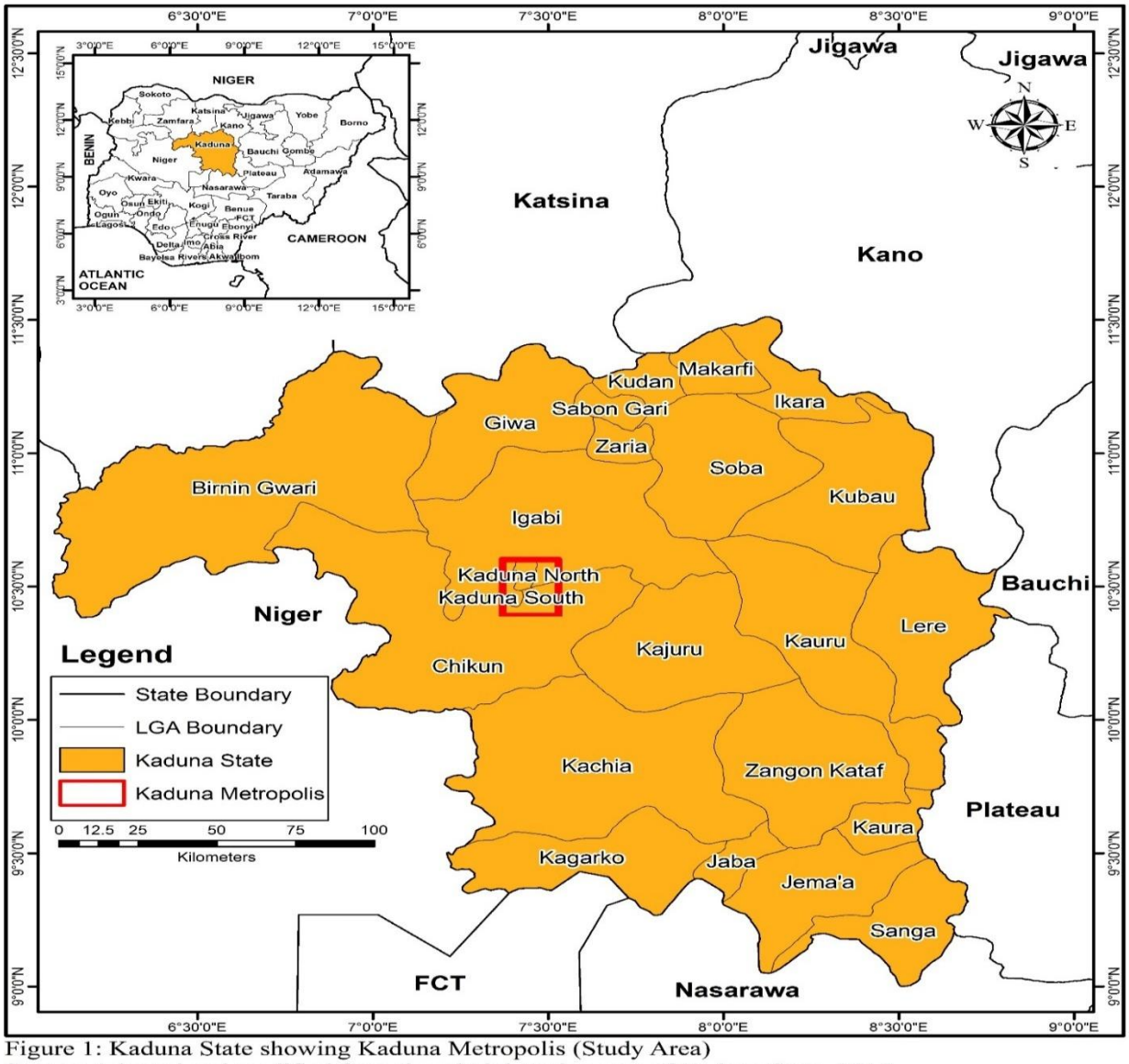

Figure 1: Kaduna State showing Kaduna Metropolis (Study Area)
Source: Adapted and modified from the administrative map of Kaduna State, 2014

Pentecostalism's rapid growth in Africa has significantly impacted not only the religious landscape but also the socio-political and economic spheres. Its large-scale operations have provided access to essential services like education, employment, and healthcare. Pentecostal churches have also actively engaged in empowerment programs, especially for women and youth, and have advocated for social and political changes through community development initiatives and political activism. Pentecostalism began in Nigeria during the colonial period and has both local and global origins. Its local origin is traceable to the secessionist movement within the Anglican Communion in Lagos between 1900 and 1914 in search of an Afro-centric revivalist expression of Christianity.

The 1920as and 30s also witnessed a surge in the establishment of indigenous Christian denominations within the Yoruba communities of Western Nigeria. These churches, such as the Precious Stone Society, Cherubim and Seraphim, and Church of the Lord (Aladura), emerged independent of Western influence. Characterized by a Pentecostal emphasis on the manifestation of charismatic gifts, these churches incorporated elements of African Traditional Religion (ATR). This distinct blend of Christianity and African spirituality contributed to their widespread appeal and growth. The Holy Spirit Movement spread to Eastern Nigeria within the same period. For instance, the Spirit Movement of 1927 among the Annang and Ibibio people in present-day Akwa Ibom State led to the expansion of the Qua-Iboe missions. Similarly, a revival among laymen in old Umuahia in 1934 resulted in the

establishment of the Assemblies of God church in Nigeria.

Global Pentecostalism, particularly influenced by the Azusa Street Revival (1906-1909), began making inroads into Nigeria in the early 20th century. Through the activities of missionary organizations like the Apostolic Faith Mission, Assemblies of God, and Pentecostal Zionist Movement, Pentecostalism gained momentum in Nigeria. The 1930s and 1960s witnessed a notable increase in affiliations between foreign and indigenous Pentecostal denominations. The partnership between Joseph Ayo Babalola and Sydney Granville Elton from the Faith Tabernacle in Britain played a pivotal role in expanding Pentecostalism beyond the southern regions of Nigeria to the Kaduna metropolis, and its gradual spread to other Northern cities. Colonial and post-colonial urbanisation leading to increased economic opportunities and migrations into the Kaduna metropolis created a fertile ground for Pentecostalism to flourish. Migration from Southern Nigeria brought new Christian influences, while economic hardships resonated with Pentecostal messages of prosperity.

Disillusioned with the perceived rigidity and lack of spiritual experience in mainline churches, the inhabitants of the metropolis found Pentecostalism's emphasis on the Holy Spirit and charismatic practices more appealing. The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) and the activism of student Christian organizations like the Scripture Union (SU), Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), Calvary Ministries, etc. at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) and Kaduna Polytechnic, further fuelled Pentecostal growth in the study area. Pentecostal leaders, mostly from Southern Nigeria, adopted urban-centric strategies like home fellowships and street evangelism to carve a niche for themselves in a terrain that was dominated by mainline churches. These churches initially tried to contain Pentecostalism through theological arguments and dissuasion tactics. Later, they adopted revival programs to win back members. These efforts largely failed as Pentecostalism continued its expansion through the 1980s and 90s, given its hope-centered, pragmatic, and dynamic variant of Christianity in the phase of socio-political and economic crises in Nigeria.

Consequently, the religious landscape of Kaduna Metropolis has undergone significant transformations over the past five decades, particularly within the Pentecostal community. Since the 1970s, Pentecostal churches in Kaduna have experienced a dynamic interplay between cooperation and competition, shaped by both internal theological developments and external religious and socio-political pressures. While Pentecostalism in Nigeria has been widely studied in terms of its rapid growth and charismatic appeal, there remains a gap in understanding the specific ways in which Pentecostal churches in Kaduna have navigated the dual forces of cooperation and competition in their religious and socio-political engagements. This research fills this gap by exploring how Pentecostal churches in Kaduna have interacted with one another, non-Christians, and the broader socio-political context within the period of study. In particular, it investigates how these relationships have influenced both their cooperative initiatives and competitive dynamics, as well as their evolving role as socio-political actors and religious communities. This is important because Pentecostal churches have been deeply involved in almost every sector of Kaduna's volatile terrain of inter-religious conflicts for decades, and have contributed to, and challenged its existing religious and socio-political landscapes since their emergence in the 1970s.

1. Conceptual Clarification

Conceptualising Pentecostalism has been very problematic given the variations in beliefs and practices among Pentecostals. The independent and decentralized nature of the movement has given rise to over 700 denominations globally (Schneider, 2016). It is also difficult to reduce Pentecostalism to just a movement because it is eclectic and diverse in organization, liturgy, and matters of faith, which makes it dynamic and able to adapt to societal changes over time. In Nigeria, Pentecostalism may be categorized into three viz. indigenous Pentecostals, classical Pentecostals, and neo-classical (modern) Pentecostals. According to Olufunke Adeboye, the major difference between classical Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism is the degree to which they respond to local changes and the globalization of Christianity (Adeboye, 2006). While classical Pentecostals are moderates, neo-Pentecostals are the most recent ones and are more susceptible to global events.

Also, they tend to cross doctrinal and denominational boundaries. An example could be seen in its belief that prosperity is one of the benefits of being Christian. Indigenous Pentecostals are home-grown, such as the *Aladura* (practitioners of prayers) movement. It comprised Cherubim and Seraphim and the Church of the Lord, which were driven by greater yearnings for spirituality, visions, and supernatural interventions lacking in missionary orders, through long prayers and fasting (Adeboye, 2006). What is common among all the categories is the belief in the profound experience of a new life through the Holy Spirit after conversion, which produces spiritual gifts (charismata) and enables the performance of miracles.

The day of Pentecost, when the apostles of Jesus Christ and other believers received the gift of the Holy Spirit, holds the key to understanding the concept. The monumental day is universally thought to mark the birth of the church and by extension, the origin of Christendom (Acts 2: 1-31; Exodus 12:27). It is also traceable to an Old Testament prophecy of a release of God's spirit on all

believers in the 'last days', which will be at variance with what was obtained before the first advent of Christ (Joel 2: 28-30). The age of the Spirit was echoed in the synoptic gospels (Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John) and re-affirmed by Christ before his 'ascension to heaven'. His disciples turned apostles, were instructed by Christ to wait in an 'upper room' in Jerusalem for the promised age of the Spirit and its accompanying power before they started to evangelize. The promise was fulfilled in the book of Acts of the Apostles, which recorded the experience and the powerful signs and wonders that followed the evangelistic missions of the apostles and other believers (Acts 2:1-31).

Pentecostalism, is thus, one of the evangelical faiths in the world that believes in the inerrancy of the bible and the transformation of Christians through the enabling life in Christ. According to the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, it is a worldwide and trans-denominational outpouring of the Spirit of God, with the evidence of speaking in tongues (glossolalia) (Engelsman, 2001). It is tripartite– a denomination, an experience, and a movement. As a protestant denomination, it embraces the 'full gospel' or 'foursquare gospel', which includes the belief that Jesus saves, baptizes saved sinners with the Holy Spirit, heals the sick, and is coming the second time to rapture his saved ones (Engelsman, 2001).

Additionally, it advocates direct/personal experience of God through repentance and baptism of the Holy Spirit, unlike mainstream Christianity, which holds that regular church attendance for prayers and worship, bible studies, and being taught and guided by the clergy, suffices. Experientially, it is centered on the supernatural realm and encounters through dreams and visions, enabled by the Holy Spirit, which creates the born-again identity and its ''charismatic'' features. As a movement, it holds that a Holy Spirit baptism and its attendant charismatic gifts of the spirit should be the normative religious experience of all Christians (Nichol, 1965). Thus, it seeks to replicate the experiences and outcomes of the day of Pentecost, which endued Christ's apostles with spiritual power to perform miracles as Jesus Christ had foretold.

Therefore, it is a blunt rejection of the long-held orthodox position that the supernatural enabling gifts of the Spirit that manifested in the lives of the apostles had ceased (Ijaola, 2023). In other words, the movement is energized by the need to return to the very foundations of the Christian church, which was apostolic. This explains why the movement aims at restoring 'apostolic Christianity', believed to have been lost to the ritualistic Christianity bequeathed to the world by the Roman Catholic and other orthodox churches.

It is instructive to note that the emphasis on the manifestation of spiritual gifts by Pentecostals is based on the assumption that it is the most reliable and sustainable solution to socio-economic and political problems in society. This belief is informed by its conclusion that human suffering is caused by Satan, contrary to conventional Christian thought that alludes suffering to the sovereignty of God in human affairs. Against this background, Pentecostals prioritize connectivity with the Holy Spirit and value divine manifestation such as prophecy, dreams and visions, and deliverance from evil spirits (Ijaola, 2023). Consequently, adherents are taught the strange and ridiculous doctrine of the sovereignty of Satan, which they uncritically accept and have come under perpetual guilt and fear. In this case, God is relegated to the position of the victim and is at the mercy of Satan, who is presented as more powerful.

Pentecostalism lacks regulations. Its insistence on total loyalty and acceptance of all its claims, makes it opposed to constructive criticisms and corrections. This is why it has been characterized by claims and counterclaims, dubiously justified by the argument that revelation is progressive (Oslon, 2006). The implication is that anyone who claims to have had supernatural experiences in the form of angelic visitations and personal experiences with Christ, irrespective of his/her education status and spiritual growth, is admitted into the fold. The lack of checks and balances in Pentecostal churches is inextricably rooted in its origin and development, which shows a preference for the culture of individualism that more often than not, paves the way for doctrinal aberrations, as there are little or no controls and no sound trajectories to follow (Fahy, 1988).

2. Early Reactions to the Emergence of Pentecostalism in Kaduna Metropolis

It is imperative to examine the response of mainline churches to the emergence and development of Pentecostalism in the area of study during the 60s and 70s. Established by the missionary societies that evangelized the study area during the colonial period, mainline churches adopted what may be termed a 'containment policy' out of fear of mass exodus to Pentecostal organizations. The strategy aimed to dissuade the youth from what was derisively called 'rascals' – leaders and devoted followers of the movement – and Pentecostalism itself. It was also an attempt to counteract the appeal and influence of Pentecostalism, which was perceived as a threat to the established Christian institutions of the time (D. Wobin, Personal Communication, March 30, 2024). David Wobin narrated how the policy saved him and many of his friends from embracing Pentecostalism after he had made up his mind to join the religious fervor. He observed that ''the profound testimonies, worship styles, enthusiasm, and optimism the movement brought to bear in the metropolis attracted him but the containment policy of the Catholic Church, which focused on the 'falsities' of the denomination with 'facts' from the bible, held him back (Wobin, Personal Communication). Furthermore,

he later realized that the testimonies that initially caught his attention were fabricated, which made him content with his choice not to join them. He also experienced the loss of a friend due to typhoid fever because the friend declined medical treatment in favor of faith healing'' (Wobin, Personal Communication).

Worthy of mention are the proponents of the containment policy who suggested that the 'erring' youths should be allowed to continue their activities without interference. This liberal policy was based on the assumption that if the movement was truly inspired by God it would continue unhindered but if not, it would die a natural death (Wobin, Personal Communication). Indeed, the movement continued unabated and even attracted more followers from the mainline churches. According to Rev. E.A. Akintola, the failed assumption that the movement would come to ruin because it was established on a faulty foundation did not put an end to the attempts made by the mainline churches to stop it. He observes that the pastor of the Baptist Church at Hayin Banki Kawo in the late 1970s beckoned on him to enroll at the BTS so that he could have a solid theological and doctrinal perspective before he went into ministry. In his words:
I told him categorically that I have discovered the difference between orthodox Christianity and Pentecostalism; it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the living God, who empowers men and women to live an evidential Christian life as recorded in the book of Acts of the Apostles. No turning back (E. Akintola, Personal Communication, April 12, 2023)!

The attempt by the Baptist pastor to persuade him to attend a Baptist seminary seemed to be to disarticulate and disorient him from the Pentecostal theology, which he had embraced, despite his Baptist background. It is instructive to note that the failure of religious diplomacy with the 'trespassing youths' led to a hardline posture by the Church to curtail or minimize their influence on those who had not been caught up in the Christian revolution of the period. As a result, the youths who continued to fellowship with the Pentecostal fellowships in the metropolis were not only accused of rebellion against the constituted authority of their various churches but were also declared rebels and expelled with immediate alacrity. Pentecostalism was denounced as heresy or a cult, the objective being to discourage people from joining the movement (J. Adedeji, Personal Communication, January 30, 2024).

Additionally, parents of the youths who left some of the mainline churches, especially the Anglican Communion, were denied the opportunity of having their children wedded in the church. The frustration experienced by parents when their children wedded in small Pentecostal fellowships led them to intensify their efforts to curtail this trend (M. Nwaonu, Personal Communication, April 24, 2024). These tactics were followed by increased evangelism through revival gatherings, crusades, and other outreach initiatives aimed at reclaiming members who had been attracted to Pentecostalism (Nwaonu, Personal Communication). Despite all of these efforts, the movement continued to expand as a result of its message centered on optimism, divine intervention, and individual empowerment, through spiritual encounters such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, and deliverance. Residents in the metropolis persisted in seeking comfort and purpose from the Pentecostal movement and its charismatic leaders against the backdrop of political and economic instability.

3. Pentecostal Churches and Non-Pentecostals in Kaduna in the Kaduna Metropolis Since the 1980s

The relationship between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches was frosty in the 1980s and early 1999s. The Cold War-like antagonistic relationships between them are deeply historical and theological in the context of two schools of thought in global Christendom. They are Continuationism and Cessationism. The schismatic schools are a product of a complex and dynamic intersection of diverse Christian cultures, personal experiences, and theological perspectives in interpreting the Christian scriptures. Both have also undergone changes through the practices and beliefs of the early Church, the development of medieval theology, the theological debates of the Reformation era, the emphasis on spiritual renewal seen in revival movements, and the recent currents of Charismatic and Pentecostal renewal (Gundry & Grudem, 1996).

While the continuationists poignantly assert that spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing as outlined in the New Testament remain active in the contemporary church, cessationists maintain that these gifts ceased after the apostolic era or the canonization of the Holy Bible (Gundry & Grudem, 1996). It is instructive to note that while mainline churches and scholars hold onto cessationist beliefs and traditions, the Pentecostals are irredeemably proponents of continuationism. The controversy surrounding the two extreme positions is particularly challenging because both have scriptural (biblical) support for their claims (See Acts 2: 38-39, 1 Corinthians 14:39, Mark 16: 17-18 &; 1 Corinthians 13-8-10, Mathew 16:4).

In line with this differing theological posture, both considered each other unchristian in outlook and practice and locked horns in what may be aptly described as a counter-religious discourse and scramble for space in the metropolis. In the counter-discourse and scramble for space, both began preaching against each other in the 1980s and 90s. The mainline churches did not want to have anything to do with the Pentecostals (Akintola, Personal Communication). They also took a reactionary position because the comfort and unrivaled position they enjoyed before the 1970s was challenged by the fast-

growing Pentecostalism. There were instances in which the leaders of mainline churches walked out of events and crusades due to the presence of Pentecostal leaders (W. Mbuk, Personal Communication, June 10, 2024). Similarly, some of the mainline churches were said to have used their influence in government to deny Pentecostals the use of big facilities such as the Ahmadu Bello Stadium and the Murtala Square (Y. Barnabas, Personal Communication, May 8, 2024). This was because of their conservative and careful approach to acclaimed miraculous occurrences in Pentecostal churches in tandem with their cessationist tradition. They were also wary of practices within Pentecostal churches such as slaying in the spirit and divination that blur the lines between divine intervention and occult activities (S. Dankande, Personal Communication, May 29, 2024). In other words, the similarity between Pentecostal practices and occult activities triggered suspicion within mainline churches regarding the source of their spiritual powers.

Another concern of the mainline churches was the abuse of the 'gifts of the Holy Spirit' (Barnabas, Personal Communication). This was visible through the commercialization of the gospel by Pentecostal churches, which turned the gospel into a money-making venture, as we have shown in their growth trajectory. The missionary orders were also critical of independent Pentecostal churches because of their poor church organization and the lack of regulatory mechanisms to instill order and discipline in their ranks (Barnabas, Personal Communication). Against this background, they argued that the theology of prosperity and the supposed power of the Holy Spirit were manipulated, and used to lure, abuse, exploit, and deprive the unsuspecting of their means of livelihood by charlatans/false prophets in the metropolis since the 1980s (Dankande, Personal Communication).

In Pentecostal circles, mainline churches were described as congregations of the dead given their solemn way of worship, which is the direct opposite of the vibrant style of worship in Pentecostal churches, which they considered the congregations of the living (Mbuk, Personal Communication). This implies that mainline churches were essentially religious but devoid of spirituality. The Catholic Church was in this regard categorized under idol worship for its use of candles to celebrate Eucharistic liturgy and a mission field in dire need of power evangelism (D. Okworie, Personal Communication, May 29, 2024). The Baptists, Anglicans, ECWA, etc. were thought to be uninspiring and lackluster in their approach to Christianity (S. Oyedokun, Personal Communication, July 5, 2024). In addition, mainline churches were also presented in messages as lacking in spiritual power and working against the spread of the gospel (Dankande; Oyedokun; Nwaonu, Personal Communication).

This was because of their perceived concerted efforts at undermining Pentecostalism at all costs. According to Yahemba and Akintola, one would not be wrong to say that the only problem of mainline churches between 1980 and 1999 was Pentecostalism (V. Yahemba, Personal Communication, January, 2023). More disturbing for the mainline churches was the fact that they were rapidly losing their members to the vibrant and seemingly result-oriented services Pentecostalism had introduced to the metropolis. Thus, the unfriendly relations between Pentecostal churches and mainline churches in our area and period of study, reflected the continuation of one of the most contentious and longstanding debates in Christian theology, as espoused by the continuationists and the cessationists.

However, the remarkable growth of Pentecostal churches since the 19990s heralded a new dimension in the relationships between Pentecostal churches and non-Pentecostals. Mainline churches, in particular, recognized the fact that the charismatic denomination had come to stay, with profound influence on their congregations (Yahemba, Personal Communication). This period saw the adoption of what may be referred to as ''the policy of assimilation'' by the mainline churches. The major objective of the policy was to absorb elements of Pentecostalism into their practices to stem the tide of mass exodus from their churches to Pentecostal churches, which started in the 1970s and reached its peak in 1999.

This means that mainline churches set out to extinguish the appeal of Pentecostalism in their congregations and to retain their members. The first initiative in this regard was the setting up of youth churches that were as vibrant as their Pentecostal counterparts by the Anglicans, Baptists, etc (Nwaonu, Personal Communication). In the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), the Charismatic Renewal Movement which slowly began in the 1970 and faced stiff resistance from church authorities was allowed to thrive. Attempts to disband it greatly declined in the 1990s for fear that such a move could bring about a major decline in membership (Okworie, Personal Communication). These groups of young people wholeheartedly embraced Pentecostal and charismatic revival fervor and spirituality but chose to remain in the mainline orders as reformists within the old order, because of the assimilation policy. Furthermore, mainline churches began incorporating charismatic practices such as speaking in tongues, deliverances, and faith healing, hitherto prohibited, into their services (Barnabas, Personal Communication). Night prayers, advertisements of programs, concerts, and crusades which were exclusive to Pentecostal churches were also embraced by the mainline churches in the metropolis.

The period also saw the introduction of English services and the emulation of contemporary worship styles through the use of modern musical instruments by the choirs of mainline churches to make services lively, engaging, and attractive (Anonymous, Personal Communication, June 3, 2024). Like their Pentecostal

counterparts, they began preaching short and interactive messages, which could hardly be differentiated from those of Pentecostal churches. The emphasis on mission, evangelism, and large-scale crusades undertaken by mainline churches was another aspect of the assimilationist policy of the period. Pentecostal churches, as earlier shown, carried out aggressive evangelism and outreach programs to people from various religious backgrounds in the metropolis since the 1970s. Mainline churches were influenced by this approach. Their efforts in reaching out to communities in the metropolis have increased since the 1990s through free medical outreaches, educational support, and social welfare initiatives, meant to counter the growth of Pentecostalism (O. Lazarus, Personal Communication, June 2024).

As part of the thaw in relations, Pentecostal preachers such as Oyedepo and Olaiya have been invited to preach at events organized by some Baptist and ECWA churches (Barnabas, Personal Communication); an indication that the relationship became much better than what it used to be in the 1970s and 80s. This also shows that Pentecostal revival has caught up with missionary churches, whose leadership once resisted it. The paradigm shift has transformed the Christian religious landscape of the metropolis, and also arguably blurred the lines between established Christian denominations. It is however eminently important to note that the relationship has also seen mainline churches influence Pentecostal churches, especially in the area of church organization and administration. For instance, Pentecostal churches have emulated aspects of the efficient organizational structures of mainline churches, which involve a clear hierarchy, specialized departments, and effective channels of communication (Mbuk; Barnabas, Personal Communication). The adoption of some of these models has led to improved administrative efficiency in Pentecostal churches and enabled them to serve their congregations better. One aspect of the leadership structure of mainline churches which these churches have shown no inclination to, is their regulatory framework, which is antithetical to the independent and individualistic traditions of Pentecostalism.

It is important to note that the relationship between Pentecostal churches in the metropolis within the period of study was also characterized by unhealthy rivalry for space, people, resources, and visibility (D. Damina, Personal Communication, September 17, 2024). This fact in their relationship may not be unconnected to the business-like nature of Pentecostalism, which gives presidents and founders unfettered access to wealth and power/influence and unquestionable loyalty. Similarly, their relationship with indigenous Pentecostal churches, the AICs, was also tense due to counter accusations of the infusion of aspects of ATR into their church practices. However, the relationships between the the major Pentecostal churches such as the Living Faith Church (LFC), the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), and the Living Faith Foundation (LFF) were cordial and cooperative. They related with each other through the umbrella of the PFN, where their leaders were foundational members, were held in high esteem, and were considered fathers of faith in Nigeria. Secondly, both Bishop Oyedepo and Rev. P.J.A. Olaiya, the founders and overseers of the LFC and LFF respectively, have been ministry partners and were ordained in the 1980s by Pastor Enoch Adeboye, the leader of the RCCG, whom they consider as their spiritual leader in the Christian faith (M. Olajide, Personal Communication, April 30, 2024). The relationship was so close that there were instances in which they preached in each other's congregations.

4. Pentecostal Churches and Relations with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

The steady growth of Christianity in Nigeria since the turn of the 20th century created the need for organizational frameworks to foster unity and cooperation amongst Christians. The first of such frameworks was CAN, which was established in 1976 (Oyedokun, Personal Communication), at a time when religion had gained prominence in Nigerian politics due to the rise of independent charismatic Christianity and reformist Islam. CAN is an association of Christian churches with distinct identities, recognizable structures, and a system of worship centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ. It exists to meet regularly and to take joint actions on matters, especially on those issues that affect the Christian faith and the welfare of the generality of Nigerians. It included only three Christian denominations in its early years – the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), which comprised other mainline churches, and others (Barnabas, Personal Communication). The inadequate representation of Pentecostal churches in CAN between 1976 and 1990 highlights the frosty relationship between it and the mainline churches, traceable to the 1960s and 70s when Pentecostalism emerged in Nigeria's religious landscape. The designation of 'others' in reference to Pentecostal churches within the CAN could be interpreted as a polite way of casting doubts on the legitimacy of Pentecostalism by some member churches.

Thus, the formation of the PFN seems to be in response to this polite disregard and a burning desire for an umbrella organization that will bring together all Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Essentially, it was deemed necessary in light of the national discourse centered on the need to regulate ''mushroom churches'' that proliferated in Nigeria in the 1980s, the majority of which were independent churches (E. Yahay, Personal Communication, August 27, 2024). The plan which intended to mandate churches to register with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), was considered an attempt to slow down the growth of Pentecostalism by Pentecostal leaders because the majority of their churches

at that time may not be able to afford the financial requirements for their incorporation. The major leaders of Pentecostal churches, thus, thought it wise to form an umbrella organization, which will be incorporated, so that smaller Pentecostal churches that may not be able to afford the cost of incorporation can be covered by their membership of the organization (Yahaya, Personal Communication).

PFN was the brainchild of one Rev S.O. Odunaike, but it was not until in 1985 at a crusade in Lagos, dubbed the Greater Lagos Crusade for Christ, which was organized by Evangelist Umma Ukpai that the platform was created to rally all Pentecostals for that city-wide crusade (Barnabas, Personal Communication). It was inaugurated in October 1985 at the Lagos City Hall but formally incorporated on June 12, 1989, with Rev. Dr. James Boyejo serving as its first president from 1985 to 1992. He was succeeded by Pastor Adeboye, the late Archbishop Idahosa, and Bishop Mike Okonkwo for the remainder of the 1990s (Barnabas, Personal Communication). PFN is a voluntary organization that is open to all Pentecostal churches who believe in its objectives and standard procedures for operations so they can encourage, and inspire each other and cooperate for the furtherance of the cause of the gospel without hindrances (E. Adekoya, Personal Communication, June 10, 2024). Its voluntary status implies that members have the right to withdraw their membership whenever they feel like it. It also exists to cooperate with government and non-governmental organizations in matters affecting Christianity, especially those relating to religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence, and to appoint representatives to the national and state executives of CAN (Adekoya, Personal Communication).

It is important to note that PFN was inaugurated in Kaduna State between 1988 and 1989 by the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa. Before the inauguration, the Kaduna State/Katsina State Evangelical Minister's Association (KKEMA) was founded in 1987 just after Katsina State was created from Kaduna State by Evangelist Mathew Owojaiye (Chairman), Bishop Dr. Peter Oluwayemi Olorunsola (Vice Chairman) and Evangelist Raphael Opawoye (Secretary) to rally Pentecostal churches together (Yahaya, Personal Communication). The venue for the association's meeting was Hospital Christian Fellowship (now Good News Chapel), Ungwan Rimi, Kaduna State. It was KKEMA that metamorphosed into the Kaduna State chapter of the PFN. Rev. Tony Hamed and Evangelist Raphael Opawoye were chosen to pilot its affairs as chairman and secretary respectively.

In 1990, however, Reverend Samuel Olutoye became the substantive chairman after misunderstandings and quarrels arose amongst the executives which they could not resolve amongst themselves. Rev. Samuel Adeeko Bamidele was also chosen to oversee the activities of all zones (Yahaya, Personal Communication). PFN was inaugurated in other Northern States in the 1990s, starting from Minna (Niger state), to Birnin Kebbi (Kebbi state), and then to Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa, Borno, Plateau, etc. by the Kaduna State chapter, under the leadership of Rev. Olutoye (National Deputy President of PFN, Northern states) Evangelist Opawoye (Northern states PFN secretary) and Bishop Dr. Olorunsola (Elder and adviser Northern states PFN) (E. Egoh, Personal Communication, August 22, 2024). The table below presents the leadership of the Kaduna State Chapter of the PFN within the period of study:

Table 1: Kaduna State PFN Leadership, 1987-20220

Term	Chairman	Vice Chairman	Secretary	Treasurer
1987-1988	Evang. Mathew Owojaiye	Bishop Dr. Peter Oluwayemi Olorunsola	Late Evang. Raphael Opaoye	N/A
1988-1989	Rev. Tony Hamed	N/A	Raphael Opawoye	N/A
1990-1999	Rev. Samuel Olutoye	N/A	Raphael Opawoye	N/A
2000-2002	Rev. S Olutoye	Rev. Eyo Edet	Evang. Ralph Opawoye	N/A
2003-2004	Rev. J Ajayi	N/A	Evang. Ralph Opawoye	N/A
2005-2010	Bishop David Bakare	Rev. Dr. Kujiyat	Rev. Dr. S Balogun	Rev. J. Onyeanusi
2011-2013	Rev. Prof. Femi Ehinmidu	Apst E. E. Bako	Rev. Tony Inwulale	Rev. Emmanuel Dauda
2014-2017	Rev. Prof. Femi Ehinmidu	Apst E. E. Bako	Rev. Tony Inwulale	N/A
2018-2020	Apst E. E. Bako	Rev. Abayomi Adekoya	Rev. Tony Inwulale	Rev. Emmanuel Dauda

Source: *List of PFN Leaders in Kaduna, Nigeria (State Secretariat)*

It is interesting to note that CAN's constitution as revised by its 1991 assembly increased the Christian denominations within it to five. These include the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), CCN, Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN)/PFN, Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), and Tekan and ECWA Fellowships (TEF). A critical look at the new composition of CAN shows a unity of opposites

as it brings together the missionary, indigenous Pentecostal, and neo-Pentecostal orders of the Christian faith. Nonetheless, it led to increased collaboration between all the Christian denominations, which resulted in joint initiatives such as prayer meetings, conferences, and community service projects. This is because both organizations share a common interest in advocating for Christian rights and values in Nigeria, as well as religious freedom and the role of faith in public life. Inter-organizational cooperation and collaboration have also created avenues for them to speak with one voice in defense of Christians during the Zangon Kataf Crisis of 1992 (A. Bassey. Personal Communication, June 3, 2024).

Furthermore, the addition of PFN as one of the constituents of CAN, suggests that the mainline churches have come to terms with the fact that Pentecostalism has come to stay. The reason is that PFN's official recognition in CAN coincided with the period of its rapid growth in the metropolis and the nation at large. The period also saw the emergence of powerful Pentecostal figures such as Idahosa, Okonkwo Adeboye, Oyedepo, and Olaiya, among others, in Nigeria's religious landscape, which mainline church leaders could no longer ignore. Thus, although the predominant mainline churches within the CAN continue to maintain differing theological and operational perspectives from the Pentecostal churches of the PFN, they have nonetheless acknowledged the importance of continued dialogue to preserve unity among Nigerian Christians. This approach promotes respectful interactions that respect the right of Christians to hold diverse opinions while upholding their common commitment to Christian values and faith in Jesus Christ.

5. Pentecostal Churches and Inter-Religious Conflicts in Kaduna

Inter-religious conflicts in Kaduna have been a major source of tension and violent clashes between Muslims and Christians who are predominantly concentrated in the Northern and Southern parts of the state. Some of the major religious conflicts recorded in the state include but may not be limited to the following: the Kafanchan Crisis (1987-1992), the Kaduna Sharia Riots (2000), and the Miss World Riots (2002). As discussed earlier, a new generation emerged within Nigeria's postcolonial political milieu, placing their trust in the competing ideologies of divergent religious movements. These movements, whether Pentecostal or Islamic reformist, employ similar strategies to propagate their faiths, despite their distinct religious doctrines and political perspectives. Initially focused on the revival and renewal of their respective religious traditions, both movements were heavily influenced by national and transnational dynamics. Emerging from similar social classes and products of post-colonial educational institutions, they aimed to instill moral and political renewal amidst the turmoil of the oil-boom era through religious revitalization.

Their competing agendas inevitably led to clashes, with provocations from both sides escalating the pursuit of converts and political influence into increasingly violent confrontations (Bassey, Personal Communication). Born within the vortex of rapidly evolving demographic and ethno-religious landscapes, the recurrent conflicts between Muslims and Christians in the metropolis reflect deeper structural tensions between Pentecostal and Islamic reformist movements. This tension stems from the politicization of religious identities among Christians and Muslims, mostly fueled by the growing organizational influence of Pentecostal Christianity, through its global networks. These intricate social and political dynamics of religious movements in the metropolis would significantly shape Nigeria's state and society during the civilian administration of Olusegun Obasanjo. The period witnessed twelve Northern state governments, including Kaduna, adopting Sharia law as a state religion (Ashafa, 2015). This development heightened the already tensed religious milieu, with the Christian community of the state, through the agency of the PFN working tirelessly to preserve the religious diversity of the state.

The vibrant nature of worship by Pentecostals has also affected its relationships with non-Christians, especially the Muslims, who accuse them of needless disturbances during the worship, mostly at night times. The reason is that the majority of the Pentecostal churches in the metropolis are concentrated in residential areas. The decision on the path of the Pentecostals to not adjust their style of worship has occasionally led to conflicts with some of the Muslim communities within the metropolis (A. Sani, Personal Communication, December 23, 2024). Some of these conflicts, which have led to the involvement of the police, did not escalate within the concerned neighborhood. They were in most cases referred to community leaders who knew the actors concerned very well for intervention (Sani, Personal Communication). This explains why they have been well-managed and resolved amicably without escalations.

A good example could be seen in the case of Kakuri. The area which was once dominated by Christians is now torn between Christians and Muslims due to the increasing sale of property to Muslims by some Christians who desire to move to Kaduna South, an area they consider safer in light of the Muslim-Christian divide of the State. In the year 2020, a serious inter-religious tension broke out at Zango Street of Makera, Kakuri. The increasing purchase of property in the area has led to an increase in its Muslim population very close to the Deeper Life Christian Church, which is now neighboured by Muslims (Yahaya, Personal Communication). The Muslim community on the street has tried but without success to reduce what it considers as noise pollution during

worship. This led to the invitation of the police and the arrest of the pastor in charge of the church.

The leaders of PFN in the area under the leadership of Reverend Emmanuel Yahaya intervened, leading to the transfer of the case to the Hakimi of the area, who the PFN claimed was a relation of the wife of Governor Nasir Ahmed El-Rufai, and feared unfairness in resolving the matter. The Hakimi pleaded with both parties to forgive one another, exercise patience, and engage in dialogue. He called on the leadership of the church and the Muslim community to accept the new reality of living side by side while calling on the church to moderate the vibrancy of its worship which was the major cause of the conflict (Bassey, Personal Communication). He also advised the Muslim community to not buy property next to churches in the future to avoid a repeat of the situation. His intervention was hailed by the PFN leadership of Kakuri as both timely and constructive (Yahaya, Personal Communication).

According to Rev Yahaya, churches in Kakuri were thereafter advised to discourage their members from selling their property to Muslims when they intend to live but to no avail (Bako, Personal Communication). This was because the majority of the buyers were financially distressed persons and the fact that Muslim buyers were always available to buy them at good prices compared to the Christians that show interest. Similar experiences have been reported in Barnawa, Mando, and the outskirts of Malali, Ungwan Maisamari, to be specific (T. Omoloye, Personal Communication, November 2024). The Christian community in the metropolis fears that the increase in the purchase of land in Christian-dominated areas is a subtle means to achieve the 'longstanding Islamisation agenda'' in the state which has yet to materialize since the Sharia crises. This informs their unending attempts to curtail the sale of property to Muslims in the areas where they are more in number, an attempt that has not yielded the desired outcome for them because of the socio-economic and religious realities of the metropolis.

The role of Pentecostal churches in inter-religious conflicts in Kaduna State is two-fold; some churches actively work towards peace and reconciliation, while others advertently and inadvertently contribute to conflict through unguided utterances during their services and in the course of public discourse (D. Nuga, Personal Communication, July 20, 2024). The churches in the former have actively engaged in peace-building initiatives which include the promoting of inter-faith dialogues where leaders from different religious backgrounds come together to discuss issues of mutual concern and to build understanding. They have also provided humanitarian aid and support to victims of conflicts regardless of their faith and advocated for the peaceful resolution of disputes through mediation and reconciliation efforts that prioritize forgiveness and reconciliation among Christians and non-Christians (Barnabas, Personal Communication). Others have established peace committees within their congregations to act as mediators in local conflicts (Damina, Personal Communication).

However, churches in the latter category have fuelled religious intolerance through divisive rhetoric during political activities and teachings during their regular services, which are capable of inciting violence. They have also contributed to the spread of misinformation and propaganda, mostly through conspiratorial theories that focus on the much-talked-about Islamisation agenda (A. Morrison, Personal Communication, September 30, 2024), instead of looking to address the root causes of conflict, which are the political manipulation of religion and the contest for resource allocation.

6. Pentecostal Churches and Relations with Kaduna State Government

Although Pentecostalism has shown its inclination to the politics and governance of Kaduna State since its inception, its involvement assumed a new dimension in the aftermath of the Sharia crisis in 2000. The fear of losing their freedom of religion should the plan to impose Sharia work out in Kaduna State was at the heart of their greater involvement in politics. For instance, while the leading Pentecostal organizations and churches between 1970 and 1999 mainly critiqued state structures and performance in relation to their constitutional roles, the 21st century witnessed a major shift in their engagements with the state. Their anti-state posture was partly premised on their longstanding belief that the leadership of Kaduna State, which has been dominated by the Muslim population, is against the growth of Christianity. To make matters worse, they lacked confidence in the CAN to fight off this scheme because of its perceived bromance with state officials against Pentecostal churches.

Consequently, they began to stabilize their relationships with the state to survive what had been a tense religious landscape. The stabilization agenda was achieved through unprecedented involvement in politics and governance, which they felt was the panacea to threats to their religious freedom. Their involvement also resulted from the conclusion that indigenous Christians within the state had displayed weakness, and could not confront the perceived challenges posed by reformist Islam (Bassey, Personal Communication).

As part of their strategies, members of their denominations were encouraged to register with major political parties and to contest for elective offices within the state and at the national level. Ordained pastors, were, however, advised to refrain from active politics to enable them to face the task of spiritual leadership (Bassey, Personal Communication.) The justification for the new

approach, which is at variance with their former position that sees involvement in politics as ungodly for believers was that only Christians, 'the light of the world', could make things work in the political sphere, dominated by 'evil men' (Bassey, Personal Communication). As a result, Pentecostal churches played major roles in the politics of the state and the nation at large by supporting candidates aligned with their interests. For instance, they supported the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), who they believed had become a born-again Christian before his release from prison in 1998, and was in a better position to protect their religious freedom (O. Olutayo, Personal Communication, June 23, 2024). They also supported the administration of Governor Mohammed Ahmed Makarfi (1999-2007) who they considered fair to the Christian community, and the administrations of Governors Namadi Sambo (2007-2010 and Patrick Yakowa (2010-2012), on the same account.

The antagonistic posture towards the administration of Governor Nasir Ahmed El-Rufai was due to a consensus amongst Pentecostal leaders that he was a threat to the freedom they had fought very hard to preserve (Bassey; Olutayo, Personal Communication). Nevertheless, some Pentecostal leaders, especially ordained Bishops, had a series of meetings with El-Rufai on matters of security, inter-religious harmony, and the politics of the state (S. Ayila, Personal Communication, December 29, 2024). In 2019, the governor is said to have held several meetings with some church leaders to win their support for his Muslim-Muslim ticket (Ayila, Personal Communiation). While some of these leaders supported the ticket, they were, however, unable to convince a substantial number of Christians to support it (Mbuk, Personal Communication).

Two reasons have been advanced for their inability. First, these leaders, mostly bishops, are considered fake by the majority of Christians in the metropolis because the bishopric office they occupy is not recognized, and believed to have been bought (Omoloye, Personal Communication). Moreover, the bodies that ordained them as bishops are unregistered, as does their affiliations which conferred on them honorary Ph.Ds. It is also thought that the bishopric office they occupy is for the financial gains that often accompany their deliberations with state officials (Omoloye, Personal Communication). Secondly, their efforts were undermined by the widely-held notion within the Christian community that El-Rufai had demonstrated his hatred for the Christian community by neglecting them in his construction of roads, which he concentrated in the Northern parts of the metropolis that is dominated by Muslims (Mbuk, Personal Communication).

Hence, Pentecostal churches have served as more than just places of worship in the metropolis; they have acted as community centers where socio-political matters are discussed and addressed. Their perception as moral authorities with direct access to God by followers has translated into significant influence for them in the politics and governance of Kaduna State. Given their number of followers, their endorsements, and rejection/criticisms of politicians have swayed public opinion in the metropolis. Most importantly, the role of Pentecostal leaders in the mobilization of voters in election seasons cannot be over-emphasized in the light of their vast network of followers. This ability to rally support for specific candidates, or parties, has impacted election outcomes and explains why politicians from all the major parties within the state rally around them for votes (Barnabas, Personal Communication).

Therefore, Pentecostal churches' relationship with the Kaduna state government is characterized by a mixture of collaboration and tension. On one hand, these churches have complemented the government's efforts in social development programs and community initiatives. On the other hand, however, their activities, especially in a politically volatile environment, have been subjected to government scrutiny, leading to frustrations and tensions, especially when they cross the lines of their religious jurisdiction.

7. Conclusion

The article has shown that the exponential growth of Pentecostalism in the Kaduna Metropolis has engendered relationships with both religious and non-religious institutions, given the deep-seated community involvement trajectories of Pentecostal churches since their rise to the limelight. It reveals that the relationship between Pentecostal churches, other Christian denominations, and CAN was unfriendly in the early years of charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity in Kaduna due to differing theological stands and the scramble for space in the religious landscapes. It contends that the ensuing competition between the major Christian orders in the state-bred conflicts, cross-denominational influences, and later, tolerance and cooperation between them. As active religious and social institutions within Kaduna, the article argues that Pentecostal churches have contributed to, and are affected by inter-religious tensions. While these churches often play a role in promoting peace and social welfare, they have also been inadvertently drawn into conflicts due to some of their positions within the broader religious landscape, where competition between Muslims and Christians for political and social influence persists.

Furthermore, it observes that the relationship between Pentecostal churches and the Kaduna State Government has been characterized by both cooperation and tension, as the government seeks to balance the religious freedom of its citizens with the need to maintain social order and stability. Conflicts often arise due to perceptions amongst Pentecostals that the state seeks to curtail their expansion,

and in the course of time, Islamise the state. This underscores the need for greater interfaith dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation between religious groups and the Kaduna State Government towards mitigating religious conflicts and promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

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The Church's Leadership Role in Nigeria: A Critical Examination of its Historical Impact and Current Challenges

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Abstract. While it may not be farfetched to assert that the church consisted of the cradle of leadership in Nigeria and indeed Africa, it is more perturbing to say that the church has drifted from its noble position to chasing after fantasies. The rationale behind this phenomenon remained enigmatic. It is believed that Christianity has in no small measure affected the polity through meaningful leadership in various capacities in Nigeria, however, it is regrettable to say that the church has shy away from its assignment. It posed serious problems on what measure the church should adopt in reclaiming its leadership mandate. The paper thus examines heuristically the position of the church and her impacts in Africa, taking a cursory look at the Nigeria experience. Leadership is fundamental to all aspects of human endeavour and cannot be handled with levity, hence it becomes paramount to critically examine these fledging leadership tussles that have bedevilled the country in recent times. The paper seeks to establish that religious leadership has a stronghold in the nation's politics. The discourse captured salient areas such as the concept of religion, leadership and the impact of church leadership in Nigeria. To achieve this goal, therefore, the historical and phenomenological methods of religious research were deployed. It also adopts the transformational leadership theory which examines transformational leaders as those connected to their followers in such a way that it raises the level of motivation and morality committed to a collective good. The paper concludes by recommending the values of Christian leadership espoused by the church should be imbibed to revamp the lacuna already created in the country. It advanced for the adoption of Christian leadership traits and values as a panacea to effective leadership structure in the Nigerian polity.

Keywords: Church, Leadership, Nigeria, Transformational Theory

1. Introduction

The church has played a fundamental role in the leadership of not just Nigeria but Africa in general. While it may not be farfetched to assert that the church consisted of the cradle of leadership in Nigeria and indeed Africa, it is more perturbing to say that the church has drifted from its noble position now chasing after fantasies. The rationale behind this phenomenon remained enigmatic. The church (*ekklesia*) is a community of people(s) which is bounded by common life principles and precepts that make them different from the rest of the other members of the society. It is in a sense a counter-community, "not a task forces whose members' mutual social contacts stem only from the common task itself", "not a periodic encounter of otherwise unrelated individuals".

According to Ellen, the church is a paradox. It appears enfeebled and defective, yet God works in it. It is undisputed that the *ekklesia* in all ages has been an agent of transformation and has brought a salvific and redemptive plan of God to humanity; where dedicated men and women have devoted their lives to selfless service to God and humanity, and where the highest ideals of human history have been enshrined and cherished. These men/women who served God in the church also hold vital positions in the community because of their noble lifestyle, which is seen across the society at large. According to Abogunrin (1986), leadership is a dynamic, reciprocal process of personal influence wherein a manager or leader affects the attitudes and actions of others in order to reach or obtain organizational objectives. Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, outlines the requirements for church leaders in the Pastorals to guarantee long-term development and survival even before contemporary ideas of leadership were developed. The church has played a significant role in Nigeria's development, particularly in education and healthcare. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, missionaries established

schools and hospitals, creating a foundation for public education and healthcare. These contributions were instrumental in setting the stage for Nigeria's formal educational and healthcare systems.
Additionally, the church has been a moral compass, influencing societal values and ethical standards. Studies have shown that early missionary activities helped shape the moral and social structure of many Nigerian communities. Accordingly, Olupona (2014), averred that the missionary-driven establishment of schools laid a groundwork for Nigeria's formal educational sector. The question that comes to mind at this juncture is that, where has the church got it wrong haven laid a solid foundation for development in Africa and Nigeria in particular?

2. Conceptualizing the Church

The Church in this work is conceptualised as the assembly, gathering together or association of followers of Jesus Christ. Simply, the church is construed as a place where like-minded persons converged with a sole aim of worshipping or fellowshipping.
According to McKim, the term "church" in the New Testament essentially means "assembly." It may be found in two verses of the canonical Gospel of Matthew, twenty-four verses of the Acts of Apostles, fifty-eight verses of the letters of Paul the Apostle, two Hebrews letters, one James letter, three John third epistles, and nineteen Revelation pages. Unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity are the four traditional notes of the Christian Church (p. 2).

In the phenomenological sense, a number of organizations refer to themselves as churches, maybe due to their desire for fellowship. According to Harper, the term is used to refer to local communities in the New Testament and, in a broader sense, to refer to all believers. Although opinions on what constitutes orthodoxy differ, only orthodox Christians are traditionally regarded as belonging to the real Church. Based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, who was regarded by Christians as the Son of God and the Messiah, the early Church was established in Roman Judea in the first century AD. Scripture, which commands Jesus' followers and apostles to proclaim and teach the kerygma to the dying generations, is consistent with the common belief that the church started with Jesus' apostles. Originating from the Jewish faith of the first century, Christians welcomed Gentiles without compelling them to completely embrace Jewish practices (such circumcision). The similarities between Christianity and the Jewish faith include the Proselytes, God-fearers, and the Noahide Law. According to others, Christians were swiftly expelled from Jerusalem's synagogues due to disagreements with Jewish religious authorities.

It is important to note right away that the church is Christ's body. The Bible makes no mention of the church being like or resembling a body. According to 1 Corinthians 12:27, the church is the manifestation of Christ in the world. Christ came from His lovely kingdom in order to devote Himself to it. Christ is clearly the head of the church, according to the New Testament. Christ's headship alludes to the source of the church's vitality rather than authority and the right to rule. Christ provides the body with the nourishment it needs to survive (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col. 1:18). It serves as the community's eye.

3. What does leadership entail?

The definition of leadership is mostly determined by the author's perspective on the idea. Accordingly, "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept," according to. Traits, behaviours, influences, interaction patterns, role linkages, and occupancy of a job are the first things that spring to mind when we consider defining the word. A leader should exhibit the following qualities: the ability to influence others' thoughts, guide behaviour, communicate with society's members, have positive relationships with others, and be able to hold a position of influence in people's lives.

According to Jacobs (1970) leadership may also be defined as "an interaction between persons in which one presents information of a sort and in such a manner that the other becomes convinced that his outcomes will be improved if he behaves in the manner suggested or desired." Terry, in his definition, leadership is only an influence mechanism, meaning that followers are impacted by the leader's lifestyle when they conduct similarly to the leader. According to leadership is "the initiation and maintenance of structure in expectation and interaction." Leadership is "the relationship in which one person, the leader, influences others to work together willingly on related tasks to attain that which the leader desires"; Katz and Kahn (1978) define it as "the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization "Leadership is defined as "effectiveness in getting ideas accepted and in guiding a group or an individual to accomplish a task" by Bray, Campbell, and Grant (1974) Leadership is "the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly towards the achievement of group goals," according to Koontz and O'Donnell (Koontz et al., p. 661). Leadership, whichever it is defined, is the

capacity to impose the inferior mentality regardless of the inferior's preference.

4. Church Leadership

The phrase "church leadership" has to be clarified now that we know what the church and leadership are. The act of influencing or serving others in the cause of Christ so that they might fulfill God's plans for and through them is known as church leadership. It is not based on materialistic ideas of success, like a passion for wealth or authority. When Jesus emphasized the value of helping others, he spoke out against this. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them," Jesus replied, calling them to Himself. It will not be that way among you, though; if someone wants to rise to prominence among you, let them serve you. In the same way that the Son of Man came to serve, not to be served, and to give His life as a ransom for many, let whomever wants to be the most important among you be your slave. (NKJV, Matthew 20:25–28).

In order to have the intended effect that may change society, Christian leaders are required to venture outside of the church and into the larger public sphere. He contends that the church can only successfully encourage good leadership in society if it can demonstrate a thriving leadership culture within its own ranks in a way that reflects the traits and style of leadership exemplified by the Lord Jesus. One may argue that Ngara's efforts represent a daring move toward resolving the enduring problem of subpar leadership on the African continent. He presents a compelling argument that poor leadership and the church's inability to have a greater public voice are to blame for the main issues facing African nations. When Jacobson (2000) asks the important question, "Who takes the lead?" he lays forth a compelling argument for why church leaders must fulfill a public role. All things considered, leadership is essential to the daily operations of all human endeavours. The purpose of it is to influence the followers' life and enforce conformity. As demonstrated by our role model, the Lord Jesus Christ, Christian leaders are required to take the lead in exemplifying the whole characteristic of effective leadership.

The Roles of the Church in the Society

For most Africans, and especially Nigerians, the church is an important aspect of their lives. Most of the time, leaders who are dispersed around the country are not from the missionary schools that the Christian missionaries in Nigeria founded. In one way or another, these leaders have deviated from the established values of the missionaries who provided them with support. As a result, these so-called leaders who have attended the missionary institutions exhibit poor governance and leadership qualities. In his work "New Testament Churches," Edwards gives us twelve pictures of a local church in the New Testament. These twelve pictures also show how the church is portrayed and its functions in Nigeria in the twenty-first century: assembly of the saints; church of God; church of Christ; cultivated field of God; building of God; temple of God; body of Christ; chaste virgin consecrated; little flock; house of God; lampstand and pillar of the truth. The church has these aspects. In the context of all the other images of the Christian community and society at large, they are "meanings of the image of the body of Christ".

According to the aforementioned, the church is a gathering place for the saints, illustrating their need to shine so that others might see them in society. Christ owns and governs this church, and anything less is only an anomaly and a lie. Whether the church's reaction is transformative and successful is the question. The church's duty includes being a community-sensitive church that considers the "community," the "church," and the "Bible." It makes an effort to align with the two universes and attributes. It does this without trying to threaten any of them. As the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13), this model seeks to preserve the human being that God created in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26) and assist that person in reaching his full potential in managing the network that surrounds him, possessing "territory over the fish of ocean... over all the earth..." and being a good steward of his local network. It is a hope of expanding God's vision in the human heart and a vital reclaiming of everything that God has created.

On the grounds that this is a legitimate and unadulterated church (James 1:27), a congregation that does not ignore the weightier matters of the law: equity and benevolence and confidence that should be done (Matthew 23:23), it is linked to bringing the network to Christ-similarity as the primary priority (Philippians 2:5-11), in word (Matthew 28:19-20), and in works of instructing, teaching, sympathy, and great deeds (Matthew 4:23-24; Acts 10:38). On the other hand, how will the salt be made if it loses its flavour? According to Matthew 5:13, "it is slacker yet to be tossed out and stomped all over by men." What is being discussed is this "additive" work or the topic of "intelligence". Additionally, as intelligence is the proper application of knowledge gained via understanding, this raises the question of whether the congregation's wisdom is discernible in today's public sphere. "Contribute its part to a network, and to take a solid hold of the fortresses of the chance of our locale" is what a knowledgeable congregation will do. Its

position is "out and stomped all over by men" if the congregation is never useful in its church again by preventing it from decaying. When one observes that the congregation is becoming less relevant and knowledgeable about the world, isn't that what's happening today? Therefore, some of the functions that the church plays in the society include:

- Integration Process: Church-Community
- Building Relationships
- The actual practice of compassion
- A genuine concern for the other person
- An authentic heart-to-heart communication
- A commitment to seek a win-win resolution of problems
- A determination not to win at the expense of anyone else
- Should anyone lose, everyone should share the loss.
- Drug-Rehabilitation centre
- offering a holistic programme to the community
- Drug-Rehabilitation Centre (Home for Boys)
- Six-month intern programme,
- Bible study,
- counselling, sports and recreational activities and
- family support system.

5. The Church and Leadership

Politically, socially, economically, academically and otherwise, we have Christians leaders spread all over the facets of the Nigerian polity. In Nigeria for example, we have leaders who have led the nation for several years in various capacities. One popular example is the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo; the former president of Nigeria from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He is a Christian leader; but if adjudged by the ways and manners with which he carried out his administrative functions in the country, can we say he led in Christ manner? This is a question or a food for thought for any Christian who wants to make restitution for his/her life. It is unarguable that the word “corruption” took a centre stage in his administration. Leadership is not about oppressing people or bossing them around as the Gentiles do but about serving and impacting people in Church and Society to please God according to the will of God and the goal of God’s Kingdom as revealed in the gospel according to Mark 10:42-45.

If a Christian leader is a person with a God-given capacity and responsibility to influence a specific group of God's people towards God's purposes-then values centre around those purposes. Values provide the shared roadways on which Christian leaders exercise their influence and on which followers respond. Many variables affect leadership effectiveness, yet values provide the constrains for all of them. Leadership effectiveness as posited by Elliston depends on many influences, but values provide the paths for these influences. Shared values provide the criteria for both what ought and what ought not to be done. Biblical values undergird selection criteria, the development process, and the bases for evaluating spiritual leadership. These values fit interculturally with only the specific local forms changing as the values are expressed. They serve as the criteria for judging how well or appropriately a spiritual leader function (Elliston 1992). Several of the more important values which undergird the concept of Christian leadership are summarized below:

- We see Christians who record betrayals that are difficult to talk about.
- Christian leaders should function as servants.
- They are to be evaluated primarily by the criteria of the servant model of leadership lived and taught by Jesus as the norm for Christian leaders.
- Christian leaders should behave in ways which are above reproach in their communities.
- Christian leaders should be distributed within the church, with different persons leading according to their particular spiritual gifts.
- Christian leaders should not base their leadership on their own rank, status, or power for personal gain.
- Christian leaders should contribute to the purpose, fullness and functioning of the Church.
- Christian leaders should reproduce themselves through others, by such means as contextual preparation, discipleship, empowerment and legitimization.
- Christian leaders should be selected for a particular purpose based on the person’s calling, demonstrated commitment, and competence.

5.1 Transformational Theory of Leadership

Transformational theory of leadership posits that transformational leaders are those connected to their followers in a way that they can raise the level of motivation and morality which is committed to a collective good. Its essence is to transform the followers to a reasonable level of good. As Stone et al. may have it, transformational leadership theory was initiated by Burns (1978). Their main concern is to motivate and mould people towards progress and development. This leadership theory has become

extremely popular concept in recent times. He/she transforms the personal values of followers into support for the vision and goals of the organisation by cultivating an environment in which relationships may be built and by establishing an atmosphere of trust and vision sharing.

Transformational theory of leadership has four basic features, which are, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Based on his/her idealised or charismatic influence, the transformational leader becomes a role model who is respected, admired and emulated by followers that underlie transforming and transactional leadership. This no doubt additionally gives driving force to vision sharing. Transformational leadership leads with forensic examples in such a way that they lead with inspiration. When we talk about inspiration, the transformational pioneer persuades others by "giving importance and challenge to the supporters' work".

As opined by Stone et al., combining idealised influence and inspirational motivation could give rise to charismatic inspirational leadership. This is where the church leadership functions to give heeds too the numerous challenges bedevilling the society. Hence, whereas intellectual stimulation is helpful to the followers' efforts to be innovative and creative, individualised consideration helps the transformational leader to give personal attention to the followers' needs for achievement and growth. Similar to Burns, Bass views transactional leadership as an exchange of rewards for compliance. However, Bass defines transactional leadership in broader terms than Burns does. According to Bass (1985), it includes not only the use of incentives and contingent rewards to influence motivation, but also clarification of the work required to obtain rewards. Bass views transformational and transactional leadership as distinct but not mutually exclusive processes, and he recognizes that the same leader may use both types of leadership at different times in different situations.

Scattered in the scripture are transformational leaders who made impact through their lifestyle and their bold courage. The researcher therefore, decides to employ transformational leadership theory knowing its intricacies towards bringing followers to bear and making them to follow by the pace set by the leader.

We read in the scripture a proactive leader-Nehemiah; what made Nehemiah the man of the hour when the king needed to choose someone to become his trusted confidante? His almost coleader? His personal assistant? A team member? His bodyguard at least when it came to a willingness to sacrifice himself for the king's life as his wine tester? Or, what qualities did Nehemiah exhibit throughout the book of Nehemiah that made him such a great leader? The church being the eye of the society must exert its full potential towards making sure that the essence of its formation is not forfeited but fulfilled. The quality that makes for effective and proactive leaderships is found in Nehemiah. Hence, he was able to face head long the likes of Sanballat and Tobiah (Nehemiah 4:1-3). We live in a society where trust and truth are elusive and no one wants to entrust sensitive ideas and commodity to his neighbours. This is the hour that Christians are supposed to showcase to the world what Christ the great leader taught and how He carried out leadership task. Leaders are to live a life that transform and mould the nation and allow the love of Christ lead through them.

6. Where is the Church in the Nigeria of Today?

In recent years, church leaders have taken active roles in social justice advocacy, including anti-corruption campaigns and supporting the rights of marginalized groups. For instance, church organizations have been vocal about governance issues, demanding transparency and accountability from the government. During the 2023 election, we found that the church took some measures in educating their members of the necessity to get their PVCs and not to be disenfranchise during the voting process. The worry here is that, of all leaders in the country there are Christian leaders who corruption has been traced to while in office. Scattered in the scripture are leaders who with their various position helped in promoting peace and tranquillity in the society. King Solomon is renowned for his wisdom, which he used to administer justice and maintain peace in Israel. His request for wisdom to govern Israel (1 Kings 3:9-12) illustrates his dedication to just and effective leadership. His famous judgment in the case of two women claiming the same child (1 Kings 3:16-28) is a prime example of his ability to resolve conflicts fairly, which helped maintain societal harmony.

Solomon's peaceful reign is celebrated in 1 Kings 4:24-25, where it is noted that "every man under his vine and fig tree" lived in safety. His reign reflects the value of wisdom and justice for societal peace. Joseph, as a high official in Egypt, played a vital role in maintaining societal peace and stability by preparing for a prolonged famine. Through his foresight, he stored grain during years of abundance and distributed it during the famine, ensuring that people both within Egypt and in surrounding regions survived the crisis (Genesis 41:46-57). His administrative wisdom

preserved many lives and prevented social unrest. Joseph's leadership provided peace in a time of potential disaster, showcasing how responsible stewardship and care for society can foster stability.

Moses was a foundational leader who guided the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to freedom. He not only led them through the wilderness but also established a judicial system to handle conflicts (Exodus 18:13-27). By delegating authority to capable leaders, Moses ensured that justice was accessible, reducing tensions and promoting peace among the people. In Exodus 18, Moses' delegation of judicial responsibilities to appointed leaders illustrates the importance of organized governance in maintaining peace within a community. Jesus emphasized peacemaking as a core value, both in teaching and practice. He encouraged people to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:44), promoting reconciliation over revenge. His role as the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6) was characterized by fostering unity, forgiveness, and love among people, ultimately establishing a model of peace for Christian leadership. In the Beatitudes, Jesus states, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). His emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, and service shaped the community and promoted peace.

The regret of today Christian leaders in position of power with history of corruption and misuse of power. It is regrettable that many churches in Nigeria and across Africa have strayed from their core mission, adopting secular rules and standards instead of adhering to biblical principles. As noted in an interview with Irivwieri, today's Nigerian leaders often display behaviors worse than those of non-believers who once sought these positions of influence. Church and political leaders alike seem to have abandoned the tenets of biblical leadership, resulting in policies and actions that make life increasingly difficult for the masses. Even members of the judiciary, who are part of various congregations, are now seen subverting justice. This situation calls for a serious examination of the church's role, as it is meant to be a standard-bearer and an anchor of hope for the people.

When Christian leaders campaign for elected positions, they often promise to change the narrative and uphold moral standards. However, once in office, many begin to follow influences that contradict the values they initially professed, disappointing those who elected them. As Tietie suggests in an interview, any Christian leader who attains a political position and is found to be more corrupt or ineffective than their predecessors should face disciplinary action within the church. Furthermore, such individuals should not be entrusted with any sensitive leadership roles in the future.

7. Conclusion

The paper examines the Church and her leadership impact in Africa taking a cursory look at the Nigerian Experience. The church still remains one organization that impacts the nation, and so the society looks at the calibre of persons being produced in the church as either standing to be a solution or a cog to the wheel of progress in the polity. The laws with which great nations are being governed are drawn from the bible, hence it is expedient that those who study and read the holy book must lead with examples as exemplified by role models in the bible. The church of the 21st century Nigeria is faced with diverse leadership challenges which calls for re-examination of the life of great leaders in the bible like that of Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah so as to be well equipped of the task that lies ahead for it is seemly so to do. The society is in dare need of exemplary leaders and so, to effectively model the behaviours which are expected of others, Christian leaders must first be clear about their own guiding principles. Christians must find their own voice and then they must clearly and distinctively express their values.

8. Recommendations

The values of Christian leadership espoused by the church should be imbibed so as to revamp the lacuna already created in the country.

There is need for the adoption of Christian leadership traits and values as a panacea to effective leadership structure in the Nigeria polity.

Christian leaders at the congregational, denominational and ecumenical levels should accept the responsibility in the holistic empowerment of both Christians and non-Christians in Nigerian society and engage alongside them in the socio-political and economic transformation of Nigerian society.

Pastors, evangelists, deacons who found themselves in position of leadership in the country must be prepared to undergo our Lord's leadership training programme like James and John in order to experience conversion and a change of heart

Christian leaders must stand tall to nip evil and all forms of corruption in the bud for this is the height of it all in the contemporary Nigeria.

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Part Two
Social Psychology

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Diagnostic and Formative Assessment Strategies on Improving Economics Achievement Among Secondary School Students in Lagos State.

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Abstract. Economics is a social science that is concerned with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. It is included in senior secondary school curricula to equip students with essential social scientific skills necessary for driving the nation's technological and economic development. However, a significant number of students continue to underperform in the subject. Researchers have identified various factors contributing to this poor performance, including cognitive, affective, and institutional challenges. These include outdated and poorly written textbooks, inadequate or superficial content in economics textbooks, teachers' qualifications, and ineffective teaching methods, among others. These challenges necessitated this study to investigate the impact of diagnostic and formative assessment strategies on improving students' achievement in Economics. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and a multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 200 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students from four senior secondary schools in Kosofe Local Government Area, Lagos State. Fifty students were chosen from each school. Data collection tools included the Formative and Diagnostic Feedback Evaluation Questionnaire (FADFEQ) and the Economics Achievement Test (EAT). The study developed two hypotheses tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant relationship between formative evaluation feedback and students' academic achievement in Economics. However, diagnostic evaluation feedback showed no significant relationship with students' academic achievement in Economics. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that school teachers should acquire updated skills and best practices in using diagnostic evaluation to enhance students' academic performance, not only in Economics but across all subjects; Head teachers or academic unit heads should ensure rigorous scrutiny of the psychometric properties of diagnostic and formative evaluations submitted by teachers; also the Nigerian government, Ministry of Education, and other stakeholders should provide financial support and incentives for teachers to attend high-quality seminars and workshops on constructing effective diagnostic and formative tests.

Keywords: Achievement, Diagnostic and Formative Evaluation, Feedback Mechanisms, Remedial Strategies.

1. Introduction

Education is a purposeful and deliberate process. It is carefully planned within a school setting, with defined objectives, goals, and aims aimed at equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute meaningfully to societal development. At the core of every educational program is the goal of ensuring that learners acquire the valuable knowledge required to advance the socio-economic, technological, and cultural progress of society. For this reason, curriculum activities, learning objectives, instructional methods, and strategies are designed to meet the needs and interests of learners, who, in turn, fulfill the needs of society.

A key question arises: how can it be determined that these objectives and experiences have been successfully achieved? What mechanisms can be used to evaluate their attainment? These questions underscore the importance of assessment procedures and approaches. For teachers to effectively support students in improving academically, they must first identify the specific challenges faced by the learners. Educational assessments have undergone significant changes, driven by expert scrutiny of what assessment entails. Ukwuije and Opara (2023) define assessment as a systematic process for determining the extent to which students meet instructional objectives. This highlights that assessment should be a well-structured and deliberate activity aimed at enhancing instructional effectiveness. Assessment involves

deciding, collecting and making judgments about evidence based on individual student progress and achievement of learning goals (OECD, 2023). According to Brown (1990), cited in Yambi, (2018), assessment relates to different kind of tests used in determining a complex characteristic of a person, or a group. It often involves gathering of data from students, and the interpretation of the data in order to understand the academic standing of learners, as well as evaluating teaching and learning objectives.

Brown (1990) in Ghaicha, (2016), asserted that the functions of assessment in the classroom are to:

- Show if teaching and learning is successful,
- Clarify the teachers' expectations from learners.
- Measure the improvement in performance over time.
- Motivate students to learn.
- Evaluate teaching styles and approaches, and
- Rank students in terms of their abilities.

In a nutshell, the three broad purposes of assessment in schools are to inform and support learning, to report achievement for certification, progress or transfer and to satisfy the demands of public accountability.

An excerpt from the teacher training manual of the National Teachers Institute (NTI, 2022) revealed that educational assessment could be conveniently grouped in four categories: Formative, Summative, Placement and Diagnostic. But for this review, focus shall be on diagnostic and formative assessment. Diagnostic assessment involves the gathering and careful evaluation of detailed data to diagnose strengths and areas of need in all students in a given learning area. Diagnostic assessment also refers to a variety of assessment tasks that are used to determine students' level of knowledge, skills, and understandings at the beginning of a course, grade level, unit and/or lesson. They test the students on what they already know. These tests allow the instructor to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of the students. The data assist teachers to plan for appropriate pedagogy and targeted learning to more effectively scaffolding the learning needs of their students.

Diagnostic assessment is used for learning when taking action to adjust teaching, and it plays a significant role in improving learning outcomes for all students. It assesses what the learner already knows, the nature of difficulties that he/she has, which if undiagnosed might limit their engagement in new learning. In the words of Betts, Hahn and Zau (2021), it is a process that involves making judgments as to how a student is performing against a predetermined set of criteria. This kind of assessment must be linked to further work, which will tackle problems identified. This implies that formative and diagnostic assessment overlap.

Barr, Blachowicz, Katz, and kaufman (2023), outlined the principles of diagnosis as follows:

- Diagnosis is a decision- making process. Teachers are constantly making decisions about individual or group of students in achieving learning objectives.
- Diagnosis process considers the whole learner. This implies that teachers should examine multiple forms of data including past experiences, attitudes, learning styles, interest, strengths and weakness, reasons for referral, conducting interviews with parents etc.
- Diagnostic is thorough and balance.
- Diagnostic is a team effort: it is impossible to learn about the child from various perspectives like physically, psychologically, emotionally, socially and academically.
- Determine the specific nature of learning difficulties: diagnosis of learning difficulties depend on the nature of the difficulty.
- Determine the factors causing learning difficulties.

Diagnosis and remediation go hand in hand. The effectiveness of any teaching and learning process depends on teacher understanding the learners' level of mastery of the subject area and is achieved through diagnostic assessment.

Generally, diagnosis is the process of determining the causes of educational difficulties is known as educational diagnosis. The scope of educational diagnosis is much larger than the use of tests and examinations. It is not proper to limit the scope of diagnosis to locating the causes that interfere with the ordinary academic prognosis of the pupils (Kumar, 2016). An adequate diagnosis may involve the use of intelligence tests, both general and specific, and of diagnostic achievement types of laboratory apparatus for measuring sensory activity, co-ordination and the like. Other forms of appraisal such as rating scales, controlled observation, questionnaires and interviews can also be used for diagnosis in education

Diagnosis is an understanding of a present situation in terms of its causes, what has brought it about or in terms of what it will cause. Kumar, (2016) cited Ross (1956) who suggested there are five levels of diagnosis, which are:

- Who are the pupils having problem?
- Where are the errors located?

- Why did the errors occur?
- What remedies are suggested?
- How can the errors be prevented?

The first four according to the researcher are called "corrective diagnosis" and the fifth one is known as "preventive diagnosis." In education, it has been suggested by researchers that there are two major aspects of diagnosis in teaching (Monroe 1965 in Kumar, 2016). They are:

- Determination of the extent to which desirable educational objectives are achieved.
- Identification of factors that may be interfering with the optimum growth of the individual.

However, formative assessment refers to the formal and informal assessments that are used throughout a unit or course of study to monitor student progress so that teachers can adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of their students. Formative assessment is defined by McManus (2018) as a process in which teachers and students provide feedback during instruction to organize the learning and teaching process in order to increase student achievement. As cited by Ozan, and Kıncal, (2018), Miller and Lavin (2017) viewed formative assessment as a valid and vital part of the blending of teaching and assessment. Formative assessments inform teachers about whether the students have learned and they have an indicator qualification for how the teachers should plan their next lessons which are: (i) Explaining learning objectives and success criteria (ii) increasing the quality of inquiry/dialogue (iii) increasing the quality of marking/feedback/record keeping; and (iv) using self and peer assessment (Wuest & Fisette, 2022). There are four main components of formative assessment (William, 2021; Centre for Educational Research and Innovation [CERI], 2018).

Formative assessment has the concept of feedback at the centre of it. (Hattie & Timperley, 2017 in Ozan & Kıncal, 2018). The impact of formative assessment arises from the strength of the feedback provided to students about their learning and to teachers about their teaching (Andrade, Lui, Palma, & Hefferen, 2015). Shute (2018) opined that formative feedback is the information transmitted to students that allows or encourages them to organize their thoughts or behaviours in order to improve their learning. The feedback provided through formative assessment has significant benefits when motivating students, helping students improve their learning, reinforcing their work, and providing them with a learning profile (Luckett & Sutherland 2000 in Ozan & Kıncal, 2018.

Besides, teachers are not the only source of feedback. Self and peer assessments can be taught carefully, guiding learners in how to provide constructive and learning-oriented feedback on their own. Self-assessment is a process in which students criticize their own work according to clearly stated expectations, usually provided in the form of goals or criteria, and then revise their work. Self-assessment is an excellent formative assessment strategy that provides students with immediate feedback on their performance according to established standards and criteria, and gives them information about how to make adjustments to improve what they learn and how they learn (Crooks, 2017). Harrison and Harlen (2016) also pointed out that self-assessment is one of the critical elements of formative assessment because it helps students participate directly in learning objective activities.

Assessment plays a crucial role in evaluating performance and determining whether established standards have been met, thereby promoting effectiveness and informed decision-making. However, traditional assessment methods have notable limitations, often being overly teacher-centered. Asuai and Adeleke (2013) observed that traditional assessment methods position students as passive recipients of information, with teachers acting as both instructors and evaluators. Similarly, Shams and Tavakoli (2014) emphasized that in traditional assessments, only the teacher determines what is learned and how it is assessed. This approach leaves learners unaware of the grading criteria outlined in exam rubrics, which hinders their ability to respond effectively. This lack of adherence to rubrics and test-answering skills has been identified as a major factor contributing to poor performance in various examinations, particularly in Economics, as reported by West African Examination Council (WAEC) chief examiners (2020).

In classroom settings, assessment involves gathering relevant information through tests, interviews, and observations to identify and address issues related to teaching strategies and learners' achievement of instructional objectives. Okeke (2004) in Casmir (2024) highlighted the importance of formative and diagnostic tests in fostering scientific thinking and evaluation. Diagnostic assessment, a type of formative assessment, is particularly useful in identifying students' understanding, strengths, weaknesses, and cognitive abilities in specific content areas. It is typically conducted before the commencement of teaching and learning activities to guide instructional planning.

Economic education focuses on the teaching and learning of Economics to prepare students to become responsible citizens, effective decision-makers, and agents of change. Its scope extends beyond basic principles like supply and demand, aiming to equip learners with tools to analyze economic issues and apply economic reasoning in their daily lives. Despite its significance, it was discovered that economics education is often overlooked in schools. The subject's importance lies in its ability to develop critical thinking skills and prepare learners to address economic challenges.

Economics education aims to help students understand fundamental economic concepts, develop reasoning skills, apply these concepts in daily life, and recognize the role they play in nation-building. It also aims to equip students with tools to analyze economic issues and consider diverse perspectives. (NCERT, 2015). Basically, Economics, studies how people, businesses, governments, and nations make choices about how to allocate resources. Economics focuses on the actions of human beings, based on assumptions that humans act with rational behaviour, seeking the most optimal level of benefit or utility. Economics, just is like other science subjects, is methodological, and its analysis is usually systematic, and the validity of its various theories can be tested and verified (Salahudeen & Abraham 2018).

According to Ononye, and Obiakor (2020) the study of economics is typically divided into two main parts: Macroeconomics and Microeconomics. Macroeconomics focuses on the behaviour of an entire economy the "big picture." Macroeconomic is concerned about such national issues as employment, control of inflation, and economic growth, etc. The essential concern of macroeconomic is to understand and improve the performance of the economy as a whole. A primary concern of macroeconomics, for example is to determine how much money in total, consumers will spend on goods and services, and the level of total business investment. Microeconomics however, concerned with the details of this big picture. In microeconomics we focus on the individuals, firms, and government agencies that actually compose the larger economy. However, in microeconomics, the focus is much narrower, attention is paid to purchase of specific goods and services rather than just aggregated totals.

Ononye and Obiakor, (2020) corrected that the macro-micro distinction does not mean that economics is so highly compartmentalized that every topic can be readily labelled as either macro or micro; many topics and subdivisions of economics are rooted in both. For example, the problem of unemployment is usually treated as a macroeconomic topic (because unemployment relates to aggregate spending). Economists recognise that the decisions made by individual workers in searching for jobs and the way specific product and labour markets operate are also critical in determining the unemployment rate. Both macroeconomics and microeconomics involves facts, theories, and policies, each contains elements of positive economics and normative economics.

Economics is one of the six elective subjects in the three – year senior secondary school curriculum. The general objectives of studying economics in senior secondary school according to Eneja, and Akamigbo (2022) who cited the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (2018) are as follows; to enable students:

- Understand basic economic principles and concepts as tools for sound economic analysis.
- Contribute intelligently to discourse on economic reforms and development as they affect or would affect the generality of Nigerians.
- Understand the structure and functioning of economic institution.
- Appreciates the role of public policies on National economy
- Develop the skills and also appreciates the basis for national economic decisions
- Become sensitized to participate actively in National Economic advancement through entrepreneurship, capital market and so on.
- Understand the role and status of Nigeria and other African countries in the international economic relationships.
- Appreciates the problems encountered by developing countries in their efforts towards economic advancement

The study of Economics also helps students to understand the human world through enquiring into how resources are used to serve individuals and society. It also contributes to the development of critical thinking and decision-making skills, which are crucial for the all-round development of students and in particular, their development as lifelong learners and responsible citizens (Jonathan, 2011 in Salahudeen & Abraham 2023). Economics students desire to learn Economics principles to form a solid foundation so as to build on for further development in theory, methodology and application on the field. Students see that Economics is not simply diagrams on

blackboards, but a way of thinking when choices are made.

Filade, Omozokpia, Uwannah, Amanze, Ajibola and Omotosho (2020), argued that the study of Economics enables students to:

- understand the nature of the complexity of the economic activities in which he is only a very small part;
- understand and appreciate various government polices where choices have to be made such as probably to spend more money on free education and therefore provide less employment opportunities;
- acquire basic skills for analysing Economic problems thereby preparing them better for positions where economic decisions have to be made; the study of Economics helps a government to promote growth and development therefore improving the quality of life of the citizens; and
- analyse fascinating patterns of socio-economic behaviour; the study of Economics is useful to understand and alter the inequalities in the distribution of income and opportunities.

Moreover, the relevance of economics to any given society cannot be over emphasized. Every family is a part of an economy and everyone uses the rules of Economy too. From the time we are born, we become consumers of various products and services (say medical services, baby foods and so on). We grow and diversify to attain various different roles as producers, trades mediators and agents. In fact, today's world is that of "economic implication" where economic factors most importantly money, dictates all the elements of the society. Economics is an issue or discipline which everybody; even ignorant households are learning (Michael, 2014).

Academic achievement also refers to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies. (Scortt, 2022). It has to do with the ability of students to study, remember facts and be able to communicate their knowledge verbally or through writing (Mwaniki, 2012). In other words, academic achievement shows how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. Kathryn (2010) opined that academic achievement is a student's performance in a given academic area (e.g. reading or language arts, mathematics, basic science) and other areas of human learning. Academic achievement therefore relates to the subjects that a student studies in school, and the skills expected to be mastered in each of the subjects. It means excellence in all academic discipline, in class, as well as extra-curricular activities.

Ernest-Ehibudu and Opurum (2023) argued that the measure of academic achievement is through achievement tests/examinations and observations, which may include tests or examinations given at the end of a lesson, unit, term, session, year or programme such as weekly test, mid-term test, termly examination, first school leaving examination, senior secondary school examination (E.g WASSCE, NECO, NABTEB) and other tests/examinations at different levels and areas of education.

However, the persistent poor performance of secondary school students in Nigeria remains a major concern for stakeholders (Ajagun, 2018). Alaka and Obadara (2013) noted a consistent trend of low achievement in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE), particularly in Economics, a subject critical to fostering creativity and critical thinking.Ononye and Obiakor (2022) reported that approximately one million students failed the May/June WAEC examinations in 2020, raising concerns among governments and the public. Factors contributing to these failures include insufficient syllabus coverage, lack of familiarity with test formats, and inadequate understanding of assessment criteria. Historical data further supports this trend. For instance, only 26% of students obtained credit passes in Mathematics and English in the 2019 WAEC examination, and the NECO results of the same year revealed a failure rate of 98% for students seeking five credits, including Economics, Mathematics, and English. Unfortunately, this pattern persists in general examinations across Nigeria. Continuous assessment aligns closely with formative testing and remediation. It involves constructing and administering tests after each instructional unit and addressing areas of difficulty before progressing to the next unit. Aboni, Okereke, and Omebe (2015) noted that the Federal Government's handbook on continuous assessment describes it as a method for evaluating students' gains in knowledge, reasoning, character development, and industriousness through various instruments, including tests, assignments, and projects. Continuous assessments are conducted periodically and their results influence students' progress and post-school opportunities. When learning is regularly evaluated, accompanied by prompt feedback and targeted remediation, students' performance is likely to improve significantly. This study therefore seeks to examine the impact of diagnostic and formative assessment strategies in

improving Economics achievement among secondary school students.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Over the years, the alarming rate of students failing economics has been a cause for concern. Notably, between 2012 to 2019 National Examination Council (NECO) examinations, a shocking 70% failure rate was recorded. Economics, a crucial subject for students' admission and essential for equipping learners with the social scientific skills necessary to drive the nation toward technological advancement, has been plagued by consistently poor performance among students. This persistent failure raises questions about the underlying causes.

Several researchers have identified a variety of contributing factors/causes, ranging from cognitive and affective challenges to institutional issues. Among the practical challenges in teaching economics are outdated textbooks most Nigerian-written economics textbooks are poorly written, lack depth, are overly descriptive, poorly illustrated, and often contain inaccuracies, as they are hastily produced. Other notable challenges include inadequate teacher qualifications and non-conducive learning environments.

These challenges have prompted the need for a comprehensive study to explore the need for a regular diagnostic and feedback assessment strategies of economics in secondary schools. The teaching of economics in secondary schools faces numerous obstacles that have significantly contributed to declining performance in public examinations. The researcher posits that the instructional methods and approaches employed by teachers may be a critical factor in this trend. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of diagnostic and formative assessment strategies in improving economics achievement among secondary school students.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the impact of diagnostic and formative assessment strategies in enhancing students' achievement in Economics within secondary schools. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To evaluate the impact of formative assessment strategies on students' achievement in Economics.
- To assess the effect of diagnostic assessment strategies on students' achievement in Economics.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses was tested in the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant impact of formative evaluation strategies on students' achievement in Economics.
Ho_2: There is no significant impact of diagnostic evaluation strategies on students' achievement in Economics.

2. Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was used. Creswell and Creswell (2018) define a descriptive survey design as a quantitative research method that involves collecting data to describe trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample. This design allows researchers to generalize findings to the entire population.

2.1 Population of the Study

The target population for this study would comprise all SS2 students in the public Senior Secondary Schools in Kosofe Local Government Area. According to the Lagos State Schools Census Report (2020-2022), there are 14 senior secondary schools and 10,405 students in the local government.

2.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

Multi-stage sampling techniques were employed in the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the four schools needed for the study in Kosofe Local Government Area. Secondly, stratified sampling procedure was employed to select fifty (50) students from each school, so that there would be equal male and female (25 each). In summary, the study used four schools in all, and 50 students from each school to give a total sample size of 200 participants, consisting of 100 male and 100 female students.

2.3 Research Instruments

The two main instruments to be used in assessing the students' achievement in Basic Science are: A questionnaire titled "Formative and Diagnostic Feedback Evaluation Questionnaire (FADFEQ)." and a Economics Achievement Test (EAT) compiled by the researcher from past questions of WAEC Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations. (WASSCE) 2019-2022. The achievement test

comprises of 20-multiple choice questions. These test items cover the topics that were treated during the term. The research instrument was validated by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation, who ensures the face and content validity, the instruments have a reliability of 0.82 for the questionnaires and 0.785 for the Economics Achievement Test (EAT).

Descriptive Analysis of Students' Bio-Data

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Students

Variables	Levels of Variables	No of Students (n)	(%)
School Name	School A	38	26.0
	School B	45	30.8
	School C	52	35.6
	School D	11	7.5
	Total		
	Total	146	100.0
Gender	Male	62	42.5
	Female	84	57.5
	Total	146	100.0
Age Group	13 – 14 years	17	11.6
	15 years & Above	129	88.4
	Total	146	100.0

Table 1 informs that an aggregate of one hundred and forty-six (146) students were involved in the survey across the four (4) selected senior secondary schools. 62% (42.5%) of these students were males while their female counterparts were 84 (57.5%). This reveals that female students were more involved in the study than their male counterparts. Moreso, the survey reveals that majority of the students 129 (88.4%) were within age group of 15 years and above, this was followed by those 17 (11.6%) within the age group of 13 - 14 years.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant impact (a measure of relationship) of formative evaluation Strategies on students' academic achievement (in Economics) within Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 2: An "r" Statistical Table Showing the Impact (A Measure Of Relationship) of Formative Evaluation Strategies on students' academic achievement (in Economics)

Variables	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*d.f*	*r_cal.*	*Sig. Value (p)*	*Decision*
Students' Formative Evaluation Strategies	146	28.49	3.23	144	0.035	Reject	
Students' Academic Achievement (in Economics)	146	9.92	6.01		-0.174*		

$$p = 0.035 < 0.05$$

Table 2 reveals that the average (mean) on students' formative evaluation feedback (28.49) was above the expected mean value of 20.00 (obtained from a 10-item subscale on Formative Evaluation Feedback rated on a 4-point response keys – SA, A, D, SD); moreso, the average (mean) of students' academic achievement in Economics (9.92) was above the expected mean value of 10.00 (obtained from a 20-item multiple-choice Economics test). While using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) technique to compute the relationship between students' formative evaluation feedback and their academic achievement in multiple-choice Economics test, r-calculated value of -0.174* emerged. This implies that a small negative as well as indirect relationship was observed

between students' formative evaluation feedback and their academic achievement in the subject. The calculated "r" (r-cal. = -0.174*) was with 144 degrees of freedom given that the obtained level of significance (p-value) is 0.035 < 0.05 (statistical benchmark). By implication, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected; hence, there is significant impact (a measure of relationship) of formative evaluation strategies on students' academic achievement (in Economics) within Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant impact (a measure of relationship) of diagnostic evaluation strategies on students' academic achievement (in Economics) within Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 3: An "r" statistical table showing the impact (a measure of relationship) of Diagnostic Evaluation Strategies on Students' Academic Achievement (in Economics)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	d.f	r-cal.	Sig. Value (p)	Decision
Students' Diagnostic Evaluation Strategies	146	28.88	4.17				
				144	0.027	0.750	Accept Ho
Students' Academic Achievement (in Economics)	146	9.92	6.01				

$p = 0.750 > 0.05$

Table 3 reveals that the average (mean) on students' diagnostic evaluation feedback (28.88) was above the expected mean value of 20.00 (obtained from a 10-item subscale on Diagnostic Evaluation Feedback rated on a 4-point response keys – SA, A, D, SD); moreso, the average (mean) of students' academic achievement in Economics (9.92) was above the expected mean value of 10.00 (obtained from a 20-item multiple-choice Economics test). While using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) technique to compute the relationship between students' diagnostic evaluation feedback and their academic achievement in multiple-choice Economics test, r-calculated value of 0.027 emerged. This implies that a small positive as well as direct relationship was observed between students' diagnostic evaluation feedback and their academic achievement in the subject. The calculated "r" (r-cal. = 0.027) was with 144 degrees of freedom given that the obtained level of significance (p-value) is 0.750 > 0.05 (statistical benchmark). By implication, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted; hence, there is no significant impact (a measure of relationship) of diagnostic evaluation feedback on students' academic achievement in Economics) within Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

3. Discussion of Research Findings

Findings from hypotheses one revealed that there is significant impact (a measure of relationship) of formative evaluation strategies on students' academic achievement (in Economics) within Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

This present finding agrees with that of Orheruata, and Oyakhirome (2019) who made an empirical investigation on the effect of formative classroom assessment on students' achievement in junior secondary school Basic science within Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Their findings revealed that formative classroom assessment had significant effect on the students' academic achievement in favour of the experimental group used; formative classroom assessment was also found to improve the students' academic achievement as observed in the difference between pre-test and post-test in favour of the post-test.

With a bit of opposition to the present research finding, Dandekar (2015) examined the effect of formative assessment on students' academic performance in a research that randomly select group of 40 students, which were randomly divided into two groups. Group A (N =20) was Control Group. Group B (N =20) was the Experimental Group. The analysis showed that even though formative assessment shows good effect on academic performance of the students, its good effect was not statistically significant.

Finding from hypotheses two revealed that there is no significant impact (a measure of relationship) of diagnostic evaluation strategies on students' academic achievement (in Economics) within Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

This present research finding was in opposition to the submission of George, Abang, Farah (2017) who investigated the relationship between students' mathematics diagnostic test results and final mathematics examination performances at a public pre-university programme. Their research samples consisted of 250 pre-university students and the data of the study were collected through a mathematics diagnostic test paper, a questionnaire and a final mathematics examination. The outcome of the study shows that there was a strong (significant) positive correlation between mathematics diagnostic test results and students' mathematics achievement in pre-university.

More opposition was given to the present research finding by Esomonu, and Eleje (2020) who investigated the effect of diagnostic testing on students' academic achievement in secondary school quantitative economics. With a sample consisted of 210 Senior Secondary three (SS3) economics students in the four co-educational schools purposely selected from Nnewi Education Zone of Anambra State in Nigeria, empirical results of the analysis indicated a significant effect of treatment on students' achievement in favour of DQEST (Diagnostic Quantitative Economics
Skill Test) with feedback and remediation group only ($F(3, 209) = 22.3114$, $p > 0.05$).

4. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, it could be inferred that as far as Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos is concerned, on a general note, formative evaluation strategies exert a significant impact on students' achievement in Economics, while diagnostic evaluation strategies exerted non-significant impact.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion in this study, it would be appropriate to recommend that:

School teachers should ensure that they get up-to-date skills set on best practices of using diagnostic evaluation to boost students' academic achievement not just in Economics, but in all subject. This was recommended since diagnostic evaluation feedback did not exert any significant influence on students' academic achievement in Economics.

Head Teachers/head of Academic Units in schools should take proper scrutiny into checking the psychometric properties of diagnostic as well as formative evaluation which these school teachers submit to them.

The Nigerian Government/Ministry of Education/ all well-meaning stakeholders should be encouraging these school teachers with financial aids or incentives to attend paid and expensive top-notch seminars and workshop in relation to best practices of constructing good diagnostic tests as well as good formative tests, which lack no psychometric property flaws. This will discourage them from the idea of depending on their years of teaching experience and academic qualification which hold no waters in the 21st century education space.

Curriculum Planners should replicate this research in order to authenticate the findings obtained from this present research.

6. Implications for Evaluators

With all that has been said and done in this research, it is noteworthy to establish that:

The needed boost in students' academic achievement needs competence of teachers' diagnostic and formative test skills.

For students' feedbacks on these tests/evaluations (diagnostic and formative) to speak well of good academic achievement, the diagnostic and formative tests given in schools needs to possess good psychometric properties.

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Impact of Leadership Styles on Conflict Management in Federal Universities South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study investigated the impact of leadership styles on conflict management among librarians in federal universities in South-South, Nigeria. The research adopted a quantitative approach using survey design, with a population of 85 academic librarians from university libraries in the region. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that employees predominantly utilize collaborative approaches in conflict management (grand mean = 3.30), followed by avoidance (3.23), accommodating (3.15), sharing (2.97), and dominating strategies (2.61), with over 90% of respondents actively listening for solutions.The study examined two primary leadership styles – transformational and transactional – and their impact on conflict management effectiveness. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between leadership styles and conflict management ($r = .724$, $p < .05$), with leadership styles explaining 52.4% of the variance in conflict management effectiveness. Transformational leadership emerged as the dominant style ($\beta = .524$), characterized by high scores in approachability ($M = 3.36$) and team work facilitation ($M = 3.27$). While transactional leadership showed a lower but significant influence ($\beta = .369$). The study concluded that both leadership styles significantly influence conflict management, with transformational leadership having a stronger impact. Recommendations include investment in leadership development programs and establishment of formal mentoring systems to enhance conflict management capabilities in university libraries.

Keywords: Leadership styles, conflict Management, University libraries, Library personnel.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the higher education landscape in Nigeria has experienced significant transformation, accompanied by increasing complexity in institutional management and heightened potential for conflicts (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Federal universities, particularly in the South-South region, face unique challenges in maintaining organizational harmony while pursuing academic excellence. The dynamic nature of these institutions, characterized by diverse stakeholder interests, limited resources, and evolving academic demands, necessitates effective leadership approaches to manage inevitable conflicts, university head librarians, as leaders, play a pivotal role in attaining the university goals and objectives concerning teaching, learning and research activities of its faculty members and the entire university community (Akparobore & Omosekejimi, 2020). The leadership style and personal qualities of heads of libraries dictate the implementation and attainment of the library's vision and mission (Saliu et al., 2018). Leadership style, defined as the pattern of behaviors and strategies employed by leaders to guide and influence their subordinates, plays a pivotal role in determining how effectively organizational conflicts are managed and resolved (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The relationship between leadership approaches and conflict management has become increasingly crucial in academic institutions, where the intersection of academic freedom, administrative control, and stakeholder expectations creates a complex operational environment (Akpan & Ekpoh, 2015). Conflict management can take different forms such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration and litigation, depending on the context and the types of conflict (Chandolia, 2020).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Research indicates that different leadership styles can either exacerbate or mitigate conflicts, ultimately affecting institutional performance and stability. In the context of Federal Universities in Nigeria's South-South region, the challenge of managing conflicts has become particularly pronounced due to factors such as increased student enrollment, limited funding, and evolving staff expectations. Understanding the influence of leadership styles on conflict management in these institutions is crucial for developing effective organizational strategies and improving institutional governance. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of adaptive leadership in educational institutions (Ogbuiyi, 2019), yet there remains a significant gap in understanding how specific leadership styles impact conflict management processes in the unique context of Nigerian federal universities. This research aims to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between leadership styles and conflict management effectiveness in federal universities within Nigeria's South-South region

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the influence of leadership style on conflict management in federal universities in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- To examine the conflict management techniques employed in federal university libraries across South-South, Nigeria.
- To evaluate the prevalent leadership styles adopted by librarians in federal university libraries across South-South, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

- What conflict management techniques are employed in federal university libraries across South-South, Nigeria?
- What leadership styles are predominantly practiced by librarians in federal university libraries across South-South, Nigeria?

1.4 Hypotheses

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance

H01: Leadership style has no significant influence on conflict management among librarians in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Leadership Styles

The concept of leadership has garnered diverse interpretations from various scholars in the field. Reed et al. (2019) conceptualize leadership as a relationship-driven phenomenon where leaders foster connections with followers to facilitate goal achievement through inspiration and guidance. The contextual nature of leadership is highlighted by Costa et al. (2023), who emphasize leaders' roles as change agents who provide direction and support to followers in pursuit of organizational objectives. Olanrewaju and Okorie (2019) expand this understanding by highlighting how leaders enhance organizational effectiveness through multiple mechanisms: they serve as motivators, inspire innovation, and maintain a results-oriented focus while developing their personnel. This perspective aligns with more recent research by Pembi et al. (2022), who frame leadership as an influence-based process that leverages persuasion to achieve organizational goals through effective delegation and principle application. The successful implementation of leadership is crucial for organizational development, particularly in managing technological integration and maintaining staff engagement. Effective organizational leadership must cultivate voluntary cooperation among members while implementing strategies that enhance both productivity and stakeholder satisfaction.

Leadership styles emerge from the unique combination of individual personalities, organizational contexts, and situational demands. Łukowski (2017) observes that leadership style significantly influences organizational innovation capacity, particularly when leaders actively support innovative processes. Building on this, Perera et al. (2021) characterize leadership style as encompassing a leader's distinctive approach to providing direction, implementing strategies, and motivating their team members.

2.1.2 Conflict Management

According to Adomi and Anie (2006), while libraries commonly experience various conflicts, library managers can transform these challenges into opportunities for constructive change. The management of conflicts requires careful attention from library administrators, as unresolved conflicts can hinder library operations and development. Therefore, conflict resolution abilities are essential

competencies for librarians. Abdulraheem (2020) describes conflict management as an individual's method of addressing conflict situations. Similarly, Khanaki and Hassanzadeh (2010) characterize these styles as behavioral responses exhibited during conflict encounters. Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020) further define them as specific approaches employed in conflict resolution. These management styles serve as strategic tools to mitigate conflict and prevent its detrimental effects on organizations. The theoretical framework for conflict management styles was first established by Follet in 1940, who identified five distinct approaches: integration, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising (Ilgan, 2020). Rahim (2010) later analyzed these styles through a dual-dimension model that considers both concern for others and concern for self.

2.2 Empirical review

Research on leadership styles in university libraries has yielded diverse findings. In a comprehensive study of 672 library staff across 23 university libraries in South-south Nigeria, Akpoborore and Omosekejimi (2020) identified autocratic leadership as the predominant management approach. Their research revealed that library staff expressed a preference for democratic leadership, citing its potential benefits for teamwork, organizational commitment, decision-making processes, and effective delegation. Contrasting results emerged from Lawrence's (2019) investigation of 43 library staff in Abraka, which examined the relationship between leadership approaches and staff attitudes. This study found that both democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles implemented by university librarians significantly enhanced library workers' devotion, commitment, and dedication to their professional responsibilities.

A significant study conducted by Khalif (2019) examined the relationship between community leadership and conflict management in Somalia's Banadir region. Employing a descriptive survey design and utilizing primary data collected through questionnaires, the research revealed compelling insights into leadership's impact on conflict resolution. The regression analysis demonstrated that 40.2% of the variation in conflict management outcomes could be attributed to four distinct leadership dimensions: administrative, enabling, adaptive, and transformational community leadership. This substantial percentage underscores the significant influence of leadership approaches on conflict management effectiveness in the region. The study's findings were particularly noteworthy as they revealed that the Banadir region operated within a highly developed collaborative environment, suggesting that structured leadership approaches played a crucial role in shaping conflict management outcomes. However, the research also acknowledged that the remaining percentage of variation in conflict management effectiveness was influenced by other factors not captured within these four leadership dimensions. Further insights into leadership effectiveness come from Ugwu et al.'s (2020) examination of 216 librarians across private, state, and federal university libraries in Nigeria. Their research demonstrated the superior impact of transformational leadership over transactional leadership in fostering knowledge sharing practices. The findings suggest that transformational leadership creates an environment conducive to collaboration and knowledge exchange among library staff members.

In a comprehensive study examining healthcare leadership dynamics, Grubaugh (2018) investigated the interrelationships between nurse managers' leadership capabilities, conflict management effectiveness, and team support in medical-surgical units. The research, which analyzed data from 257 staff nurses through multiple regression analyses and mediation modeling, revealed significant positive correlations among nurse manager leadership ability, conflict management, and team backup systems. Notably, the study demonstrated that staff nurses' perceptions of their managers' leadership capabilities served as a crucial predictor of both effective conflict management and team support mechanisms, ultimately influencing teacher productivity.

Recent studies have explored conflict management in educational settings across different contexts. Fossung's (2023) investigation focused on school effectiveness and principals' conflict resolution abilities in the Kumba I, II, and III Sub-divisions. Using a mixed-methods approach combining questionnaires and interviews, the study revealed that while no schools in these sub-divisions met the full criteria for effectiveness, several institutions approached the established benchmark standards.

In a related study examining conflict management in secondary schools, Wainanina (2020) investigated principals' conflict resolution strategies in Murang'a County. Through descriptive research methodology employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, the study identified the prevalence of established conflict management mechanisms within schools. The findings highlighted mediation as the primary approach for addressing principal-teacher conflicts, with results indicating a significant positive linear relationship between conflict management techniques and strategic conflict resolution outcomes.

3. Research Methodology

This research employed a descriptive design framework to investigate the research problem. The study was guided by two research questions, with one hypothesis tested at a 0.05 significance level. The research population comprised 85 Academic librarians from federal universities across South-South Nigeria. Data collection was facilitated through a structured questionnaire. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software to generate both descriptive and inferential statistical outcomes. Given the manageable size of the target population, a total enumeration sampling technique was implemented to include all academic librarians within the specified geopolitical zone.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table:1 Demograhics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
University	University of Port Harcourt	20	23.5
	University of Uyo	18	21.2
	University of Calabar	16	18.8
	Federal University of Petroleum Resources	13	15.3
	University of Benin	11	12.9
	Federal University of Bayelsa	7	8.3
	Total	85	100.0
Gender	Male	39	45.9
	Female	46	54.1
	Total	85	100.0
Age	20-30 years	10	11.8
	31-40 years	28	32.9
	41-50 years	23	27.1
	51 and above	21	24.7
	No Response	3	3.5
	Total	85	100.0
Professional Status	Assistant Librarian	17	20.0
	Librarian II	15	17.6
	Librarian I	20	23.5
	Senior Librarian	15	17.6
	Principal Librarian	10	11.8
	Deputy University Librarian	2	2.4
	University Librarian	6	7.1
	Total	85	100.0
Educational Qualification	BLS/BSc	25	29.4
	MLS/MLIS/MIRM	47	55.3
	PhD	13	15.3
	Total	85	100.0
Work Experience	0-5 years	19	22.4
	6-10 years	18	21.2
	11-15 years	21	24.7
	Above 15 years	23	27.1
	No Response	4	4.7
	Total	85	100.0

Source: *Field 2025*

Table 1 revealed that the study encompassed 85 Academic librarians from six federal universities in South-South Nigeria, with the University of Port-Harcourt (23.5%) and University of Uyo (21.2%) having the highest representation. The gender distribution showed a slightly higher female representation (54.1%) compared to male (45.9%). Age distribution indicated that most respondents (60%) were between 31-50 years, suggesting a mature workforce with considerable professional experience.

In terms of professional status, the majority of respondents occupied middle-management positions, with Librarian I (23.5%) and Assistant Librarian (20.0%) being the most prevalent ranks. The presence of six University Librarians (7.1%) indicates representation from all surveyed institutions. Educational qualifications reflect a highly educated workforce, with most respondents holding master's degrees (55.3%), followed by bachelor's degrees (29.4%), and a notable proportion possessing PhDs (15.3%). The work experience profile shows a balanced distribution, with 51.8% having over 10 years of experience, indicating a workforce with substantial professional expertise.

Research Question 1: What conflict management techniques are employed in federal university libraries across South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2

Techniques and Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	S.D
Collaborating						
I am a decision maker who actively listens to find the best solutions	42 (49.4)	35 (41.2)	6 (7.1)	2 (2.3)	3.38	0.72
I explore issues with colleagues to find solutions that meet everyone's needs	39 (45.9)	37 (43.5)	7 (8.2)	2 (2.4)	3.33	0.74
During conflicts, I adjust my priorities to reach resolution	35 (41.2)	40 (47.1)	8 (9.4)	2 (2.3)	3.27	0.73
I accept and implement colleagues' recommendations when appropriate	32 (37.6)	42 (49.4)	8 (9.4)	3 (3.5)	3.21	0.76
Grand Mean					3.30	
Avoidance						
I tactfully avoid positions that would create controversy	40 (47.1)	35 (41.2)	8 (9.4)	2 (2.3)	3.33	0.75
I prefer to postpone dealing with sensitive matters	35 (41.2)	38 (44.7)	10 (11.8)	2 (2.3)	3.25	0.76
I maintain neutrality during departmental disagreements	32 (37.6)	40 (47.1)	10 (11.8)	3 (3.5)	3.19	0.78
I keep disagreements to myself to maintain harmony	30 (35.3)	42 (49.4)	10 (11.8)	3 (3.5)	3.16	0.77
Grand Mean					3.23	
Accommodating						
I cooperate with others' ideas when they seem reasonable	30 (35.3)	45 (52.9)	8 (9.4)	2 (2.4)	3.21	0.71
I adjust my approach to accommodate others' needs	28 (32.9)	47 (55.3)	8 (9.4)	2 (2.4)	3.19	0.70
I encourage others to express their views during conflicts	25 (29.4)	48 (56.5)	10 (11.8)	2 (2.4)	3.13	0.70
I prioritize maintaining relationships over winning arguments	25 (29.4)	45 (52.9)	12 (14.1)	3 (3.5)	3.08	0.76
Grand Mean					3.15	
Sharing						
I seek mutually satisfactory solutions in conflicts	25 (29.4)	45 (52.9)	12 (14.1)	3 (3.5)	3.08	0.76
I use give-and-take approach to resolve issues	22 (25.9)	45 (52.9)	15 (17.6)	3 (3.5)	3.01	0.77
I negotiate to find middle ground solutions	20 (23.5)	45 (52.9)	15 (17.6)	5 (5.9)	2.94	0.81
I prefer compromise to prolonged conflict	18 (21.2)	42 (49.4)	20 (23.5)	5 (5.9)	2.86	0.82
Grand Mean					2.97	
Dominating						
I firmly defend my position when necessary	15 (17.6)	40 (47.1)	25 (29.4)	5 (5.9)	2.76	0.81
I maintain my solutions to problems	12 (14.1)	38 (44.7)	30 (35.3)	5 (5.9)	2.67	0.79
I use my influence to achieve desired outcomes	10 (11.8)	35 (41.2)	32 (37.6)	8 (9.4)	2.55	0.82
I prioritize my concerns in conflict situations	8 (9.4)	32 (37.6)	35 (41.2)	10 (11.8)	2.45	0.82
Grand Mean					**2.61**	

Source: *Field 2025*

From the results of Table 2, Collaborating emerged as the most predominantly used approach, with a grand mean of 3.30. This indicates that respondents most frequently employ collaborative strategies in conflict situations. Particularly notable is that 90.6% of respondents (combining SA and A) actively listen to find the best solutions. This strong preference for collaboration suggests a workplace culture that values participative decision-making and inclusive problem-solving. Avoidance ranked as the second most common approach (grand mean = 3.23). The high percentage (88.3%) of respondents who tactfully avoid controversial positions suggests a significant tendency toward conflict prevention rather than direct confrontation. This could indicate either a diplomatic organizational culture or, potentially, some reluctance to address conflicts head-on.

Accommodating strategies ranked third (grand mean = 3.15), with particularly strong showing in cooperating with reasonable ideas (88.2% combined SA/A). This suggests that while respondents are willing to adjust their positions,

they do so somewhat less readily than they might avoid or collaborate. Sharing approaches ranked fourth (grand mean = 2.97). While still showing positive tendencies, there's a noticeable drop in the percentage of strong agreement compared to the top three approaches. Only 29.4% strongly agreed with seeking mutually satisfactory solutions, suggesting that while compromise is accepted, it might not be the preferred initial strategy.

Dominating emerged as the least utilized approach (grand mean = 2.61). The relatively low scores across all dominating behaviors indicate that respondents generally prefer more cooperative approaches to conflict management. Only 17.6% strongly agreed with firmly defending their position, the highest-rated dominating behavior. These findings suggest an organizational environment that strongly favors collaborative and avoiding approaches to conflict management, while being less inclined toward dominating strategies. This could indicate a mature conflict management culture, though the high avoidance scores might warrant further investigation to ensure that necessary conflicts aren't being suppressed at the expense of organizational effectiveness.

Research Question 2: What leadership styles are predominantly practiced by librarians in federal university libraries across South-South, Nigeria?

Table 3:

Leadership Styles	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	S.D
Transformational leadership style						
In my library the leadership is friendly and approachable	38 (44.7)	40 (47.1)	7 (8.2)	0 (0.0)	3.36	0.63
In my library, the leadership gives room for team work	32 (37.6)	46 (54.1)	5 (5.9)	2 (2.4)	3.27	0.67
In my library the leadership accepts new ideas from subordinates	30 (35.3)	43 (50.6)	9 (10.6)	3 (3.5)	3.18	0.75
In my library, the leader communicates well and gives good feedback	28 (32.9)	44 (51.8)	10 (11.8)	3 (3.5)	3.14	0.76
In my university, the leaders have the interest of the subordinates at heart	25 (29.4)	49 (57.6)	9 (10.6)	2 (2.4)	3.14	0.69
In my library the leadership is considerate about life outside work	20 (23.5)	51 (60.0)	11 (12.9)	3 (3.5)	3.04	0.71
In my library, the leadership does not penalize for different opinion	16 (18.8)	58 (68.2)	8 (9.4)	3 (3.5)	3.02	0.65
In my library the leadership accepts subordinates to take part in decision-making process	21 (24.7)	47 (55.3)	12 (14.1)	5 (5.9)	2.99	0.79
In my library, the leadership allows subordinates complete freedom to solve problems on their own	15 (17.6)	48 (56.5)	17 (20.0)	5 (5.9)	2.86	0.77
In my library the leadership does not impose policies	14 (16.5)	43 (50.6)	21 (24.7)	7 (8.2)	2.75	0.83
Grand Mean					**3.08**	
Transactional leadership style						
In my library, the leadership acknowledges good performance	31 (36.5)	44 (51.8)	7 (8.2)	3 (3.5)	3.21	0.74
In my library the leadership motivates subordinates to do work well	30 (35.3)	43 (50.6)	10 (11.8)	2 (2.4)	3.19	0.73
In my library the leadership gives recognition when work is properly done	23 (27.1)	50 (58.8)	10 (11.8)	2 (2.4)	3.11	0.69
In my library the leadership shows that much is expected from subordinates	12 (14.1)	57 (67.1)	14 (16.5)	2 (2.4)	2.93	0.63
In my library the leadership knows the right time to reward	13 (15.3)	52 (61.2)	18 (21.2)	2 (2.4)	2.89	0.67
In my library, the leadership is very strict	12 (14.1)	30 (35.3)	36 (42.4)	7 (8.2)	2.55	0.84
In my library, the leadership always punishes if subordinates make mistakes	6 (7.1)	32 (37.6)	38 (44.7)	9 (10.6)	2.41	0.77
In my library the leadership does not accept new ideas from subordinates	8 (9.4)	19 (22.4)	35 (41.2)	23 (27.1)	2.14	0.93
Grand Mean					**2.80**	

Source: *Researcher 2025*

The study investigated leadership styles in university libraries, focusing on transformational and transactional approaches. The data indicates a predominant transformational leadership style in university libraries, with an overall grand mean of 3.08. Library leaders demonstrate particularly strong performance in approachability and friendliness, achieving a mean score of 3.36, with 91.8% of respondents expressing agreement. This suggests that library leadership maintains an open-door policy that facilitates staff interaction and communication. Team work facilitation emerged as another significant strength, scoring a mean of 3.27, indicating that leaders actively promote collaborative work environments. The acceptance of new ideas from subordinates (mean = 3.18) and effective communication with good feedback mechanisms (mean = 3.14) also received notable positive ratings, reflecting a leadership approach that values innovation and clear communication channels.

However, within the transformational leadership dimension, certain areas showed room for improvement. The aspect of policy implementation scored relatively lower (mean = 2.75), suggesting that leaders maintain considerable control over organizational policies. Similarly, the provision of complete freedom for problem-solving received a moderate score (mean = 2.86), indicating a balanced approach to staff autonomy rather than full empowerment.

Regarding transactional leadership characteristics, the findings revealed a slightly lower overall presence, with a grand mean of 2.80. The strongest aspects of transactional leadership centered around performance recognition and motivation. Leaders showed particular effectiveness in acknowledging good performance (mean = 3.21) and motivating staff (mean = 3.19). The recognition of properly executed work also received positive feedback (mean = 3.11), suggesting that library leaders effectively utilize positive reinforcement strategies.

The study revealed interesting patterns in disciplinary approaches within the transactional framework. Punitive measures for mistakes received notably low scores (mean = 2.41), indicating that leaders rarely employ punishment as a management tool. This aligns with contemporary management practices that favor positive reinforcement over punitive measures. The data also showed that strict leadership approaches are relatively uncommon (mean = 2.55), suggesting a more flexible and accommodating management style. The standard deviations across both leadership styles ranged from 0.63 to 0.93, indicating reasonable consistency in respondent perceptions. Higher variability was noted in areas concerning policy implementation (S.D. = 0.83) and acceptance of new ideas (S.D. = 0.93), suggesting diverse experiences or perceptions in these aspects of leadership.

These findings have significant implications for library management practices. The strong presence of transformational leadership characteristics, particularly in areas of approachability and team work facilitation, suggests that university libraries are adopting modern, employee-centered management approaches. The balance between transformational and transactional elements indicates a hybrid leadership model that combines supportive leadership with structured performance management.

The data suggests several areas for potential development in library leadership. While leaders maintain strong interpersonal relationships and communication channels, there may be opportunities to enhance staff autonomy in problem-solving while maintaining necessary oversight. The current balance between policy control and staff input could be optimized to promote more participative decision-making while ensuring organizational stability. The findings also highlight the effectiveness of positive reinforcement strategies in library management. The high scores in both transformational aspects (interest in subordinates) and transactional elements (performance acknowledgment) demonstrate that library leaders successfully combine supportive leadership with clear performance expectations. This dual approach appears to create an environment that promotes both staff development and operational efficiency.

Hypothesis Testing

The study was guided by the following null hypotheses; tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: Leadership style has no significant influence on conflict management

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.724	.524	.513	.4876

Table 5: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	21.842	2	10.921	45.983	.000
Residual	19.478	82	.237		
Total	41.320	84			

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.124	.246		4.569	.000
Transformational Leadership	.486	.078	.524	6.231	.000
Transactional Leadership	.312	.071	.369	4.394	.000

Source: *Researcher 2025*

Table 4 indicates that The R-value of .724 showed a strong positive correlation between leadership styles and conflict management. The R Square value of .524 suggests that leadership styles explain 52.4% of the variance in conflict management effectiveness. The Adjusted R Square of .513 provides a slightly more conservative estimate of the model's explanatory power. The F-statistic (45.983) with a significance level of .000 ($p < .05$) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This suggests that leadership styles, as a whole, have a significant influence on conflict management.

The regression equation can be expressed as: Conflict Management = 1.124 + 0.486(Transformational) + 0.312(Transactional). This analysis suggests that for every unit increase in transformational leadership, conflict management effectiveness increases by 0.486 units. For every unit increase in transactional leadership, conflict management effectiveness increases by 0.312 units. The constant of 1.124 represents the baseline conflict management level when no leadership influence is present. The results demonstrates that both leadership styles play important roles in effective conflict management, with transformational leadership showing a stronger influence. This suggests that library administrators should focus on developing both leadership styles, with particular emphasis on transformational leadership approaches.

Both leadership styles contribute significantly to conflict management, with transformational leadership having a stronger impact. Given that $p < .05$ for both leadership styles and the overall model. Based on this, the null hypothesis positing that there is no significant influence between leadership style and conflict management is therefore rejected and hereby restated: leadership style has significant influence on conflict management of librarians in Edo State.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of leadership styles on conflict management among librarians in Edo State, with specific focus on transformational and transactional leadership approaches. The findings reveal that leadership styles significantly influence how conflicts are managed in university libraries. Transformational leadership emerged as the predominant style, with library leaders showing particular strength in approachability, team work facilitation, and openness to new ideas. The research demonstrated that leaders who exhibit transformational characteristics are more effective at managing conflicts, as evidenced by the strong positive correlation ($r = .724$) between leadership styles and conflict management outcomes.

The study also found that while transformational leadership had a stronger impact ($\beta = .524$), transactional leadership also played a significant role ($\beta = .369$) in effective conflict management. Library leaders demonstrated proficiency in acknowledging good performance and motivating staff, while maintaining a balance between positive reinforcement and necessary oversight. The combined influence of both leadership styles explained 52.4% of the variance in conflict management effectiveness, indicating that leadership approach is a crucial factor in maintaining harmony and resolving disputes within library settings. The research further revealed that library leaders have successfully created environments that promote open communication and collaborative problem-solving. However, there remains room for improvement in areas such as policy implementation and delegation of problem-solving authority to staff members. The findings suggest that a hybrid approach, incorporating both transformational and transactional leadership elements, is most effective for managing conflicts in academic libraries.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Library administrators should invest in leadership development programs that specifically focus on enhancing transformational leadership skills. These programs should emphasize emotional intelligence, active listening, and collaborative decision-making techniques to strengthen leaders' ability to manage conflicts effectively.

Universities should establish formal mentoring programs where experienced library leaders can guide newer managers in developing balanced leadership approaches that incorporate both transformational and transactional elements. This will help create a more comprehensive leadership pipeline within the library system.

Library management should implement regular feedback mechanisms that allow staff to provide input on leadership effectiveness and conflict resolution processes. This could include anonymous surveys, suggestion boxes, or regular town hall meetings to ensure continuous improvement in leadership practices.

These recommendations aim to enhance the quality of leadership and conflict management in university libraries, ultimately contributing to more effective and harmonious work environments. Implementation should be approached systematically, with regular evaluation of outcomes to ensure continued improvement in leadership effectiveness and conflict management capabilities.

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Correlates of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), Emotional Regulation, and Self-Esteem among In-School Adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examined the effects of adverse childhood experiences on low self-esteem and difficulties in emotional regulation among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used with a target population of 13- to 19-year-old adolescents selected through a three-stage random sampling technique. The sample comprised 300 adolescents, which consisted of 100 randomly selected participants from each of the three randomly chosen local government areas. Data were subjected to adapted scales measuring ACEs, self-esteem, and emotional regulation difficulties, including the ACEs scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire; all had good reliability. The descriptive and inferential statistics such as Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to test the relationships and contributions of ACEs to the psychological outcomes. Findings are expected to open up new insights into how adverse childhood experiences psychologically affect affected adolescent students while further guiding the development of interventions in educational settings.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Self-esteem, Emotional regulation, In-school adolescents

1. Introduction

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has witnessed remarkable surges in global research as it directly affects physical, emotional, and psychological growth. Many potential traumatic events that can happen in childhood such as abuse, neglect, household dysfunction, and exposure to violence are also included in ACEs. There are countless findings showing how ACEs affect life-long health and well-being and finally have adverse relationships with mental health disorders, substance abuse, chronic diseases, or several behavioural problems (Bellis et al., 2019). In global contexts, the study of ACEs has evolved from predominantly studying the individual experiences to transmission from generation to generation and finally social impact. Currently, a thorough understanding of ACEs has been acclaimed as very important to develop appropriate public health policies that reduce child trauma and its effects.

Globally, the prevalence of ACEs is high in war-torn and economically depressed countries dominated by social instability. Research has been extensive in developed nations, primarily North America and Europe, into much long-term effects that childhood adversity poses on the individual, including linking incidents of ACE to a wider spectrum of enduring negative outcomes in life (Finkelhor, 2020). The many countries continue to experience difficulties in eliminating some root causes of ACEs such as income inequality, some cultural practices, and weak systems of child protection. The world, however, is shifting into joint-integrated approaches involving multi-sectorial collaborative participation, such as healthcare, education, and social services, in dealing with the multilayer impacts of ACEs.

Adverse Childhood Experiences in Africa compared to other continents have been given less attention, even with emerging evidence showing high prevalence of childhood adversity across the continent. The cultural and socio-economic landscape of many African countries presents unique challenges in studying ACEs because poverty, communal violence, and child labour are commonplace. However, recent research continues to unveil the extensive nature of childhood adversity within the populations within Africa, particularly in contexts of conflict, migration, and limited social services (Hoffman et al., 2021). The complicated nature of childhood in Africa often proves an obstacle to doing ACEs, requiring that culturally sensitive, local contextualised interventions be applied.

Some regions in Sub-Saharan Africa bear particular brunt regarding recognition and addressing kinds of ACE impacts. With poverty rates being high, widespread orphanhood, and childhood exposure to armed conflict, the region carries a heavy burden of childhood trauma. There are studies indicating the possible adverse effect prolonged exposure to violence and instability has on the psychological well-being of children (Rojas et al., 2020). In countries like South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somalia, where children grow up under conflict, those are under extreme stress doing different forms of adversity, which can have long-lasting effects on cognitive and affective development. Initiatives designed to address such effects are increasingly gained momentum, but the issue remains for comprehensive intervention due to poor and inadequate child protection mechanisms and poor mental health services in their regions.

Although recognition of the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as a public health issue is taking root in Nigeria, gaps still exist in the areas of awareness and intervention. Broad poverty, internal displacement, and high communal conflicts are some of the threats Nigeria confronts, and most of which tend to yield a high-level incidence of ACEs. Nigeria has combined some aspects of child protection within its social policies, but this rarely works as there are not enough established systems and resources to cover the broad scope of the problem. Stigma on issues of mental health and child trauma has also created barriers for open discourse on ACEs and their impact on children and adolescents (Olayinka et al., 2020). Given the rich and diverse cultural and socioeconomic differentials in Nigeria, which will provide different lenses regarding experiences and coping methods during adversity, it is vital to interrogate ACEs in relation to Nigeria.

There is an increasing awareness about ACEs in the southwestern region of Nigeria (Sekoni and Danja, 2024; Omopo, Offor, & Ogunbowale, 2024; Offor, Ogunbowale, & Omopo, 2025), but little research is available on this. Ibadan being one of the largest urban centres in Nigeria determines a combination of the heritage traditional cultural practices with the dynamics of modern socio-economic practices. Adverse childhood experiences in this context are thought to be related to urbanisation, family structures, and socio-economic inequalities. Localised studies have begun to address diverse forms of childhood trauma, such as domestic violence and child neglect, as determinant factors of mental health among children in Ibadan. The impact of ACEs at Ibadan promises to be most severe, as this city hosts a large population of impoverished vulnerable children under spell of urban poverty, unavailability of health services, and exposure to violence. Unfortunately, much of the research on ACEs in southwest Nigeria is still in the early stages, indicating the need for more targeted investigation into how such experiences affect the population here, particularly in urban settings such as Ibadan. Adverse Childhood Experiences might result in (ACEs) low self-esteem and difficulties in emotional regulation. Investigating these outcomes is crucial since they will greatly influence the social functioning and academic performance of adolescents despite being overshadowed by nagging issues such as depression and anxiety. Construct interventions to define these concerning factors while their effects on resilience and emotional wellbeing within the group can be improved.

Common psychological manifestations of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include: low self-esteem as early trauma has a rather profound effect on one's conception of self-worth. Higgins et al. (2021) showed that children who have suffered neglect or abuse have negative beliefs about themselves and this leads to lowered self-esteem. According to studies, ACEs such as physical or emotional ill-treatment result into feelings of inferiority and impotence, which can continue up to adolescence and adulthood. Critical in terms of understanding the relationship between ACEs and low self-esteem is the fact that, with low self-esteem comes a higher likelihood of risk behaviours such as substance abuse and self-harm (Cicchetti & Toth, 2020). Such individual gains of childhood adversity may require intervention on self-esteem.

Problems in regulating emotions have now been recognised as another psychosocial consequence of ACES, as they often severely limit the developmental

activities that help people learn healthy coping processes. The failure of numerous ACE-affected children to gain the ability to control their feelings may be caused by many impairments of brain development, especially in relation to the roles of such an area of the brain as the prefrontal cortex, which regulates emotional responses (McCrory et al., 2021). Studies show that people with ACE history may appear to be more impulsive, anxious, and angry, demonstrating poor emotional regulation (Schimmenti et al. 2021). Importance of this relationship lies in emotional regulation dysfunctions being linked to other mental vulnerabilities for instance depression and anxiety which worsen the long-term effects of ACE; thus, an understanding of emotional regulation dysfunctions that would illustrate and inform on therapeutic interventions involving adaptive coping strategies to people affected by early adversity would be valuable.

Notwithstanding the raising awareness regarding the adverse impact of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on mental health, there lingers a gap in the understanding of how ACEs link to less-discussing psychological outcomes such as lowering self-esteem and difficulties in emotional regulation, especially among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis. A good theoretical postulation for this study is the attachment theory. Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) explains how early negative experiences shape emotional control and self-esteem. ACEs in adolescents can encourage the development of insecure attachment patterns that interfere with emotional control and a stable view of themselves. While earlier studies have concentrated on more conspicuous outcomes such as depression and anxiety, little has been explored in terms of access to the actual pathways through which ACEs affect low self-esteem and emotional issues within this particular group. In addition, culturally specific factors in southwestern Nigeria can affect how these psychological problems manifest, yet very few attempts have been made on 119ocalized dynamics within the school context. Therefore, the study seeks to fill this gap by establishing the relationship of ACEs with low self-esteem and emotional regulation problems among in-schooled adolescents in Ibadan. The study also seeks to explore the socio-cultural context which might mediate the treatment effects of ACEs on these outcomes toward informing culturally appropriate interventions for improving adolescent mental health and resilience within educational environments.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The study is generally intended to look at the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), low self-esteem, and emotional regulation difficulties of in-school adolescents in the Ibadan metropolis. Out of this, the study's interest is to assess how ACEs together and alone contribute to these two psychological outcomes-low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties-in this particular population. The study specifically aims to:

- assess the relationship between ACEs, low self-esteem, and emotional regulation difficulties among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis.
- determine the joint contribution of ACEs to low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis.
- examine the relative contribution of each type of ACE (physical abuse, neglect, household dysfunction) to low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis.

1.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), low self-esteem, and emotional regulation difficulties among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis.
- There is no significant joint contribution of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis.
- There is no significant relative contribution of each type of Adverse Childhood Experience (physical abuse, neglect, household dysfunction) to low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis.

2. Methodology

This study, a descriptive survey design, investigated the correlates of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The target population consisted of adolescents aged 13 to 19 years from Ibadan metropolis, selected using a three-stage random sampling technique. In the first stage, three local government areas (LGAs) (Ibadan North, Ona-Ara, and Ibadan Southwest) were randomly chosen, and one secondary school was randomly selected from

each LGA. A total of 300 adolescents (100 from each school) participated in the study. Data were collected using adapted scales measuring ACEs, low self-esteem, and emotional regulation difficulties, including the ACEs scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. These scales demonstrated reliability and validity in previous research, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.88 for self-esteem and 0.85 for emotional regulation. The researchers administered the questionnaires during school hours, providing clear instructions to participants and addressing any questions.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of data. Demographic data and responses were summarised by descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Correlational and multiple regression analyses were used to determine how ACEs influence the psychological outcomes measured in the study. The strength and direction of relationships involving ACEs were revealed by regression analysis of multiple variables through joint and relative contribution to self-esteem and emotional regulation, while Pearson's correlation provided evidence for the relationships. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to capture the statistical significance of any results. This facilitated the identification of patterns and correlations among variables, thus shedding light on the psychological effects of ACEs on the development of adolescents in Ibadan.

3. Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Representation of the Participants

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Representation of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	13-15 years	85	28.3%
	16-17 years	160	53.3%
	18-19 years	55	18.3%
Gender	Male	135	45%
	Female	165	55%
Class	JSS 1	50	16.7%
	JSS 2	85	28.3%
	JSS 3	70	23.3%
	SS 1	60	20%
	SS 2	35	11.7%
Religion	Christianity	190	63.3%
	Islam	100	33.3%
	Others (Traditional)	10	3.3%

Table 1 illustrates the socio-demographic characteristics of 300 respondents used in the study. Over half (53.3%) are aged 16-17 years, while 28.3% are aged 13-15 years. Finally, 18.3% of the respondents are aged between 18 and 19 years. With regard to gender distribution, there is a slight imbalance on the side of females at 55% against 45% males. For the class distribution, it comprises 16.7% from JSS 1 with 28.3% from JSS 2, 23.3% from JSS 3, 20% from SS 1, and finally, 11.7% from SS 2. In religion, a majority of the respondents consider themselves Christians which number at 63.3% with 33.3% Muslims followed by the 3.3% of respondents who have other religions, including traditional ones. This demographic distribution takes a wide sweep of adolescent population in Nigeria (specifically Ibadan, Oyo State).

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant Relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Low Self-Esteem, and Emotional Regulation Difficulties

Table 2: Relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Low Self-Esteem, and Emotional Regulation Difficulties

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance (p-value)
ACE and Low Self-Esteem	-0.40	0.001*
ACE and Emotional Regulation Difficulties	-0.50	0.000*

Table 2 outlines the findings of Hypothesis 1 which examines correlations among ACEs, low self-esteem, and difficulties in emotional regulation among in-school adolescents in the Ibadan metropolis. The respective Pearson correlation coefficients (r) for ACE and low self-esteem are -0.40, while for ACE and emotional regulation difficulties is -0.50 with both correlated pairings significantly at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$). This means the high ACE score correlates with low self-esteem and high emotional regulation difficulties in adolescents.

The above findings of Hypothesis 1 showed that the relationships between ACE with low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties are negative. This means that adults experience more ACE, thus cause low self-esteem, which hinders them from effectively dealing with their emotive responses and failures in such a situation. Such scenarios have also been seen previously, where ACE was thought to be a disruption in the psychological development of an individual, resulting in long-term emotional and self-perception issues (Felitti et al., 1998; Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2018). Worse, problems with emotional regulation only add fuel to the fire since they make this mismanagement worse for an adolescent, causing a cycle in which mismanagement in emotion also impacts self-esteem and issues related to social behaviours further down the line.

Studies like Felitti et al. (1998), Cicchetti & Rogosch (2018), correlate ACEs with poor self-esteem and emotional dysregulation that spring cognitive and emotional impairments. Complementary evidence according to Masten et al. (2019) suggests that interventions on either emotional regulation or self-esteem are able to reduce some adverse effects associated with ACEs. This study advocates the need for environments supportive of adolescents to acquire resilience and adjust their emotional skills, especially with those who come from unfriendly childhood.

Hypothesis 2: There is no Significant Joint Contribution of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to Low Self-Esteem and Emotional Regulation Difficulties

Table 3: Joint Contribution of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to Low Self-Esteem and Emotional Regulation Difficulties

Predictor Variable	R	R^2	F-value	Significance (p-value)
ACE, Low Self-Esteem, and Emotional Regulation Difficulties	0.65	0.42	35.57	0.000*

The outcomes of Hypothesis 2 were outlined in Table 3, which examined the joint effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on low self-esteem and emotional regulation deficits among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis. In general, the multiple regression analysis indicates a significant joint effect of ACE on both dependent variables since the R-square coefficient for joint contribution is 0.42, indicating that ACE accounts for 42% of condition variance in both dependent variables, that is, low self-esteem and problems in emotional regulation. The corresponding F-value of 35.57 was also shown as significant at $p < 0.05$, indicating that ACE could be a significant predictor of said psychological outcomes when viewed collectively.

The results from Hypothesis 2 indicate that ACE indeed has a significant joint contribution to low self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties. The 42% variance, therefore, shows that, however limited ACE may be among many factors that contribute to the aforementioned correlate outcomes, it plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' emotional and self-perceptual functioning. These findings reinforce earlier studies that noted accumulative effects of ACE on the mental health of adolescents (Chapman et al., 2013; Shonkoff et al., 2012). High-ACE adolescents manifest comparatively worse emotional-self regulation and do not feel worthy of themselves; therefore, interventions that would help address traumas as well as build emotional resiliency may maximise their impact.

Previous studies have backed this outcome, with many noting that ACE influences psychological outcomes, including self-esteem and emotional regulation. For example, Chapman et al. (2013) and Shonkoff et al. (2012) found that the incidence of adverse childhood experience increases the likelihood of emotional and cognitive difficulties, from which the affected might suffer such as poor emotional regulation and low self-esteem. These might, in turn, relate to academic and social well-being among adolescents. Hence, it may be presumed that this further calls for early interventions and psychological support to bring down the pernicious effects of ACE and foster healthier emotional development and self-concept in adolescents.

Hypothesis 3: There is no Significant Relative Contribution of each type of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to Low Self-Esteem and Emotional Regulation Difficulties

Table 4: Relative Contribution of Each Type of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to Low Self-Esteem and Emotional Regulation Difficulties

Predictor Variable	β (Standardised Coefficient)	t-value	Significance (p-value)
Physical Abuse	0.23	4.12	0.000*
Neglect	0.31	5.43	0.000*
Household Dysfunction	0.18	3.25	0.001*

Hypothesis 3 was tested with reference to the following results: relative contributions of each type of Adverse Childhood Experience, i.e. physical abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction, to low self-esteem and difficulties in emotional regulation among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis. The standardised regression coefficients (β) indicate that neglect (β = 0.31) has the highest relative contribution followed by physical abuse (β = 0.23) and household dysfunction (β = 0.18). All three types of ACEs have statistically significant contributions to the psychological outcomes at $p < .05$, demonstrating their impact on the adolescents' self-esteem and emotional regulation difficulties.

Findings from Hypothesis 3 suggests that differential kinds of ACEs made both an independent and significant contribution to low self-esteem and difficulties in emotional regulation among in-school adolescents. Beyond such, neglect, representing the greatest relative contribution, leaves adolescents feeling particularly worthless and emotionally unstable. Physical abuse has a marked effect on both increasing emotions' dysregulation and impairing ones' sense of self in a poor manner. Household dysfunction-the lesser relative contributor-is not insignificant as emotional instability and image of self can be informed by this type of family stress related to instability at home.

These findings confirm earlier studies emphasising unique but interdependent effects of various types of adverse childhood experiences on psychological outcomes in adolescents. For example, Springer et al. (2007) and Gilbert et al. (2015) found that neglect and physical abuse are among the very harshest types of ACEs which consequently have prolonged effects on mental health, such as low self-esteem and emotional regulation troubles. Anda et al. (2006) showed that household dysfunction such as either parental separation or substance abuse can create a chaotic home environment that polluted emotional well-being. The present study reiterates how it is necessary to consider every type of ACE in the development of interventions to improve adolescent mental health outcomes.

4. Conclusion

The present study assessed the interrelationship of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), low self-esteem, and emotional regulation difficulties among adolescents attending school in Ibadan metropolis. The results reveal that ACEs, especially neglect, physical abuse, and family dysfunction, predicted difficulties in emotional regulation and low self-esteem among the adolescents. These findings bear witness to the severe impact of childhood trauma on the adolescent's mental health and necessitate targeted interventions and support networks in addressing these issues.

5. Implication for Policy, Theory, and Practice

The policy, theory, and practice impact of the study findings is significant. At the same time, policymakers are expected to come up with strategies that will facilitate interventions that address the influences of ACE's on adolescent mental health, such as including emotional regulation training and self-esteem-building programmes in school curricula. Finally, theoretical frameworks on trauma and development will be shaped more dynamically with the introduction of specific types of ACE effects. In practice, mental health professionals should be geared to identify and therefore address the emotional and psychological needs of adolescents affected by ACEs so that early intervention strategies can be made effective and accessible.

6. Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, the following recommendations were made:

School-Based Mental Health Programmes Implementation: Emotional regulation training as well as counselling should be integrated into rehabilitation services that can help adolescents overcome the effects of ACEs, among other services in schools. These identification-early approaches should be risks targeted and tailored directed to children's needs.

Positive Parenting Awareness Campaigns for Parents and Caregivers: Stakeholders should organise awareness campaigns and workshops to equip parents and caregivers with the knowledge of the long-term consequences of neglect, abuse, and family dysfunction. Bring more awareness to good practices in parenting to nurture a friendlier environment for adolescents at home.

Peer Mentorship Support through Community Networks: Through community networks and peer mentorship schemes, affected adolescents can have safe spaces for disclosing experiences while being resilient and having access to emotional support from trusted adults and peers.

Policy-level Interventions for Child Protection and Welfare: The government and policymakers should, therefore, tighten the laws of child protection and social welfare to prevent and mitigate the losses from ACEs through schools, health care, and social work in early apprehension and intervention of children with the cases of abuse or neglect.

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Effects of Stress Inoculation Training and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in Enhancing Conjugal Bliss of Women with Childhood Trauma in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract. In Nigeria, reports have linked past trauma with low levels of conjugal bliss in women. Previous studies on conjugal bliss focused more on family and environmental factors than on interventions such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Stress Inoculation Training (SIT). This study, using a quasi-experimental design, therefore, was designed to determine the effects of CBT and SIT on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State, Nigeria, while also examining the moderating effect of partner support. The research was conducted using the Vulnerability Stress Adaptation Model of Marriage Theory. The study employed a four-stage sampling technique, selecting two local government areas (LGAs), Agege and Ajeromi Ifelodun, based on the availability of Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs). PHCs were purposively selected based on the number of eligible women and the conduciveness of the locations for intervention. A screening test was administered to 205 married women in the selected LGAs using the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF/MEQ) to identify those with past trauma. Respondents who scored 50.0% and above were included in the study, resulting in a final sample of 81 married women (married for 1–10 years) receiving medical services at the PHCs. Participants were randomly assigned to either the CBT or SIT intervention groups. Findings revealed that both CBT and SIT significantly improved conjugal bliss among women with past trauma, with SIT demonstrating the highest levels of improvement. Additionally, partner support played a crucial role in enhancing conjugal bliss. The study suggests that marriage and family health practitioners, as well as women's affairs bodies, should incorporate these therapeutic interventions to improve conjugal well-being among women with past trauma.

Keywords: Married women with past trauma, Cognitive behaviour therapy, Stress inoculation training, Conjugal bliss

1. Introduction

Trauma in the past is said to greatly affect the marital lives, as far as women are concerned, which provokes serious exploration. A person may have been past trauma from an adverse childhood experience, for example, neglect, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, where it has lifelong effects of such experiences in a person's life (Redd, 2017). These experiences often lead to many social, emotional, mental, and cognitive impairments, resulting in the high risk of unhealthy behaviour, chronic health issues, and mental health problems like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and addictive behaviours (Morin, 2019; Dye, 2018). According to Offor, Ogunbowale, and Omopo (2025), the psychological and socio-economic factors will inform an individual who would eventually become involved in sexual offence acts; indeed, their effects on later behavioural outcomes could be much more comprehensive given the scale of how childhood trauma affects a later individual's state. Such a trauma could affect adult relationships, including marriage, with a visible impact on intimacy, trust, and satisfaction in marriage (Nguyen, Karney, & Bradbury, 2017; Bigras et al., 2015).

The most recent Nigeria Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS) (2018) further expose the disturbing picture of the sad stories of young women in terms of engaging in sexual violence, with more than half experiencing engagement in sexual activities before the age of eighteen and many reporting incidences of violence (Ekine, 2020). Such early trauma can have far-reaching consequences as it affects the survivor socially, educationally as well as emotionally. Bakare, Asuquo and Agomoh (2010) point out the disinterest

around the abuse of women and girls even as a very large fraction of the population. Most survivors develop fear, anxiety, and lack of trust, which extraordinarily affect their marital relationships. It has also been proved through research that childhood trauma influences patterns of behaviour and emotional reactions that can be carried into adulthood (Omopo, Offor, & Ogunbowale, 2024).

Research describes how early adversities predict marriage dissatisfaction where avoidance of intimacy and fear of abuse contribute to decreased couple satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2017; Bigras et al., 2015). Past trauma-related biological stress responses disrupt regulatory processes of the limbic-hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (L-HPA) axis to mental and physical health (Cherry, 2019). Omopo (2024) delved into the PTSD symptomatology and diagnostic criteria, largely focusing on how unprocessed trauma is portrayed in relational spheres, particularly marriage. Marriage is, in fact, part of the socio-cultural endeavors that provide a platform or ground for family life; when interference of such past trauma takes place, challenges to its practice are serious and significant (Jain, 2019; Tavakol et al., 2016). Factors of marital bliss include sex, income, communication, and common ground (Korporaal, Groenou, & Van-Tilburg, 2013; Buss, 2003). Although there have been different studies addressing various aspects of conjugal bliss like economic conditions, social security, etc., the effect of therapeutic interventions such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Stress inoculation training (SIT) on women with histories of abuse has hardly been explored (Taghani et al., 2019).

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based treatment that has a highly structured approach to helping the client identify maladaptive thoughts and beliefs connected with traumatic experiences (Resick & Schnicke, 1993). The therapy works by processing traumatic memories and constructing coping strategies that reinterpret the trauma, thus minimising its aversive effects on the person's life (Schulz et al., 2006). Therefore, CBT aims to teach clients about their trauma symptoms, the effect of thoughts and feelings on recovery, and also provides them with skills to counter unhelpful beliefs. Some studies suggested that cognitive reframing techniques may effectively target trauma-related behaviours (Omopo & Odedokun, 2024).

Stress inoculation training (SIT) is more like a "vaccine" against stress, which helps to prepare clients to face future stressors and deal with present stressors. Khorsandi, Vakilian, and Salehi (2016) report that SIT is a form of stress therapy developed by Meichenbaum back in 1976. SIT has three interlocking phases: conceptual education, skills acquisition, and application, and has been seen to alleviate anxiety and depression among several populations (Aneja et al., 2017). Research on those therapies' impacts on women with past trauma-their abilities to enjoy and stay in conjugal bliss though otherwise-are scanty in Nigeria. Omopo, Offor, and Ilori (2024) studied clinical evaluations of PTSD-related triggering cues to gain further insights into the psychological trauma borne by survivors.

Several studies have already concluded that those who have undergone past trauma tend to show improvement in their relationship satisfaction but there is little information on how CBT and SIT affect the wellbeing of couples. It is also worth putting into consideration the presence of moderator effects of partner support as they may not be alleviative to traumatic impacts in marriage-life. It clearly indicates the necessity of exposure to ongoing research in covering this gap.

It was also apparent that previous trauma strongly influences a woman's married bliss and has an effect on emotional and relational problems. However, using the intervention therapies of CBT and SIT would be very helpful to women who are finding it difficult to cope with the intricacies of their past experiences and would like to work in that regard toward their marital satisfaction. A better understanding of the effects of these therapies on the improvement of conjugal bliss among women with traumatic history must, therefore, be addressed. This is especially important in Nigeria, where this issue is largely prevalent yet understudied.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Conjugal bliss is a genuine feeling of pleasure, contentment, ease, joyfulness, and fulfillment that can be expressed by both husband and wife in their union. Sadly, due to low levels of conjugal bliss, many marriages today are on the brink of collapsing for reasons such as; too many expectations from the partners, poor interpersonal skills, health challenges, in-law interference, peer pressure, and past trauma. A study spearheaded by the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2015) reports that 6 out of 10 children in Nigeria experience some form of trauma before the age of 18 with girls at a higher risk. This, therefore, portends that a high segment of the married female population can be women with past trauma thus further insinuating that they can carry different mental and emotional encumbrances of varied degrees into their homes and when unexpected pressure sets in, like in-law interference or financial constraints, such stress can

trigger some maladaptive behaviour reducing conjugal bliss. This can further result in outcomes such as domestic violence, separation, and divorce indicating the need for professional psychological intervention.

Furthermore, it has been observed that some couples in Nigeria may find it difficult to experience some level of conjugal bliss as they were raised in emotionally deprived environments. Some of such settings contribute to children being exposed to a wide range of predispositions. Some early inadequate psychological nurturance that such settings can demonstrate include: disregard for their basic intellectual needs, extreme punitive 'disciplinary' measures, insufficient care, inadequate attention, verbal assaults, threats, destructive criticism, exposure to inappropriate sensual activities, rape, molestations and other forms of adverse circumstances eventuating into difficult challenges in adulthood. Although issues on mental health are gaining public attention, there is still a scarcity of studies on women's past trauma and conjugal bliss. This study, therefore, was designed to determine the effects of Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State, Nigeria.
Specifically, the study set out to:

- determine the main effect of treatment (Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy) on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma.
- examine the main effect of partner support (low, moderate, and high) on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma.
- investigate the interaction effect of treatment and partner support on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma.

1.3 Hypotheses

The following three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant main effect of treatment (Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy) on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State.
- There is no significant effect of partner support (low, moderate, and high) on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State.
- There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and partner support on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State.

2. Theoretical Framework

Karney and Bradbury developed the Vulnerability Stress Adaptation (VSA) model of marriage in 1995 (Karney, 2010). In addition to these, findings by Karney and Bradbury (1995) and Karney (2010) reiterate that couples with significant levels of enduring vulnerabilities who pass through stressful circumstances will encounter a hard time maintaining their marriages. According to Karney and Bradbury (2020), the VSA model is a framework for comprehending the active and complex processes of marriage. They posit that the model is divided into three basic elements namely; enduring vulnerabilities, stressful conditions, and adaptive processes. Karney (2010) affirms that spouses' susceptibilities and life stressors either positively or negatively influence these parts. In considering enduring vulnerabilities, Karney and Bradbury (1995) describe them as stable traits which spouses bring into marriage such as irrational beliefs, problematic behavioural qualities, and emotional challenges arising from past trauma (Karney, 2010).

Van Der Troost (2005) explains that Karney and Bradbury (1995) developed longitudinal studies reviewing 115 marriages. They aimed to gain some insight into spouses' conjugal bliss and to also observe how marriages achieve different outcomes over time. This led to their conclusion that an unhappy childhood and maladaptive behaviours could lead to negative marital outcomes; conversely, positively inclined variables like adaptive behaviours would yield promising results in terms of satisfaction and stability (Eysenck, 2000). Furthermore, Van Der Troost (2005) reveals that the VSA model hinges on four foundational postulations (social exchange, behavioural, crisis, and attachment theories) however they are not all applicable to this study. The three relevant theories, namely, social exchange, crisis, and attachment have therefore been retained.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

The study adopted a pretest-posttest, control, quasi-experimental design. The design was used to explain, interpret or contextualise quantitative findings and to

describe in detail unexpected results from the quantitative study.

3.2 Population

The population for the study comprised married women with past trauma in Lagos State. This included women who have been married between 1-and 10 years and had disturbing childhood experiences such as neglect, and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. They also included women who could interact in English and attended primary healthcare centres (PHCs) in three of the local government areas in Lagos.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample comprised married women in Lagos State who had been exposed to trauma during their childhood. The sampling was done in four stages: local government areas, centre, the participants, and assigning treatment /non-treatment groups. Two Local government areas were selected; Agege and Ajeromi Ifelodun LGAs were purposively selected based on a large number of Primary Healthcare centres available in the local government areas. Similarly, the PHCs were purposively selected based on how large the number of women available for the study was and how conducive the locations were for intervention. A screening test was administered to 205 married women in the two locations using the Past trauma Questionnaire-short form (CTQ-SF/MEQ). The purpose of the screening test was to identify women who had experienced past trauma. The CTQ-SF/MEQ has 28 items with a minimum score of 28 and a maximum of 140. Respondents who scored 50.0% and above of the distribution were used in the study, while those who scored below did not participate. A total of 81 married women (married between 1-10 years) who received medical services at Primary Healthcare Centres of the selected local government areas were eligible for participation in the study. The centres were randomised into CBT and the SIT groups respectively.

3.4 Control of Extraneous Variables

The researcher guarded against the effects of extraneous variables by considering the following:

- appropriate randomisation of the participants into the two treatment groups and the control group.
- adherence to the inclusion criteria.
- effective use of the use of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) statistical tool.

3.5 Instrumentation

ENRICH Conjugal Bliss (EMS) Scale

The ENRICH (Evaluation and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication and Happiness) Conjugal bliss scale is a 15-item instrument adapted from Fowers and Olson (1993). The focal point of the instrument is based on how spouses perceive conjugal bliss in their union. The authors used a Likert scale of 5 points: 5= Strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral (Undecided), 2= Disagree and 1 =Strongly disagree. In this study, the instrument was used on married women who have experienced past trauma intending to test the level of satisfaction in their marriages. Some of the items were: *my partner and I understand each other; I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship.* The scale consisted of 5 items described as idealistic distortions which were overly positive evaluations of marriage thus denying the existence of challenges for example; *my partner completely understands and sympathises with my every mood* while the other 10 domains like *I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship* were based on marital quality. Raw scores were calculated by the reverse. Its concurrent validity was .73 with a Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment test measuring common areas of satisfaction and conflict in marriage. This instrument was revalidated using 31 married women who were not part of the samples of the main study. The Cronbach alpha of .771 (See Appendix) was established indicating that the instrument is valid and reliable because it (Cronbach alpha) showed a measure of construct validity and internal consistency of the rating scale. Three items such as *our relationship is a perfect success; my partner and I understand each other perfectly* which correlated negatively with the scale were removed leaving a total of 12 items.

Partner Support Scale

Yildrim (2004) developed this instrument, which offers three response options: appropriate for me, exceptionally appropriate, and not appropriate. The instrument assesses the perceived support of spouses. It emphasises that my spouse is involved in my aspirations and aspirations. This study utilised a Likert scale with a score of 5 for “Every time,” 4 for “Frequently,” 3 for “Sometimes,” 2 for “Rarely,” and 1 for “Never.” Instructed respondents to select the column that most accurately represents their perspective on each subject. Participants were guaranteed the highest level of confidentiality. The instrument assessed instrumental, informational, validation, appraisal, and emotional support. Section A comprised respondents’ age, religion, tribe, and

duration of marriage. Section B comprised 27 items. There are concerns regarding my husband's reluctance to share, desire to conceal, and incapacity to comprehend. Percentile ranks categorised responses into three groups. Poor support was defined as individuals scoring between the lowest scores and 33.3%, moderate support as 33.4% to 66.7%, and high support as 66.8% to 100%. A total of 31 married women who were not involved in the primary study completed the instrument in order to validate it. The rating scale is internally consistent and construct valid, with a Cronbach alpha of.959.

Past Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF)

Bernstein, Stein, Newcomb, Walker, Pogge, Ahluvia, Stocks, Handelasman, Medrano, Desmond, Zule (2003) founded CTQ-SF. It assessed trauma in the study including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect injuries. The participants were questioned about their 1-17 year-old traumatising experiences. Each question asked respondents to choose the number that best expressed their thoughts. Answers were honest, even if personal. The responses were private. One was never true, two seldom, three occasionally, four often, and five often. Question examples: I knew someone would protect me. Replace "stupid", "lazy", and "ugly" with "some family members called me". The Marriage Enhancement questionnaire (CTQ-SF) has 28 items with a score range of 28–140. A scale identified trauma survivors. This score indicated women who have. This study found that married women with 50.0% or above had past trauma, but those with minimum scores to mean scores did not. In validation, 31 married women outside the main study took the test. Cronbach alpha of.932 indicated the rating scale's validity and reliability.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

An introduction letter was obtained from the Lagos State Ministry of Health and submitted to the selected primary healthcare centres. Informed consent forms were given, and the participants were informed about the study's purpose and potential benefits, and assured of confidentiality. The study was conducted in stages, namely: pre-session, pretest, intervention, and post-test. Groups were randomly assigned into treatment and non-treatment groups. During the pretest stage, instruments were administered and participants signed an informed consent form. The intervention stage consisted of eight sessions of treatment packages to that of control group not receiving any treatment. Participants in all the three groups were post tested with ENRICH and data collected for analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

For the quantitative aspect of the study, the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was the major statistical tool. It was used to partial out the initial differences between the three groups. Since there were differences in the posttest scores, estimated marginal means were used to estimate the strength of the differences, moreover, the direction of differences was determined using Sidak post-hoc pair comparison analysis. In addition, the interaction effects were significant thus requiring a graphical representation to determine the nature of the interaction.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The Ministry of Health in Lagos State granted ethical approval for a study on Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy. The study aimed to understand the decline of marriages and provide solutions for their sustainability. The findings were beneficial to participants, providing enduring coping skills and improving their conjugal bliss. The study was non-maleficent and voluntary, allowing participants to withdraw at any time.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results obtained from the study. This is done based on the analysis of the seven hypotheses formulated for the study. Explanations have been given following the findings of previous empirical studies. In addition, limitations of the study and areas suggesting further research have been highlighted. Furthermore, this research has made recommendations based on the findings and contributions of the investigation to the body of knowledge.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant main effect of treatment (Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy) on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State.

To test this hypothesis, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to analyse the post-test scores of the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State using the pre-test scores as covariates. This was to ascertain if the post-experimental differences were statistically significant.

The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Post-Test for Conjugal Bliss of Women with Past Trauma in Lagos State

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	7295.981[a]	18	405.332	6.430	.000	.544
Intercept	9424.758	1	9424.758	149.511	.000	.607
PRE EMS (Covariate)	119.739	1	119.739	1.899	.171	.019
Treatment	3527.016	2	1763.508	27.976	.000	.366
Partner support	1451.227	2	725.613	11.511	.000	.192
Treatment * Partner support	397.846	4	99.461	1.578	.186	.061
Error	6114.597	52	117.58			
Total	259511.000	80				
Corrected Total	13410.578	81				

R Squared = .544 (Adjusted R Squared = .459)
Key: *Sig at 0.05

Table 1 revealed that there was a significant main effect of treatment on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State ($F_{2,81} = 27.98$, $P < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.37$). This means that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State exposed to cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and stress inoculation training (SIT) when compared with the control group. Hence, the null hypothesis stated was rejected. The table also showed a contributing effect size of 37.0%. This implies that 37.0 % of the variance in conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State was accounted for by the treatment (CBT, SIT, and control). This also means that cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and stress inoculation training (SIT) are both effective forms of intervention in the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State. To further provide some information on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State among participants in the three groups (CBT, SIT, and Control), it was imperative to determine the magnitude of the mean scores of the participants in each of the treatments and the control group. Therefore, the estimated marginal mean score was calculated and presented in Table 2

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Mean

			95% Confidence Interval	
Treatment	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
CBT	49.782	1.357	47.089	52.474
SIT	50.015	1.308	47.420	52.610

The following observations were made from Table 4.2; showing that married women exposed to SIT had the highest conjugal bliss (50.02) followed by CBT (49.78) and control (37.06). To determine the direction of the differences, Fisher's LSD was not suitable for use in this study because the number of participants for the three levels of experimental and control groups was not equal. In addition, even though Bonferroni is widely used, Sidak post-hoc analysis possesses more statistical strength (King and Eckersley, 2019). Sidak also has tighter bounds than Bonferroni (Lee, Nunes Dunis, Lowe and Anders, 2016; Blakesley, Mazumdar, Dew, Houck, Tang, Reynolds and Buffers, 2009) therefore; it was more suitable as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Sidak Post-Hoc Analysis Showing Differences in the Treatment Groups

		Subset for alpha = 0.05	
	N	1	2
CBT	40	49.782	
SIT	41	50.015	

The following observations were made from Table 3:

(i) There was no statistically significant difference in the post-hoc test mean scores obtained by participants in the CBT and SIT treatment groups on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State. However, the participants in the SIT group (Mean = 50.02) benefited slightly more than those in the CBT group (Mean = 49.78).
(ii) There was a significant difference in the post-hoc test mean scores obtained by participants exposed to SIT and the control group. The mean scores of participants in SIT (Mean = 50.02) were significantly better than those in the control group (Mean = 37.06) on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State.

(iii) There was a significant difference in the post-hoc test mean scores obtained by participants exposed to CBT and the control group. The mean scores of participants in CBT (Mean = 49.79) were significantly better than those in the control group (Mean =37.06) on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State.
This showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of participants in CBT, SIT and those in the control group. Again, SIT was more effective in the two groups than the control group, thus indicating that the intervention had the greatest potency on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State than CBT and control groups.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant effect of partner support (low, moderate and high) on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State.

The results from Table 1 showed that there was a significant main effect of partner support on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State ($F_{2, 97} = 11.51$, $P < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.192$); meaning that there was a significant effect of partner support (that is; low, moderate and high) on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State. Hence, the null hypothesis three was rejected. Table 1 also displayed a contributing effect size of 19.2%. This means that 19.2% of the variance in conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State was accounted for by partner support.

Furthermore, to provide information on the extent to which partner support on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State among participants at the three levels (low, moderate, and high), the magnitude of the mean scores of the participants in each of the levels was computed as shown in Table 4. Consequently, the estimated marginal mean was calculated and presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Estimated Marginal Mean

			95% Confidence Interval	
Partner support	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low	40.636	1.465	37.729	43.543
Moderate	50.691	1.473	47.767	53.615
High	45.532	1.172	43.206	47.857

Table 4 confirmed that the mean score of participants with moderate partner support (50.69) was the highest, therefore, showed utmost conjugal bliss. This was followed by those who had high partner support (45.53) and lastly by those with low partner support (40.67).

5. Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis was rejected as revealed in Table 1. There was a significant main effect of treatment (Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy) on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State. This indicated that both Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy were effective means of treatment on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma. This agreed with the findings of Amipour et al. (2017) who reported a significant effectiveness of Cognitive behaviour therapy on conjugal bliss of war veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. Again, Bashpoor (2012) indicated that CBT has the ability to improve the conjugal bliss of women who survived exposure to infidelity. In the light of this, Murray et al. (2018) explained that CBT's capacity to focus on cognitive restructuring and reducing avoidance of trauma-related stimuli in individuals who have experienced disturbing events such as past trauma, can demonstrate its usefulness through challenging negative beliefs about self as well as others (Monson, Resick, and Rizvi, 2014).
Before intervention, Iverson et al. (2015) explained that some married women who exhibit certain overgeneralised maladaptive thoughts due to early adverse situations, and who also uttered some core negative beliefs, were found to significantly change after treatment. This was seen in one of the participant's before/after impact statements written by respondent (38) who was sexually molested by a close male friend of the family whom she was very familiar with. She was still a Nursery/Primary school pupil at the time the incident occurred. According to her, "The traumatic experience left me with trust issues from my childhood but now I am working on it. When bad things happen, it can take a while to get over the pain and feel safe again but with self-help methods and other strategies taught during the programme, I have discovered at this time that it is possible to recover. As a wife, I am more welcoming to my husband's jokes and sexual advances, something I used to find difficult

to do. I feel a lot safer because I am able to trust my husband and others better."

This has indeed buttressed the point that women who had received CBT have reported remarkable improvements in the interpretation of their early traumatic event. This was because the intervention produced more self-compassion and made them more hopeful about their future. As a result of this progress, there would often be reductions in symptoms of anxiety, depression, intrusive thoughts, avoidance and emotional numbing which have been associated with early traumatising experiences (Lenz et al., 2014). Additionally, CBT has been known to significantly decrease hopelessness and records improvement in sleep disturbances (Gutner et al., 2013) which are also linked to early challenges. Similarly, Galovski, Harik, Blain, Elwood, Gloth, Fletcher and Davila (2016) recommended that CBT can also be used to assist distraught women using Socratic questioning techniques while giving precedence to beliefs of assimilation and over-accommodation in order to improve the condition. Based on how important sexual satisfaction is in marriages, CBT has been used as a successful stigma-reduction intervention on women who have survived sexual violence which can particularly induce depression, anxiety, guilt, shame, self-blame and other psychological damages (Murray et al., 2018). Cognitive behaviour therapy has proved to be an effective evidence-based treatment for women who have difficulties navigating marital functioning including those caused by past trauma.

Similarly, from the findings of this study, SIT was found most effective on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma. This aligned with the findings of Akbari and Khodadadi (2013) which reported that the intervention led to decreased levels of marital conflicts thereby increasing conjugal bliss. Furthermore, their study affirmed that living with a spouse who is struggling with the effects of a past trauma can cause increase in marital clashes, stress and decrease in satisfaction. In their conclusion, they recorded that SIT can improve marital relationship by produce significant improvement in marital quality. Rabiee, Zahrakar and Farzad (2019) recommended SIT as a mediation for married women. They affirmed that it is an intervention that can be linked with reducing symptoms of prolonged mental, emotional and physical exhaustion thus increasing marital bliss in married women. This further demonstrated the proficiency which SIT as a psychological intervention possesses in ameliorating and improving conjugal bliss. Hojjat et al. (2016) also observed from the cohorts in their study that the hands-on coping skills designed for use in SIT were found stimulating because they helped individuals build resilience and boost enough confidence to deal with difficult situations hence enhancing functionality.

Shalkouhi et al. (2015) also Nikrokh and Zahrakar (2015) explained that infertility and pregnancy are part of the complex issues of marital life which can generate some psychological stress resulting in anxiety, depression, feelings of failure with outcomes like marital dissatisfaction. As a result of this, SIT has proven to be effective in alleviating stress in this complex phase because it can build a high level of resilience and tenacity to help couples facing life-stressors. In addition to this, Brannon, Updegrade and Feist (2021) submitted that SIT has the ability to facilitate the learning of adaptive techniques which can boost psychological 'immunity' to accelerate healing and increase self-confidence. Shalkouhi et al. (2015) maintained that despite the damaging outcomes of past trauma, the therapy builds a level of determination that can help individuals face marital issues successfully while finding meaning in the disturbing experiences such that they even learn to believe in themselves, their spouses and others. Again, another phase of life which affects many women is having their babies for the first time. This is a major transitional life occurrence which could bring about stress characterised by emotional turmoil affecting conjugal bliss. Odinka et al. (2018) confirm that SIT can help to reduce maternal stress while increasing conjugal bliss (Beigelman and Bacharier, 2013).

There is also a relationship between conjugal bliss and job stress observed in married female bankers and nurses. These women can be exposed to many stressors such as work place complaints, time schedule pressures, and heavy work load resulting in lack of sexual interest, reduction in shared activities, ultimately leading to poor conjugal bliss outcomes (Fawole and Isiaq, 2017; Barzideh et al., 2014). To this end, Spears (2019) identified that married female professionals who are faced with job stressors reporting low conjugal bliss can benefit enormously from SIT thus producing significant changes in the cognitive, motivational and emotional areas of behaviour. A probable reason why SIT could have been more effective than CBT was because it was full of action skills designed with easy to do hands-on methods. It was also less stressful because it did not dwell on the memory of the traumatic event nor did it involve much use of writing like CBT.

Hypothesis two was rejected as there was a significant main effect of partner support (low, moderate and high) on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma (Table 1). However, the participants in the moderate

level of partner support enjoyed conjugal bliss significantly more than those in both low and high levels. Gbiri and Akinpelu (2012) confirmed that partner support positively influenced the wellbeing of stroke survivors as it provided the emotional, financial and motivational assistance needed to improve. Again, women such as those attending the fertility clinic are quite vulnerable to psychological pain thus requiring partner support, therefore, Omoaregba, James, Lawani, Morakinyo and Olotu (2011) clarified that not having partner support predicted high emotional distress leading to marital disharmony.

Supportive spousal behaviour such as affection, attention and material provision when shown can increase conjugal bliss. Again, this was corroborated by Khan and Aftab (2013) as they reiterated that the higher the level of assistance received from spouses the more enhanced the satisfaction. This conflicted with the findings of the present study which revealed that women in the moderate level of partner support experienced more conjugal bliss. Apart from that, it also opposed the findings of Enebuwa-Okoh and Osho (2016) as well as Monin and Clark (2011) who submitted that high spousal assistance can enhance marital fulfilment. In the same vein, the findings of this study did not entirely agree with Arisukwu, Igbolekwu, Oyekola, Oyeyipo, Asamu and Osueke (2021) who reported that though partner support had a substantial effect on conjugal bliss, high levels of support were detected to sustain and promote good quality of marital life. Peter-kilo and Long John (2021) were however consistent with the results of this study as they recorded that there was a significant association between marital harmony and partner support but at a moderate level.

Another investigation, which agreed with this study, was that of Brock and Lawrence (2009). Their work on how levels of partner support can affect conjugal bliss showed that those couples who indicated that they were receiving high or low levels of care experienced a reduction in satisfaction. They stated that the plausible explanation for this was that husbands who are emotionally disconnected from their wives feel a certain level of fear and guilt; implying that these emotions can lead such men to display certain tendencies like an over-generous show of affection through unnecessary gifts. They added that, this type of men can overcompensate to make up for their shortcomings by providing more than their wives need. They concluded that these wives usually perceived that their husbands' support could be deceitful schemes meant to cover up their clandestine affairs. As a result of this, Brock and Lawrence (2009) asserted that receiving elevated levels of partner support than is necessary is especially disadvantageous to wives' conjugal bliss, similarly declined levels of assistance can produce low marital harmony. Again, past trauma can leave a 'wounded child' within an adult married woman (Teicher, 2000). This could lead to emotional and cognitive encumbrances such as fear of being abandoned, anxiety, low self-esteem, nagging, suspicion, and anger issues (Thatcher, 2018; DeCaralho et al., 2015; Marshall et al., 2011). Therefore, as past trauma can intensify already existing problems in marriage (Lauders et al., 2019, Marshall et al., 2011) not expecting or anticipating too much from a spouse can serve as a defense mechanism; in this way, moderate levels of partner support can help women with past trauma cope with averting heightened responses to relationship stress.

Hypothesis three was not rejected because there was no interaction effect of treatment and partner support on the conjugal bliss of women with past trauma as shown on Table 1. Partner support is useful in marriage as it indicates the type of sustenance given by couples to maintain their marital relationships. Furthermore, partner support geared towards growth predicts better mental health outcomes for spouses. According to Nguyen, Karney and Bradbury (2017) individuals with a background history of past trauma are linked with difficulties in relationships which is why Cooke, Racine, Plamondon, Tough and Madigan (2019) claimed that compassion can serve as a protective element that can be used to promote resilience in families with people who have experienced past trauma. They reiterated that support from the spouse of a survivor can be a key tool for change and overall wellbeing. Spouses' behaviours are critical in understanding the health outcomes of adverse childhood experience survivors (Evans, Steel, Watkins, and DiLillo, 2014) which can escalate due to spousal abuse but mitigated by sensitive and compassionate ones (Widom, Czaja, Bentley and Johnson, 2012).

Partner support is the demonstration of love, care and affection by one's spouse using marriage maintenance strategies such as emotional, informational, instrumental, appraisal and validative measures, which are necessary for strengthening marital bonds thereby producing satisfaction (Ebenuwa-Okoh and Osho, 2016). Therefore, conjugal bliss is a complex crucial feature which couples require in the attainment of marital happiness along with receiving support from one another aimed at thriving in life especially when challenges arise. Apart from partner support, another area of help for couples can be therapy.

John, Adebayo, Boychuk and OlaOlorun (2022) highlighted that intervention can focus on problematic areas in relational strengths and weaknesses with the goal of enhancing marital harmony. However, from the empirical findings of this study, the conjugal bliss of the women with past trauma was unaffected whether or not they received the treatment to enhance partner support. The probable reason for this could be that the women believe in family ties. Family ties are deep bonds embedded in the ethnic context of the rich Nigerian culture. These ties breed a sense of belonging, comfort and stability between spouses generating strong commitment to the marital relationship. This study supported Ogungbola and Akomolafe (2019) who postulated that elements of family ties such as togetherness, forgiveness, patience and understanding are important for conjugal bliss as they can foster peace.

Moreover, the spousal mate retention tactics described by Shackelford and Shackelford (2021) seem like another feasible explanation of the findings of this current study. They stated that women frequently use mate retention strategies which are behavioural methods to reduce relationship problems and increase satisfaction. These strategies can include tolerating the significant other despite his flaws, looking physically attractive to gain and maintain his attention, cooking delicacies to captivate him, also pretending to reach orgasm during intercourse to inflate the man's ego which is a common behaviour that 60% of married women practice (Shackelford and Shackelford, 2021).

5.1 Implication of the Study

Past trauma, a series of adverse experiences, can lead to severe psychological effects such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and sleep disturbances. These events can also cause stress, which can lead to chronic mental illnesses. Conjugal bliss, a mental state indicating the perceived cost and gains of marriage, can be a risk factor for satisfaction. Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy can help individuals become aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, identify negative core beliefs, and manage stress symptoms using effective coping strategies. This study highlights the importance of recognising children and adolescents who exhibit symptoms of past trauma and provides valuable information for social workers and school counsellors. Mental health workers and policymakers can use this research to develop trauma-informed interventions and plans to make the nation safer and healthier.

5.2 Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State, Nigeria. Partner support were the moderating variable. Participants were exposed to the treatment packages as interventions, thus relevant data were collected, collated and analysed using appropriate statistical tools. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached: Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy were effective on conjugal bliss of women with past trauma in Lagos State. Therefore, applying the ethics, components and structured approaches of both interventions could be effective in strengthening conjugal bliss of women with past trauma. Additionally, stress inoculation training was more efficacious in reinforcing marital harmony of women with past trauma. Furthermore, women with moderate levels of partner support had the best conjugal bliss than those in the low and high levels.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

These interventions (Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy) can be used to help women going through traumatic experiences to nurture satisfaction in marriage and harmony in homes.

The knowledge provided in the research on past trauma, conjugal bliss, and partner support can provide guidance for parents, teachers, school management, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrist, legal bodies, policy makers including other organisations involved in mediating on behalf of trauma victims as well as survivors to identify, understand and seek appropriate professional help for them.

Whilst Government empowerment programmes are beneficial for enabling women reach their full potentials, psychological assessments and interventions like Stress Inoculation training and Cognitive Behavioural therapy may be needed to assist those who have experienced past trauma.

The study focused on married women with past trauma; however, its knowledge could be extended to premarital counseling sessions for the singles to create a forum where issues of early trauma, its impact on marital relationships and how to cultivate better relationship outcomes can be discussed.

Through this study, it is obvious that some married women who are traumatised need interventions. This can be encouraged by setting up support groups where interventions can be administered. This can be utilised to help the affected women improve functionality and to correct such anomalies like the erroneous culture of silence.

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The Emotional and Social Challenges of Child Labourers in Nigeria

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Abstract. Child labour has several negative effects, some of which include harm to the children's social and emotional development. In the Benin metropolis of Egor and Oredo Local Government Areas in Edo State, Nigeria, eight working children between the ages of seven and fourteen will have their psychosocial effects from the child labour problem examined in this study. The research's theoretical model was informed by the ecological theory. Using a narrative method, this qualitative study aims to provide a deeper understanding of children's experiences based on the impact of workload on their development. Through the use of thematic data analysis, it was discovered that children's involvement in wage earning had a detrimental effect on their social and emotional development because of labour.

Keywords: Child labour, emotional, social, psychosocial, social work

1. Introduction

Child work has significant implications for children's physical, social, and moral development, making it a global issue that needs serious attention. Any work that is fundamentally exploitative, robs children of their youth, potential, dignity, and is harmful to their development is referred to as child labour (International Labour [ILO] & Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Nonetheless, child labour is still a major issue in today's society. A total of 160 million children—63 million girls and 97 million boys—are employed as child labourers worldwide, making up about one in ten of all children, according to the ILO and United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] (2021). Furthermore, Africa has the largest rate of children working as well. Additionally, the ILO and the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (2024) state that, of children in the 5–14 age range in Nigeria, "a total of 46.5% (23,184,430) are working; approximately one in ten are exclusively working, while almost four in ten are combining work and school" (p. 5). The way childhood is viewed affects how children are treated and, consequently, whether or not they should engage in labour activities (Omorogiuwa, 2017; 2020b).

The type of labour that children do and the environments in which they operate make it difficult to quantify the work that children do through their services (Admassie, 2002; Fetuga et al., 2007; Amuda, 2010; ILO, 2016; Omorogiuwa, 2018; 2020a). The research's narratives look at the many psychosocial effects of child labour. Because of the situations under which children are forced to work, child labour has gained attention both nationally and internationally (Aliyu, 2006). "Children in Nigeria are often found engaged in work activities as hawkers selling their goods, some as beggars, car washers, scavengers, and iron workers," according to UNICEF (2006, p. 1). According to Owolabi (2012) and Omonona et al. (2010), children have engaged in a variety of employment activities over the years, including industrial, street, and home labour, with the resulting psychosocial impacts. In a similar vein, Mitik and Decaluwé (2009) suggest that children's labour load include all activities completed, such as domestic duties, education, and earning money. The researcher was inspired by these viewpoints to ask children about their experiences with work exposure.

The "Ideal workload of child labourers can only be determined when the hours of work and household chores are included," according to Ensing (2010, p. 9). Child labourers often lack essential social connection, opportunities for personal growth, emotional support, and safety from various hazards as a result of their lengthy work hours (Okoronkwo & Oprah 2024). As a result, the study took into account the intricacy of the job that the children did as well as the ways in which their many tasks affected them all at once. Child labour has a variety of psychosocial repercussions on children since it affects the kind of work they undertake as well as its duration, intensity, and frequency (Liborio &

Ungar, 2010; Omorogiuwa, 2016; 2018). In essence, their workload has significantly increased in intensity.

Even though it is believed that children who work to support their families are doing so at the expense of their own relaxation, leisure, and social interactions, this is not the case. According to researchers from a variety of backgrounds, the psychological effects of child labour lead to low self-esteem, feelings of hopelessness, dejection, and isolation (Rabiu, 2010; Jones et al. 2012; Asamu, 2015; Omorogiuwa, 2018 Okoronkwo & Oprah 2024). In Nigeria, there has been little discussion of these aspects of child labour and how they affect children' social and emotional growth. The statement "child labour has some harmful effects on children's school attendance, social relations, and leisure time" is made by Grootaert (quoted in Togunde & Carters, 2008, p. 175). Consequently, child labour severely impairs children's rights and welfare by having an adverse effect on their early years and development.

1.1 Aim of the research

This study's primary goal is to investigate the emotional and social problems that working children in Benin City, Nigeria, face.

2. Theoretical Framework

Ecological theory is the theoretical framework that explains the comprehension of the psychological effects of child labour and the suitable solutions. Theorists of ecology would rather see children's activities as interactions between people and their surroundings (Germain & Gitterman, 1996; Ungar, 2002). An ecological perspective on child labour revolves with the relationships that exist within society. This method of social intervention promotes "challenging properties" at all social ecological levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 1643). Psychosocial aspects, according to Sossou and Yogtiba (2009), are essential to understanding the phenomena of child labour and its effects.

The present investigation employs a multi-level ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) to facilitate comprehension of child labour and the many approaches taken to address it, namely the micro, messo, and macro levels. The relationship a youngster has with his immediate surroundings and how that interaction helps or hinders the actualization of his potential is known as the micro system level. Moreover, the recurrent interactions between systems that have a direct impact on children and their surroundings make up the meso system level (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Using this approach to the understanding of child labour in this study, the social and emotional effects are considered meso factors.

3. Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative research methodology, drawing on the experiences, worries, and views of working children regarding the pressures they face at work (Gilgun & Sands, 2012).

3.1 Sample and sampling technique

Eight working children, both male and female, between the ages of seven and fourteen from two local government districts were chosen for this study using purposive sampling in order to participate in a semi-structured interview. The two local government regions' consents to participate in the research, together with the children's willingness to do so, were taken into consideration during the selection process. Two visits were given to each child participant and their parents/guardians to create rapport. This helped to foster trust and protected the researcher's capacity for reflection. The study aims to explore the effects of double work load on children's well-being from their personal perspectives, rather than generalizing findings, which is why the number of participants was

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Since the child participants needed the same information, a single interview guide was created for them. The type of work, the activities the children were involved in, how long the job took, and how many tasks they completed were the main topics of inquiry. Children's opinions were also sought regarding the long-term impacts of employment experiences on their social and emotional development.

The present investigation employed theme analysis methodologies as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) to conduct a qualitative analysis of the data. The utilization of thematic data analysis associated with the ecological approach enabled a comprehensive comprehension of children's experiences. The six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) for achieving convergence of empirical knowledge consists of the following: (1) familiarizing yourself with your data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) organizing themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the report. A great deal of thought was given to how children engaged, thought through their experiences, and

expressed opinions about their important jobs and growth. As a result, the information gathered was confirmed.

4. Results and Findings

The effects of children's labour activities on their wellbeing were investigated in this study. The data analysis produced the following conclusions. The child participants' answers in this study make it clear that children's exposure to the workplace causes them emotional anguish, which in turn impacts their personalities. The absence of leisure time or break periods and the financial exploitation by their clients are just two of the social and emotional effects that the children in this study had to deal with. When children are refused breaks at work, the emotional and social effects of employment on them are amplified, as will be covered in more detail below.

4.1 Lack of Breaks and Leisure

Lack of breaks or free time is one of the prevalent characteristics of children's job. The students in this study also mentioned how infrequently they take breaks during work hours or between school and work, even with how hard they work. Without set work hours and rest periods, children's work experience is a sign that their childhood is being taken from them since they don't have as much free time as they should, which is crucial for their development (Kuti, 2006), a Nigerian researcher. It may be deemed unfair, harsh, and exploitative to work for extended periods of time without taking breaks (Omorogiuwa, 2016).

According to the Child's Rights Act, Act 26 (2003, Sec. 28(1) B), children "shall not work in any capacity." The Nigerian Labour Act, 1990, Section 13(3), states that "where a worker is at work for six hours or more a day, his work shall be interrupted by allowing one or more suitably spaced breaks of not less than one hour," even for adults. The youngsters in this study, however, operate under much worse conditions because they are required to work nonstop without any breaks, which violates their rights. When asked how often they take breaks while working, two more children responded as follows:

"I don't take breaks... I only take breaks from work when I'm not as busy, and when I have no customers to sell my iron to, I use that time to talk with my friends who are also child labourers. Otherwise, I work through the day without taking a break".

"My mother did not advise me to take a break; instead, I constantly hawk my things. Occasionally, I will try to locate a spot to relax, but as soon as I remember the market (my goods), I begin hawking right away in order to sell successfully and even finish them".

The children's stories show how their necessity to make a sufficient living prevents them from taking many breaks to rest in between jobs. Encouraging youngsters to work longer hours per day than what is legally required for adults can have a significant negative influence on their emotional development. Due to hectic work schedules, children who miss meals may get exhausted and hungry. However, some child labourers were seen sitting beneath a tree during the fieldwork for this study, presumably venting to themselves and taking a break to unwind. According to Omorogiuwa (2016), child labour is unregulated, therefore although they use their own judgment to pause to rest, they do not take time off from work.

Children who work nonstop lose out on leisure time and experience negative effects on their psychological growth. For example, two of the children who were interviewed stated that because they work nonstop, they hardly ever get time to relax. One person recounts: "Even when there are no customers around, I still work and occasionally clean the shop." The other child said that she doesn't have a break at work since there isn't enough room, unless her shop is less crowded. Children who work "without stop" are more likely to be mentally and socially exhausted in addition to physically exhausted. According to Admassie (2002), Omorogiuwa (2018) and Omorogiuwa (2024), children's psychosocial development is negatively impacted when they are engaged in activities for long hours because it deprives them of their social wellbeing.

According to several of the interviewees, youngsters work because they frequently need to earn money throughout the course of their working day, not because it gives them less space. One could argue that letting children labour long hours without much or any downtime is the same as enslaving them (Omorogiuwa, 2016). It also suggests that children's social functioning is probably going to suffer when they don't get enough sleep, especially at work. "The denial of rest breaks does not only have physical effects, but an irreversible psychological impact on the development and well-being of children," according to the UNCRC (Act 31(2013, No. 17)). Children's feeling of purpose for work could be enhanced by leisure time, which is denied to child labourers.

The aforementioned accounts provide important insights on the psychological effects of child labour on an individual and interpersonal level, as well as how children's wellbeing is hampered when they are unable

to take breaks from work. Feelings of helplessness, being taken advantage of, dissatisfaction, and loss of identity are made worse by this. Not only do children have to deal with the psychological effects of working long hours without a place to take breaks, but they also have to deal with not getting paid or getting paid too little by clients, which is covered in the next section.

4.2 Exploitation of Working Children by their Customers

A prevalent encounter that numerous children shared was the deception techniques used by their clients. Children who work for a living are susceptible to exploitation since their employers might not be kind and might underpay them or take a long time to pay them (Desai, 2008; Omorogiuwa, 2016). Children's interactions with customers revealed some of the effects of their job on their emotional health; some children talked about how difficult it was for them to deal when they were required to provide services and then had their money withheld because they were vulnerable to abuse. "Some of my customers do not pay me after buying from me," a young youngster explained simply. The goal of children's labour is undermined if they receive no payment after working. Additional examples of nonpayment are provided.

"I get calls from customers saying come and collect money from me later when you are going home, but when it comes time to pay, they never do; all they say is come tomorrow, come tomorrow, it hurts me and makes me cry," the customer said. "Sometimes, when I go out to hawk, customers do not pay me. Some people will pretend as if they want to buy and pay, but they will not."

Since some of my clients buy from me but refuse to pay, I dislike not getting paid. After selling, I occasionally don't get paid, and I frequently spend my time sobbing in my customers' homes because they wouldn't pay me".

The stories told by the children show how sometimes they go home empty-handed because some clients take things but won't pay for them. When the children come to pick up the promised money, some clients offer to pay the children, but the money is taken away. When asked what emotions they experienced in such situations, the children said they felt sad and furious. One young person says, "I was always angry." The children also said they weren't happy in those circumstances and occasionally started crying. Customers' behavior may be characterized as insulting and humiliating since it exposed children to more abuse and rejection. As a result, children's labour in these circumstances not only gets in the way of their ability to earn money, but it also has an emotional impact on them since they feel sad.

As a result, one of the children remarks, "I will be happy when my customers buy from me and pay me." This demonstrates that children benefit from the money they earn by working, as well as the compensation they receive for their labour. Therefore, it is deemed exploitation when minors encounter non-payment. Desai (2008) and Ekpenyong and Sibiri (2011) both attest that when minors participate in child labour, they are occasionally the target of extortion since some clients refuse to pay for the services they receive. When clients don't pay for the work they do, youngsters feel less accomplished and get depressed.

Underpayment is a component of the adults' exploitation technique that the youngsters work for, aggravating the working conditions. They are occasionally underpaid against their will rather than being compensated for the services they performed. Two of the children who were interviewed talked about how they were underpaid by some customers since they would frequently receive a meal or a modest stipend instead of the agreed-upon sum after working. Children haggle with clients to reach a certain price, but after their services are provided, the clients refuse to pay the entire amount. The following children's narratives serve as examples of this:

"Most of the time, I don't go home with a lot of money because some of the clients I work with won't give me the money we agreed upon." Sometimes, when it is time for them to pay, I get given modest amounts of money after moving their load to where they want it. I frequently carry their trash since I deal with some stingy consumers. I usually take whatever money they want to pay because they either want to beat me up or refuse to give me any money at all".

"I frequently wash dishes for patrons at restaurants and expect to be paid accordingly, but occasionally they choose to give me little payment, which irritates me sometimes. Some will try to offer me food in place when I insist that my money must be paid. Usually, I refuse because it was not what we agreed upon, but occasionally I give in if they are persistent because I am powerless to stop them".

These reports highlight how youngsters who labour in the public eye are susceptible to exploitation. Even when preliminary agreements are negotiated before work begins, once the job is over, the customers unilaterally change the arrangement and pay however they see fit—or, as in one of the aforementioned situations, offer food in lieu of money. In the second instance, the child's ultimate payment was far less than

the sum that was first agreed upon. These situations show that children frequently have no choice but to submit to the dominance of their parents in order to prevent conflict or because they have little authority and no recourse to the legal system because it is against the law for children to work as young. Situations like this have a significant effect on the psychosocial well being of children.

Additionally, they have an emotional effect on the children, making them feel useless and helpless. Such circumstances are unfair and discriminatory as an employee is entitled to the pay that was agreed upon. They did, however, reply positively when asked if they would continue to work for clients who underpaid them, pointing out that not every day is the same and that there have been instances when they have received the agreed-upon payment. This demonstrates how, because of their desperate financial circumstances, children persisted in interacting with the same clients in spite of their dishonesty and deceit. According to Leka and Jain (2011) and Yasin et al. (2011), certain children did exhibit acts of resistance while staying inside the boundaries of the exploitative and oppressive behaviors that their clients had set.

The stories told by these children provide as more evidence that certain children who work as minors are frequently exploited and denied money by adults. These children are defenseless and helpless to stop the scenarios from happening, so they find comfort in mimicking or in the idea that God would punish the customers who refuse to comply. According to Omorogiuwa (2023), the fact that child labour is prohibited makes children more susceptible, and as a result, when children are exploited, neither the parents nor the children can seek justice. These clients most likely take advantage of this as well as being completely aware of it. Children who work should be considered victims with the right to fair compensation for their efforts, even though it may be counterproductive to encourage the legalization of child labour in any case. This story encapsulates the challenging working conditions that children face, which are made worse by consumer abuse. Consumers who treat children with disrespect and dishonesty lose their sense of self, which affects their ability to stand up for their rights out of concern that other customers won't buy from them.

According to studies conducted throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, children are susceptible to exploitation, hazards and other vulnerabilities (Rabiu, 2010; Jones et al. 2012; Okoronkwo & Oprah 2024; Omorogiuwa, 2023; 2024). This is sometimes defined as "under-payment or non-payments in intimidating environments" (Admassie, 2002; Omorogiuwa, 2016). Therefore, children and their families who are living in impoverished conditions experience distress as a result of this extortion of revenue, which is a sign of helplessness. Children's ongoing involvement in work activities resulted in sentiments of anguish, helplessness, and mistreatment since their interactions with consumers at work do not always align with their psychosocial well-being.

In conclusion, children's firsthand accounts of child labour demonstrate how these events undermine their early development and have a mesolevel impact on their social and emotional development. We can conclude that these results hampered the well-being of youngsters. Under such conditions, employment obstructs children's rights to protection and optimal development.

5. Conclusion

The two themes that surfaced from the data and had an impact on children's development are highlighted in this study. The children's descriptions of their working environments make it abundantly evident how dangerous those settings are for their mental and social development. Through payment delays or nonpayment following service delivery, customers intimidated and manipulated youngsters, causing them to develop low self-esteem and unhappiness. The absence of recreational possibilities or work breaks was indicative of social hardship.

In light of the complexity, the steps taken to address the issue of child labour would offer some means of support to the children and their families. Therefore, interventions focused on how to best use social work techniques to address the challenges faced by children and their families will support the society's response to the problem of child labour.

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Part Three
Language and Literary Studies

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Poisonous Pedagogy: Patriarchal Religious Tenet of Child Illegitimacy in Nawal El-Sadaawi's *The Fall of the Imam*

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Abstract. This paper interrogates the interconnection of religion, patriarchy and child illegitimacy in Nawal El Saadawi's *The Fall of the Imam*. In Islam, *Zina* laws are part of the jurisprudence that give cogency to the phenomenon of child (il)legitimacy and the criminalisation of female sexuality. Thus, juristic terminology, *Waladul zina* designates the illegitimate child as a product of fornication. Even though a child belongs to the one in whose bed it is conceived, the legitimacy of a child is tied to the nuptial bed in Islamic law. Focusing on the prism of the novel's narrative of the subject matter of religion, patriarchy and female sexuality, the paper interrogates the concern with the phenomenon of child illegitimacy. A qualitative textual data collection from the novel is employed to interrogate and discuss the contradictions underscoring the interconnections of religion, patriarchy and female sexuality in a fictional Islamic society. Textual data analysis is anchored broadly on Marxist and Feminist literary dialectics. The concepts of ''feminism'', ''patriarchy'' and ''ideology'' are understood and deployed in the context of the religious sentiments and the established religious ethos which define the superstructure of the setting of the novel. Critical literary analysis revealed that, in Nawal El Sadaawi's *The Fall of the Imam*, male characters manipulate the religious tenets of Islam, use these tenets as poisonous pedagogy to execute personal, political and gender biases agenda. The paper concludes that the novel carpets the politics of gender by regarding it as a constitutive religious discourse and ascertains that Islam is a political agency for executing and maintaining traditional male dominance and gender disparities in the Arab society.

Keywords: Illegitimacy, Patriarchy, Girl-Child, *Waladu Zina*, Islam, Criminalisation

1. Politics and/in Religion

This paper interrogates the fictional depiction of religious patriarchal tenets, hegemonic dispositions that cumulates to criminalising sexuality and stigmatising the child born out of wedlock, in Nawal El Sadaawi's *The Fall of the Imam*. The paper considers representation of oppressive religious doctrines used by male characters against female characters in the novel as a form of poisonous pedagogy. The broad aim of the paper is to highlight and discuss the implications of the politicisation and criminalisation of religious tenets on the idea of the illegitimate child in the Arab society. A critical reading of the novel provides an access into the socio-political and cultural configurations of an imaginary Arab society, which serves as the spatiotemporal context of the novel. The background of this novel depicts an Arab society, which is predominantly occupied by people who profess Islam as their faith, characterised by patriarchal cultural activities. It depicts a society that thrives on the leadership of men who, under the guise of religion, politically and culturally sustain the hegemonic control of women and treat them as commodities in a supposedly ideal Islamic society. The scenario captured in the novel indeed ventilates Hubert Seiwert's (2016) argument that, any attempt to dichotomise the interdependency of religion and politics would be a demonstration of a reflection of normative idea of modernity (431). In other words, the influential role religion plays in giving allowance to the manipulation and management of the social and political process, particularly in modern African societies such as the one depicted in *The Fall of the Imam*, is incontestable. Criminalisation of female sexuality as a result of genderisation of social-acceptable versus social taboos/deviant behaviours are a common characteristic of many African societies which the novel contextualises using the Arab (Egypt) example.

When properly conceptualised religion, in whatever form or origin, relies fundamentally on a set of doctrines, which are supposedly immutable, unalterable, obligatory, and unquestionable to adherents. These tenets are taught and internalised

formally and informally and implemented pedagogically by adherents. However, adherents' interpretations of religious doctrines often reflect the interlocking of religion with politics and so are always plagued by diverse outcomes for adherents. Studies in the sociology of religion affirm that religion indeed is an expression of the undercurrents of and/or a communication between the secular and the sacred (John Mbiti 1970; Bolaji Idowu 1973; Wilson 1954). The argument here tilts to the idea that religion is an ideological indoctrination which teaches the people to accept their present lot in life in relation to the influence wielded on them by the sacred realm of the supernatural existence. By that same token, Shishima, S.D and Apenda, A.Z (2004) argue that religion is "an adjustive mechanism within the social system" (57). In a nutshell, religion functions to sustain an organised social group (and political group, too) within a network of human relationship; hence, religion does not exist in a vacuum because it is an important element of a society's superstructure. It comprises elements of beliefs, values, creeds, laws, codes among others and, therefore, is inseparable from the society and its political process especially in the third world countries such as the Arab socio-political and cultural society where El Saadawi's novel, *The Fall of the Imam* is set.

The politicisation of religious ideals to achieve patriarchal agenda often provides the allowance for privileged individuals and groups to engage in the deployment of crude, poisonous methods to address perceived sins of individuals within the community. Although the concept of ''poisonous pedagogy'' is used in psychology and sociology to refer to methods of raising children that are considered repressive and uncivilised, the idea is used, in this paper, to refer to the maltreatment of not only the children in the orphanage, but also the raping of Bin Allah's mother by the Imam who orders also that the product of the illicit affair with the woman, Bint Allah, be stoned to death on accusation of having committed adultery. Femicide is committed by the Imam in the killing of Bint Allah and the stoning of her mother to death in the name of punishment for the sin of fornication. Indeed, a fundamental sociocultural vision of *The Fall of the Imam*, as literary text, is to project the relationship between human beings and the spiritual otherworldly reality as mutually interactive even though this is poisonous to basic human justice during implementation. The fact that the characters in the novel coexist in a religious cum political sphere of life shows the kind of social control embraced by the people. The complexities trailing the expressions of socio-political, religious and cultural ideals the characters express are of major concern to this paper.

Similarly, Sellin Volker (2014) maintains that the meaning of politics, like that of religion, is shrouded in a multiplicity of interpretations that are driven by philosophical insights and sociological assumptions with practical concerns (23). And reasoning alongside Volker and Hubert is the concern that religion, politics, sociology and philosophy are interlocked with a complicated sense of ambiguities even though politics and religion, as concepts, have evolved as key ideas for classifying different aspects of sociopolitical realities.

According to William T. Tucker (1965), Max Weber analysing its functionalist characteristics observes that, religion is the breaking point in human existence; the basic mechanism for administering the frustrating elements of social and political system. Weber is particularly critical of the effects of the economic factor on the social function of religion and maintains that the larger economic framework in which religion evolves remains the context where the internal significance of religion can be interpreted (9). More importantly, however, is that Weber considers religion as part of the process of actualising the dynamics of politics where the concept of politics is understood as the process of contesting for political power or influencing the distribution of power both between states and between social groups within states (Tucker 1965: 10). To exemplify Weber's functionality of religion theory, El- Sadaawi in *The Fall of the Imam* call attention to the way in which the tenets of Islam are weaved into the fabrics of politics as the Imam uses his political and religious position to influence and manipulate power relations between men and women in the society to his personal advantage. It is significant to this paper, therefore, that Weber extends the relationship between religion and politics to formations that do not belong strictly to the sphere of states and governments such as the distribution of power in religious communities. By and large, critics whose concerns have focused on the relationship between religion and politics agree that religion wields enormous influence on politics and governance systems and that this influence pervades every facet of the human society and its institutions. To this end, the central focus of conflict in *The Fall of the Imam* is how characters in *The Fall of the Imam* who are adherents of Islam believe that the ideals of religion must dictate politics, gender delineation, sexuality, marriage, and of course child legitimacy/illegitimacy. Hence, in order to exemplify critics' linkage of religion and politics to patriarchal religious tenets to poisonous pedagogy, this paper contextualises the interdependence of these ideas within ideological

conversation evident in the subject matter of child illegitimacy in *The Fall of the Imam*.

2. Child Illegitimacy (*Waladu Zina*) and Female Sexual Preference in the Arab Society

Maybe the subject of child illegitimacy, as it were, should not be as much a serious contentious issue in the Arab society depicted in *The Fall of the Imam* as the expression of its implementation by privileged members of the society in the novel. Marriage is understood as an ordained and prescribed institution which has an overall spiritual implication for the Muslims in the novel. To that extent, a marriage contract is expressed as an authentic proof of paternity in Islam even though child legitimacy is hinged on legal paternity and not on an abstract spiritual belief. Yet, the Islamic legal tradition criminalises sexual relationship between two opposite sexes who are not legally married; it condemns *zina*, which is sexual relationship outside marriage. Consequently, the product of an illicit relationship or *zina* is referred to as *waladul zina,* child of fornication; a child born outside of wedlock (Ebrahim Moosa 1992: 26). Moosa argues that Muslims in Arab societies believe that "a child belongs to the one on whose bed it is conceived and born" (28) therefore child legitimacy is tied to marriage even though the Quran is silent on the issue of illegitimacy. The backing and implementation of *zina* law, according to Moosa is sought from prophetic traditions and subsequent consensus and analogical conclusions of jurists (29), which are secondary in preference and authenticity to the Quran in the Islamic legal process.

In portraying *zina* law, however, Nawal El Saadawi in *The Fall of the Imam* theoretically situates the conclusions of jurists on cultural and religious law. By so doing she foregrounds the feminist perspective on sex and sexuality, which views zina law as a cruel way to sanction female sexuality. The novel demonstrates that *zina* is an aspect of the Islamic legal tradition that must be situated within the tradition's classification of human behaviour, especially sexual relationship and gender roles (84). Similarly, Noel James Coulson (1971) avers that "legitimacy of birth is the legal postulate for admission into the family" (22). In other words, a child is admitted as a member of a family if it is of a legitimate birth. Moosa and Coulson are in agreement with Sadaawi's narrative point of view contending that, in Islamic tradition, a child is only legitimate if it is conceived in a lawful marriage of a man and a woman (its parents). These positions pointedly highlight the implication of anyone's sexual choice whether in marriage or not. And it is for this that sexuality and genderisation to which the idea of child illegitimacy may be examined in Islamic jurisprudence. Yet, there is a sense of conundrum created with critics' insistence that the absence of legal paternity disqualifies bond between father and child and confers on the child the status of illegitimacy because this is inconsistent with the prescribed penalty for *zina* in Islamic jurisprudence as contained in the Quran.

The pedagogical execution of child legitimacy or illegitimacy in the Islamic law suggests that legal paternity could be understood through two methods. The first is the presumption of paternity within a validly established marriage while the second method is through acknowledgement. The second method entails that formal recognition of the status of legitimacy already exists and results in establishing the paternity of a child. To put it succinctly, the man must acknowledge and formally recognise the child as his child before paternity is established; which presupposes that if a man acknowledges the child of his slave or concubine, the child becomes a legitimate child regardless of the fact that its mother is not a legal wife. In particular, the second method makes concubinage an acceptable tradition in Islam even though it is a form introduced into the practice of the religion in the Arab society (Coulson 1971: 26). Kecia Ali (2012) opines that before the abolition of slave trade in the late 19th and early 20th century, the tradition of concubinage was an acceptable mode of sexual relationship among the Arabs. Ali observes that legal sexual relationship was not exclusive to legally married couples because keeping slaves as mistresses and concubinage was practiced by affluent Arab men, maintaining also that there were rules governing the possession and use of female slaves that were unique to them (39). Ali further insists that the availability of female slaves as sex partners had social implication for the development of Muslim thought on sex, which is expressly sanctioned by the Quran in various verses. For instance, the Quran, being the most authentic source of legal injunctions in Islam, outlines the type of women a man can engage in sexual activity with as well as the procedures for marrying even a slave. But Ali, indeed, emphatically cites the example of a prominent 8th century Jurists, al-Shafi', who expressed a legal view on concubinage. According to Ali, al-Shafi' posits that a man could take as many concubines as he desires because God did not restrict the number of concubines for men. (41) Ali is not, however, unaware that al-Shafi's position is nullified by the fact that '' He (God) forbids men taking more than four wives'' (41). In any case, sex is a social activity that is both a private and intimate act human beings engage in, which perhaps is the reason all human societies and cultures deliberately seek to regulate sexual activities

among their members. Hence, certain pairings of male and female in the Qur'an are tolerable while others are not; some acts are approved while others are disallowed. The emphasis here is that, Muslims are not alone in regulating sex or distinguishing between lawful and unlawful sex and proper and improper sexual behaviour (Kecia 56).

To a large extent, this paper calls attention to the novel's representation of *zina* laws, emphasizing the feminist theoretical point of view and Marxist scholarship base of the novel. It analyses the wider sociocultural and institutional structure of inequality that take validity from male characters' interpretations of religious texts (The Quran and the Hadiths) in the novel. The point here is the fact that the sacred texts and laws derived from them are matters of human interpretations rather than the actual ideal of the religion. Hence, the following questions come to mind in this paper: What is legitimacy? Who is a wife? Who is a concubine? Who is a legitimate child and who is an illegitimate child? Interrogation of these questions are targeted to seek equal life chances for all the human characters in *The Fall of the Imam* irrespective of circumstances of their birth, social and gender choices. These questions are interrogated through literary and content analysis of El Saadawi's concern with how religion and religious tenets are manipulated for socio-political oppression of women, the criminalisation of women's sexuality in relation to meaning of child illegitimacy.

3. The Intersection of the Religious and the Political in *The Fall of the Imam*

As earlier asserted, religion and politics are closely intersected and interlocked especially in societies where people are deeply religious. From an extremely feminist perspective, El Saadawi ideologically foregrounds this clash or intersection against the background of gender realities in many human societies in *The Fall of the Imam*. The Imam, the villain of the story, is at fore front of the execution of the religious tenets and politics of cultural assaults on women in the novel. He is portrayed as a religious and political leader to reflect the novel's feminist and gender concerns. Religion is represented in the novel as one of the sociocultural systems dictating the individual and collective consciousness of the people. Attention is drawn specifically to the linkage between the events that connect the characters of Bint Allah, her mother and the character of the Imam. These characters are not only the central focus of attention in the novel, they are presented to demonstrate how an oppressive political cum religious manipulations work. The so-called religious leader (the Imam) is pitched against the vulnerable (the child) and the victim of sexual assault (the woman). The Imam's character ensconces religion in an exploitative political rather than spiritual ideology and as an instrument for the criminalisation of female sexuality and stigmatisation of an innocent child as an illegitimate child. The Imam controls both religious and political spheres of the community, governing the state supposedly activating religious law, the Shari'a as his guide. It is amusing to see the Imam in the novel as the leader of the ruling political party, Hizb-Allah, and simultaneously the founder and financier of the opposition party, Hizb al-Shaitan (41, 48). Indeed, the narrator notes that the Imam had founded the opposition to disguise his autocratic political agenda. It is quite intriguing also that, he is of a low birth; an indigent and unintelligible school boy who latches on self-styled patriarchal ideological provisions in religion to attain high social and political status (15-17). His innate desire has been to control the world and execute self-explained rigid theology of Islam. Now that he is the Imam, he enjoys being regarded by the society as God's representative on earth. It should not be surprising that he uses the same religion that lifted him from the margin of the society as a tool of oppression and subjugation of the vulnerable members of the society, especially women. He unashamedly denies the paternity of Bint Allah whose mother is of low class even though Bint Allah is a product of the sexual escapades the Imam had with her mother.

The novel uses the Imam to offer a narrative through which the reader is availed knowledge of sexual assault and brutal oppression of women, which elevates the complex construction of masculinity in the narrative. The Imam's refusal to accept Bint Allah as his legitimate child is not unconnected with the child's mother's social status coupled with his grand design to cover his criminal activity of rape. He is aware that identifying with either Bint Allah or her mother will be inimical to his socio-political image as the Imam (a religious and political leader) and will discredit his hypocritical claim to holiness and religious authority. In his lame defence of self-styled theology of Islam, he justifies his rejection of his biological child. In other words, the Imam's image corresponds with the ideological misrepresentation of the religion of Islam, and this is kernel to the critical caution offered by Perin Gurel on the need to ''historicize feminism, historicize Islam, and highlight the complexity of representation'' (3)

The Fall of Imam is interested in the intricate puzzle underscoring the phenomenon of the illegitimate child in a highly patriarchal religion-based society. This interest emerges from the author's feminist vision to challenge the misnomer of genderisation of sexes. It is

a concern in the novel which reinforces the need to understand the Arab patriarchal society where Islam and its extant theology are manipulated to advance both gender inequality and gender violence, which further calls attention to the problem of femicide in such societies. Femicide is the act of killing the woman and or the girl child on account of their gender. Gender related violence and femicide in the name of religion is associated with patriarchy and the politicisation of religion by state actors and/or institutions in the novel. The author, through the novel, demonstrates the politicisation of religion and the criminalisation of female sexuality (another form of gender violence) in various colourations. For instance, the treatment of the phenomenon of child illegitimacy and/or *Waladul Zina* resonates in the novel to demonstrate criminality of female sexual choice and gender violence. In this manner, *The Fall of the Imam* blends fantasy and reality and develops a controversial narrative about femicide, brutality and injustice against the child labelled illegitimate and the woman criminalised for her sexuality.

In unpacking the riddle underscoring the phenomenon of child illegitimacy in an Arab society, the novel puts Bint, Allah, a fictional alter ego of the author, in the centre of the discourse. Bint Allah's mother is a prostitute; a belly dancer and woman of low social status. Bint Allah's mother is impregnated by the Imam who refers to Bint Allah as a child "born out of a moment rashness and numerous cups of wine" (57). The Imam is purportedly actualising the ideals of a religious tenet which regards Bint Allah as a child of an unlawful union. For him Bint Allah is not ''the child of the bedding'', rather, she is a child of fornication; hence, an illegitimate child, a *Waladul zina*. She is taken to an orphanage were other children like her who have no father, no mother and no chain of reference are kept. God becomes their father since the society considers them as ''children of God'' (26). Assigning the word 'Allah' to the names of the children tagged illegitimate as their surname is deliberate in the novel. This comes with the implication that, in a religious and sociocultural environment, such as the Arab society where the concept of *Waladul Zina* is operationalised as the illegitimate child, Allah (God) must take responsibility for the plight of the children designated as illegitimate. Hence, the so-called illegitimate children are named variously to reflect this self-styled tradition i.e. Bint Allah meaning the "Daughter of God", Nemat Allah (the "Blessing or Gift of God") and Fadl Allah ("God's bounty") etc.; hence, the illegitimate children become God's children (68).

To this end, while El Saadawi's feminist stance on the phenomenon of cultural denigration of women is clear, it would seem that her view of religion is inseparable from those she expresses about other social and cultural phenomena. It is perhaps crucial to note therefore that she seemingly does not oppose religion (Islam) per se, rather, she is aversive and shows her disinclination to the interpretation and practice of basic religious doctrines by the privileged male dominated religious tenets. For instance, she makes her opinion clear about God in an interview with Newson-Host Adele where she insists that God is justice; she claims that even her grandmother identifies God with "justice" (Newson-Horst Adele 2012: 57). Her firm position that God is synonymous to justice however challenges the notion as to whether God is male or female and this is what gives cogency to her 'queer' association of a female character, Bint Allah. She unapologetically renders the image God in female attributes, which is a form of blasphemy in Islam. Thus, even though she is rejected and labelled illegitimate child in the novel, Bint Allah/Daughter of God to El-Saadawi is a creation of a just God to reflect how justice should manifest.

Marilyn Booth (1996) is, indeed, also correct when she observes that in *The Fall of the Imam,* ''religious discourse dominates the text more than that of politics." (34) In other words, religious doctrine takes precedence, giving preference to religion laws and rules in day-to-day governance in *The Fall of the Imam*. By and large, El Saadawi's treatment of the phenomenon of child illegitimacy in the novel also shows her predilection for probing the hidden femicide that colour the actual interpretation and execution of some critical religious doctrines; the various shades of violence carried out against females. This is demonstrated in the novel's narration of the phenomenon of *waladul Zina*. This doctrine is presented as an isolated religious practice and acceptable life only meant to achieve some form of femicide. Bint Allah's mother is, for instance, summarily stoned to death as a result of the belief that she engaged in an illegal sexual activity which produced Bint Allah, the *waladul zina*. It is not surprising to see also that the woman and her child receive sanctions, social marginalisation, mental torture and general repulsive attitudes, and death, from the hegemonic patriarchal society led by the Imam. Furthermore, a connection is drawn between the patriarchal tendencies, religious extremism, gender violence against women and the girl-child and the act of femicide through the execution of the law on *waladul zina*. All the illegitimate children in the novel are kept in an orphanage with very strict orders and are punished severely for any slightest offence. (29) The only parental care they receive are those they

experienced in their dreams where they fantasise of parental warmth (45). These children are violated and subjected to inhuman treatment, particularly rape. To further execute the concern with maltreatment and insecurity that pervade the life of the children in the orphanage, El Saadawi creates a two-face character referred to as Baba. One part of his faces is smooth and gentle like the bosom of a mother's face while the other part is fierce-looking and covered with hair. (32-33) The two parts signify the metaphor of religion as a gentle, smoothing and empowering phenomenon yet harms, disempowers and renders man unable and incapable of controlling and affecting his life. Baba goes about the orphanage with a stick and intermittently drags small girls to punishment cells. (33) The same Baba also gathers the children around himself and teaches them lessons on religious catechism holding the Holy Book of God in one hand and guiding the children as they recite prayers from the sacred texts. (34) However, he will drag a girl into the punishment cell where she is made to close her eyes in reverence to God while Baba rapes and deflowers her in the guise of punishment. (37) Baba, like the Imam, uses religion as an instrument of violation of the female sex, pointing to the double-edge faces of religion and which the male privileged members of the society in the novel practice and sustain. Baba even audaciously makes references to Quran verses or the Hadith to justify child illegitimacy.

Similarly, the Imam uses his privileged position, authority and power and knowledge to gain socio-political and cultural ascendency. The Imam, by the design of political and hierarchy in the religion, purportedly rule according to the law of God that stipulates punishments for offences. The narrator tells us that, according to the Imam, it is religious to stone
adulterous women to death, cut off the hands of those who commit
theft, slash the tongue of those who spread rumours about irradiate
milk, pour all brothels, all casks, and barrels of alcoholic drinks into
the water of river. (12)

These are the tenets of the theology of Islam which Baba and the Imam must purportedly uphold and executed on behalf of God. However, the question which the novel raises from the law on "stone adulterous woman to death'' is, what happens to the woman's male partner in the act? This question becomes pertinent bearing in mind that it takes two people, male and female, to commit adultery. Also, is it not that the women labelled adulterous are victims of rape as in the case of the Imam and Bint Allah's mother? Of course, the principle of punishing an adulterer or fornicator is clearly spelt out in Quran as follows, but the Imam is never going to consider this context in isolating punishment for Bint Allah and her mother:

The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual
Intercourse- lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do
Not be taken by pity for them in the religion of Allah. (24 verse 2)

Going by the fact that the Quran is placed as the most authentic and highest source of the Islamic law, one would have thought that the Imam as a religious leader will place the injunctions in the verse quoted above any other opinion or pronouncement on the subject matter of illegal sexual activity. In other words, if there is any reason to belief that the law has been violated by any not legally married individuals who engage in sexual activity and the need to punish them appropriately, would it not affect the two of them rather than punishing one and be silent on the other? Besides, why does the law being executed and applauded by the people fail to investigate the incidents to identify the actors? These questions are addressed in the novel by nudging the reader's attention to the patriarchal structure that places religion and genderisation as the base of its superstructure.

El Saadawi agreeing with Sazzad, who likens the treatment of *Zina* laws in Islam to flawed social morality that poisons women's consciousness from the moment of birth (84), states that the treachery of men is allowable by divine law, while that of woman is inspired by Satan. *The Fall of the Imam*, to this end, not only carpets the double standard and abuses in the name of religion, as exemplified by the character of the Imam who not only secretly violates a vulnerable woman, impregnates her, orders that she be stoned to death for adultery but also condemns the denying of the paternity of the offspring of the illegal relationship. Bint Allah reveals that, "nobody knew that the Imam was my father…. only my mother and my dog Marzouk knew he was my father. Marzouk, which means 'fortunate creature of God', is privileged to witness the sexual act between the Imam and Bint Allah's mother. Bint Allah further claims that, "it was Marzouk who saw my mother kneeling on the ground, stifling her sob, and it was Marzouk who saw my father slipping away in the dark." (21) In other words, the sexual act between the Imam and Bint Allah's mother was not consensual but through coercion from him. Unfortunately, the Imam is God's representative on earth who is beyond reproach and at liberty to commit rape. His action of rejecting the paternity of

Bint Allah is not unconnected with the fear of diminishing his religious authority.

To further pursue the feminist ideological agenda of the novel El Saadawi employs character stereotyping through metaphor, symbolism and allusion which underscores the feminist vision of the novel. The author stereotypes Bint Allah as a defiant, rebellious and bold female figure who is not afraid to raise her voice in the society. Bint Allah's boldness is evident in the way she answers the townspeople who instruct her to cover her shameful face for being an illegitimate child of a whore. The collective belief of the townspeople is hinged on the interpretations of the Islamic law on sex, marriage and legitimacy/illegitimacy of the child by their Imam who, unfortunately, is the political and religious leader. But Bint Allah queries them on the source of their authority regarding their perception of her as *waladu zina*. Of course, the townspeople's answer is not unexpected: ''God, where God's words are written'', which gives Bint Allah more opportunity to speak about the ignorance of the townspeople and use the occasion to challenge the manipulated and misinterpretations of religious doctrines by the patriarchal religious leaders. Bint Allah, as already observed earlier is El Sadaawi's alter ego; she is the voice women liberation and call for equity and justice in all spheres of sociopolitical life of modern society.

The metaphors of the Virgin Mary, Bint Allah and that of The Philosopher are directly used to parallel activities and biblical and Quranic images and characters. The character of The Philosopher symbolises a man who is conceived through the test tube technology and challenges the idea of illegitimate child and the myth of female virginity. Through this narrative construction, she x-rays the paradox of the Imam's pietism, as he conferred on the test tube baby who is not 'the child of bedding' the title of a Philosopher because he meets the stipulated conditions of declaring faith in the oneness of Allah and in His Prophet Muhammad, cutting off the foreskin that covers his male organ (141-142). El Saadawi calls her readers attention to the differential and preferential treatment engendered by patriarchy in collaboration with religion that underscores gender and class regulations. The issue of social class also comes to fore in the novel to further uncover and establish the problem of double standard that characterise patriarchy and religion as collaborators in the treatment of the question about child illegitimacy in an Arab society. Even though The Philosopher as a character is educated, he has no father but has a mother. In comparison, the children in the orphanage who are "born out of a moment rashness and numerous cups of wine" (57), have no chain of reference, no father (because their fathers deny their paternity), no mother (because their mothers are stoned for adultery), no name; not having any parent or not cared for by parent surrogates. In the case of the Philosopher, renouncing his faith for Islam and his social status offers him the identity that family bestows. The question this novel seems to be asking here is, does class and faith wipe the religion tenet of illegitimacy? The Philosopher, accepts the Islamic faith for material gains. A short while after the Imam bestows on him the title of Philosopher, he says "God multiples my gains to the extent that…I packed …bays full of gold and smuggled them through the customs without…." (143) Ironically, the privileges the Imam accorded him, an equally illegitimate child as the children in the orphanage, cannot be accorded to any of the children hoarded in the orphanage, violated and deprived by both the Imam and Baba who represent the face of patriarchy and religion in the novel.

4. Conclusion

This paper has so far made an attempt to interrogate the politicization of religion that engenders the concept of child illegitimacy and establishes injustices embedded in the *zina* law in *The Fall of the Imam*. It has been established that the novel is concerned with a self-styled patriarchal Islamic sociopolitical system that subjugates and criminalizes innocent and vulnerable women. It analyses that El Saadawi in *The Fall of the Imam* questions the entrenched oppression of women through social constructed religious discourse and interrogates the ways in which the boundaries between religion and politics blur contemporary politics. The novel's treatment of a plethora of issues relating to the intersection of religion and sexual relationship between man and woman in *The Fall of the Imam* suggests that child illegitimacy in the Arab society is instituted and reinforced by the concept of the 'sleeping child'. The novel's contention is therefore built upon the idea that patriarchal religious tenets are a form of poisonous pedagogy in implementation. The overall conclusion to be drawn is that Nawal El Saadawi's concern in *The Fall of the Imam* is ideologically subjective in its approach to the issue of child legitimacy/illegitimacy in Arab societies. There is the supposition demonstrating the poisonous pedagogy that regulate and execute sexuality and female sexual laws in the novel.

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Opening and Closing Sequences in Nigerian Pidgin Sales Talk

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Abstract. One of the ways that individuals maintain good interpersonal relationships is by using appropriate opening and closing strategies in their conversations. Research on conversational openings and closings has been conducted in different parts of the world. Still, there is a shortage of scholarly works on openings and closings in Nigerian Pidgin. It is this gap that this study addresses. The aim is to discover how closely the patterns for opening and closing conversations in Nigerian Pidgin sales talk follow the sequences identified in prior research. The data comprises fifteen dyads of recorded conversations between salespersons and their customers collected from five different business settings. The duration of the interactions ranges from two to five minutes, and the participants are adult Nigerian Pidgin speakers from various walks of life. The corpus is analysed using Coronel-Molina's (1998) theory of telephone conversations. The findings show that all four components of conversational opening sequences identified by Coronel-Molina were found in the data- the summons/answer, identification/recognition, greeting adjacency pairs, and "how-are-you" adjacency pairs. For closing sequences, out of the four strategies proposed by Coronel-Morina, only one category was found: the final closing. The findings also show that opening and closing sequences are context and culture-dependent.

Keywords: Openings; closings; Nigerian Pidgin; Sales talk; service providers; summons/answer; identification/recognition; greeting adjacency pairs.

1. Introduction

Conversational openings and closings are essential to any interaction and directly affect how human relationships are maintained. Isosavi and Vecsernyes (2022, p.9) note that opening sequences are used to establish connections between interlocutors, while David M.K et al. (2012) report that openings refer to how a conversaion is initiated and may include the use of address forms, greetings, exchange of positive non-verbal movements like smiling, waving of hands and eye movement. For Majeed and Hassan (2022, p.232), openings are initiation chunks of speech used to start a conversation. Conversely, closings refer to how a conversation is closed and may include thanking and goodbyes with positive non-verbal acts like smiling, waving and eye contact. Bou-Franch (2011, p.4) notes that opening and closing sequences "are mainly phatic, inter-personally-loaded structural slots, mostly empty of content regarding the goal or reason for the interaction". Bou-Franch adds that while in opening sequences, the social relationship between the participants is negotiated and established or recalled, in closing sequences, participants work to accomplish a joint, negotiated, frictionless termination of the social event. Openings and closings determine the circumstances for the initiation of the first topic in a conversation, indicate that all issues in a conversation are adequately taken care of (Illomaki and Kuusuvuori, (2020, p.1) and are more stylised than other parts of the conversation (Nurjanah and Rchmawati, 2022, p.28). Opening and closing strategies vary from person to person and from culture to culture and may constitute challenges to foreigners who are unaware of the rules guiding their use. Kerbrat- Orechoni, (2005) as cited in Tabback and Van den Heede, (2021) observes that openings and closings are the locus per excellence of positive politeness. This goes to show that using the appropriate openings and closings enable interactants start and end conversations in a smooth and frictionless manner. Despite the growing number of studies done on opening and closing sequences in face-to-face conversations in diferent languages: Emery,2000 (Omani Arabic); Kpoko and Abrefa, 2017 (Akan in Ghana); Akindele, 2007(Basotho in South Africa), to the best of our knowledge, no study has been conducted on opening and closing sequences in face-to-face conversations in Nigerian Pidgin. It is this gap that this study addresses.

2. Literature Review

Studies on openings and closing sequences have been conducted in different parts of the world. Some scholars have focused on telephone conversations: Majeed and Hassan, 2022 (Behdini Kurdish); Al-Ali and Abu-Abah,2021 (Jordanian Arabic); Taleghani-Nikazm, 2002(Germany and Iran); Hopper and Chen,1996(Taiwan); Schegloff,1968 (British English) while others have examined the structure of openings and closings in face to face conversations: (Felix-Brasdefer, 2015 among Yucatan Mexicans; Huang, 2016 for Taiwanese and Italians; Kpogo and Abrefa, 2017 for Akan in Ghana; Mahzari,2019 for Saudi Arabic).

Majeed and Hassan (2022) analyse opening sequences in radio phone-in programmes in Behdini to find out the effects of gender on the forms of the sequences. The findings reveal that the forms of openings depended on whether the caller was known or unknown and that the caller-unknown structures occurred mostly in female-female speech and rarely in female-male discourse.

In another study, Isosavi and Versernyes (2022) compares opening sequences in Finnish, French and Hungarian Youtube videos with focus on addressing, greetings and gestures. The data discovers cultural similarities in the use of greetings, address forms and gestures. In terms of cross-cultural differences, the data shows that Finnish and Hungarian were closer to each other than to French.

Al-Ali and Abu-Abah (2021) examine opening phases of telephone conversations in Jordianian Arabic. The analysis shows that although the participants employed functional patterns similar to those found in other cultures and languages, there were peculiar options used by only Jordianians.

In a related study, Mahzari (2019) explores opening sequences in mobile phone calls and landline conversations between Saudis in order to identify the different patterns and to find out if similarities and differences exist. The results of the investigation show that even though similarities exist between the two, there are still areas in which the two mediums are different.

Kpogo and Abrefa (2017) examine the structure of face -to –face casual conversations among the Akans in order to find out the different ways openings and closings are patterned. Using Coronel- Morina's theory of telephone conversation, which is a development of Schegloff (1986) and Schegloff and Sacks (1973) the authors juxtapose the structure of face-to-face casual conversations to that of casual conversations. The findings show two forms of face-to-face conversational openings: presence and absence of interlocutors with greetings and how-are- you sequences occurring in both forms. For closings, the study reveals three forms: introductory closings, intermediate closing and final closings.

Felix-Brasdefer (2015), in an examination of service encounters in Yucatan Mexican discovers that openings and closings did not occur in the data but that the conversations consist of pre-sequences in which inquiries were made about products and services.

Huang (2016) examines openings and closings among EFL students. The corpus was gathered from 768 email discourses between eleven Taiwanese college freshmen and thirteen Italian senior high school students. The results of the study reveal that both the Taiwanese and Italian students used openings and closing strategies in their interactions with each other. This present study analyzes conversations in Nigerian Pidgin sales talk, with focus on openings and closings, in order to find out the extent to which the data fits into Coronel-Molina's (1998) model of openings and closings.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Coronel-Molina's (1998) theory of telephone conversations, which is an adaptation of Schegloff and Sacks's (1973) and Schegloff's (1986) theory of telephone conversations. Like Schegloff (1986), Coronel-Molina proposes the following features of opening sequences in telephone conversations: summons/answer, identifications/recognition, greeting adjacency and inquiry sequence. The summons/sequence refers to the ringing of the telephone and the receiver's response by picking up the phone. This answer is usually in the form of the word 'Hello' or any other identification. The identification /recognition sequence involves each party identifying themselves and displaying recognition of the other party. The greeting sequence consists of exchanging greetings, while the inquiry sequence refers to that part of the conversation when both parties pose an initial inquiry. He expands Schegloff and Sack's pre-closings for closings to include features such as new topic introduction, recapitulation and final closing.

4. Data and Method

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design. Data for this study consists of a corpus of naturally occurring conversations collected from different settings. The location is Abraka, a thriving commercial town in Delta State, Southern Nigeria. The instruments for data collection are an audio recorder, observation, and field notes. Adult Nigerian speakers of Nigerian Pidgin took part in this study. The data is presented first in Nigerian Pidgin, followed by their English translations. Jefferson's (2004) transcription notations will be used to transcribe the data.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Openings

Coronel-Molina identifies components of conversational opening sequences in telephone conversations as summons/answer, identification/recognition, greetings, and "how-are-you" adjacency pairs. All these forms occur in the data, although with variations, especially in the summons/ answer sequence.

5.1.1 The Summons/Answer

This summon aims to start the interaction and draw the addressee's attention to the addresser, while the answer is the addressee's verbal reaction. In telephone conversations, the phone's ringing constitutes the summons, and the answer is the addressee's response to the summons made of words like 'hello' and 'Yes.' However, in face-to-face conversation, as seen in this study, the conversational participants use interrogations as first signals, and herein lies the difference between sales talk and telephone conversations.

5.1.2 Interrogation

Sometimes, when interlocutors come within sight of each other, they begin the conversation with an interrogation as a signal to draw attention to themselves. They do this without any opening sequence and do not engage in phatic talk. The conversation below is an example of such an occurrence:

Exchange 1:

1. Customer: → ↑ How much for hypo?
Medium size.
What is the price for hypo, medium-sized?
2. Shop Keeper: Two fifty.
Two hundred and fifty naira.
3. Customer: → What of Jik?
What about Jik?
Shop Keeper: Three hundred naira.
Three hundred naira.
Customer: Take. Give me change.
Here you are. Give me my change.
Shop Keeper: One thousand naira! I no get change o. Just give me the fifty naira wey dey your hand.
One thousand naira note! I don't have any change. Just give me the fifty naira note that you have in your hand.
Customer: I wan use am. Abeg give me my change.
I want to use it. Please give me my change.
Shop Keeper: Take. Thank you
Here. Thank you.

Zhou and Yu (2023,p.186) note that interrogatives are the most commonly used conversational openers between strangers. An example is seen in Exchange 1, where the customer initiates the conversation with an interrogative 'How much for hypo? (Line 1) as a way of attracting the shop owner's attention and stating the purpose of her visit. After obtaining a response from the shopkeeper, she proceeded with another question: 'What of Jik?'The customer's use of the interrogative in Line 1, as well as 'Excuse o', is done to soften the impact of the request. Another instance of the use of the interrogative as a form of signal is seen in Exchange 2.

Exchange 2:

Customer: → How much for Maggi?
How much is Maggi seasoning cube?
Shop Keeper: Chicken own abi meat own?
Chicken or beef flavour?
Customer: Meat.
Beef.
Shopkeeper: Carton?
A full carton?
Customer: Yes.
Yes.
Shop Keeper: Na five thousand seven hundred naira e bi.
It costs five thousand seven hundred naira.
Customer: No discount?
No discount?
Shop Keeper: Na so dem dey sell am everywhere.
That is the price at which it is sold everywhere.
Customer: Na here I dey, no bi everywhere, and I dey ask if you no go less for the price?
I am here, not everywhere, and I am asking if you won't reduce the price.
Shop Keeper: No, ma. That na the last price.
No Ma'am. That is the last price.
Customer: Give me one pack.
Give me a pack.

Zein et al. (2021, p.58) observe that the essence of interrogation in conversations is to make inquiries and seek clarification. They also serve as a way for interlocutors to register their presence (Chepinchikj 2020, p.4). In Exchange 2, the customer makes her request in the form of an interrogation: 'How much is Maggi'? (Food seasoning cubes). She is direct and straight to the point, with no time for pleasantries, and immediately states the reason for coming to the shop. Her primary objective is to make her purchase. The conversation continues with more question-and-answer sequences until the customer eventually takes her leave.

5.1.3 Address Forms

Another way through which participants initiate conversations is by using address forms. Afful (2006), cited in Kpogo and Abrefa (2017, p.79), asserts that terms of address are essential to human verbal behaviour and reflect a society's norms and practices. Zhou and Yu (2023,p.186) also observe that solidarity and power relationships influence address forms. This is exemplified in Exchange 3:

Exchange 3:

Customer: → Madam, you get coke? Cold one? Plastic?
Madam, do you have a Coke? A Cold one in a plastic bottle?
Shop Keeper: No Coke, only Fanta.
No Coke, only Fanta.
Customer: Give me Fanta. How much?
Give me Fanta. How much is it?
Shop Keeper: Five hundred.
Five hundred naira.
Customer: Take!
Here you are!

In Line 20, the customer begins the interaction by referring to the shopkeeper as 'Madam.' In the Nigerian society, it is considered impolite for a younger person to refer to their elder by name. Forms like 'Uncle, Auntie, Madam' and' Mummy' are used to show respect for the addressee's age. From the data analysis, one common form of address the interlocutors use to initiate any interaction is the title plus greeting sequence, as seen in the following conversation.

Exchange 4:

Customer: → Aunty, good evening.
Auntie, good evening.
Shop Keeper: Good evening. Wetin you want?
Good evening. What do you want?
Customer: You get Extract soap?
Do you have Extract soap?
Shop Keeper: Yes
Yes
Customer: Bring am
Let me have it
(0.5):
Customer: →Aunty, this one no be original
Auntie, this is not the original.
Shop Keeper: How the original be?
How does the original look like?
Customer: For the original, dem no use Arabic write for am. Na English dem use.
The original has no Arabic inscription on it. The words are in English.
Shopkeeper: Na, this one I get.
This is the one I have.
Customer: No. I no wan this one.
No. I don't want this one.

In this exchange, the customer, the younger party, initiates the conversation with the title plus greeting. She refers to the shop owner as 'Aunty' out of respect for her age (Lines 25 and 30). Even when expressing her displeasure about the soap given to her, she remains polite by calling the shopkeeper 'aunty.' The conversation continues with the customer educating the sale person about the differences between the two kinds of Extract soap. A similar title plus greeting sequence is seen in Exchange 5 below.

Exchange 5:

Hair Dresser: → Aunty welcome, you wan do hair?
Auntie, you are welcome. Do you want to make your hair?
36. Customer: No, na my daughter.
No, it is my daughter that wants her hair-done.
37. Hair Dresser: She don loose her hair? Why?
Has she loosened her weaves? Why so soon?
38. Customer: E no last. I wan make she fix weave-on. Na dat one go last.
Those weaves did not last. I want her to fix a weave-on. That will last longer.
39. Hair Dresser: After this one, she go braid hair, I go stretch am, she no go retouch the hair and after some time even you go surprise when you see the hair. U sef go regret wetin make you retouch your hair.
After this, she will braid her hair, and I will stretch it. She will not retouch her hair; after some time, you will even be surprised when you see it. Even you will regret why you retouched your hair.
40. Customer: How much I go drop? I wan reach market.
How much will I deposit? I want to go into the market.
41. Hair Dresser: Two thousand, five hundred naira. No need to wash am.
Two thousand, five hundred naira. There is no need to wash her hair.

42. Customer: Take, give me change. Abeg no waste time. Na she go cook the things wey I dey go buy for market.

Have it. Give me my change. Please do not waste time. She will be the one to cook the foodstuff I am going to buy in the market.

43. Hair Dresser: Ok, ma.

Ok, Ma'am.

Kordon (2006 cited in (Polo 2021, p.12) observes that the opening phase is rich in phatic language used to lubricate the switch from non-communication to communication. In the opening sequence of exchange 5, it is evident that the participants share a long-time relationship, and the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. The use of 'Aunty welcome' by the hairdresser serves as a means of initiating the conversation. This done, she then proceeds to ask" You wan do hair? (Do you want to make your hair?).

5.1.4 The Identification/Recognition

Kpogo and Abrefa (2017) observe that identification/recognition refers to a situation where a conversational participant (who has been summoned) tries to find out the addresser who is addressing them. In most interactions between shopkeepers and their customers, the identification and recognition process occurs when the interlocutors come within sight of each other.

Exchange 6: (In a Restaurant)

44. Customer: → ↑ Well done oo

Hello.

45. Restaurant Owner: → Welcome customer. Wetin you want?

You're welcome, Customer. What do you want?

46. Customer: I want rice and stew.

I want rice and stew.

47. Restaurant Owner: Like how much own you want?

How much worth?

48. Customer: You fit give me like 1000 naira own?

Can you give me 1000 naira worth?

49. Restaurant Owner: Wetin you want use take chop am?

What would you like to eat it with?

50. Customer: With 1000 naira cow-leg, but you go put plenty stew o.

With 1000 hundred naira cow-foot, but put a lot of stew.

51. Restaurant Owner: Cow-leg na 1500 naira. Cow-leg plus rice, 1000, making 2500 naira.

Cow-foot on its own is 1500. Cow-foot and 1000 worth of rice will be 2500 naira.

52. Customer: Eeyyyyh. The cow-leg cost o! Na 2000 I go pay.

Eeyyyyh. Cow-foot is expensive! I will pay 2000 naira.

53. Restaurant Owner: The rice no go plenty o, you know say things don cost.

The rice will be very little. You know that things are expensive.

54. Customer: But you no go look dat one. I be your customer. Na, every day, I dey come chop.

But it would be best if you did not look at it that way. I am your customer. I eat here daily.

55. Restaurant Owner: You, too, consider me. Na inside di rice and cow-leg I go get money for shop before I see gain. You want make hungry beat me? I go muni for you because of next time.

Please also consider my situation. I pay my rent and profit from the sales of rice and cow-foot. Do you want me to go hungry? I will add a little extra rice for next time's sake.

56. Customer: Thank you.

Thank you.

57. Restaurant Owner: You go chop here abi you go carry go?

Do you want to eat in or take away?

58. Customer: I go carry am go.

I want to take it away.

59. Restaurant Owner: Oya, wait first, make I serve people for your back. Make I give them first. Na them first you.

Please wait a while; let me serve the people behind you. Let me serve them first. They were here before you.

In this exchange, it is evident that the parties are within sight of each other and are inside the restaurant. Upon entering the shop, the customer recognises the restaurant owner's presence by greeting 'well done' to acknowledge her presence. The restaurant owner, in turn, acknowledges him as a 'customer' and responds to his greeting. The dialogue is a long back and forth, with the customer haggling for a reduction in prices as he repeatedly appeals to the shopkeeper to cut down on the cost of his meal. The conversation is relatively informal, and it is clear that both participants have a long-term business relationship. Another example of identification/recognition is seen in next exchange.

Exchange 7:

60. Shop Keeper: → Madam, good evening. You wan buy something?

Madam, good evening. Do you want to buy anything?

61. Customer: Ehh. Good evening.

Yes. Good evening.

62. Shop Keeper: Long time I never see you. Where you dey now?
I haven't seen you in a long while. Where are you based now?
63. Customer: I travel before.
I have been out of town.
64. Shop Keeper: Welcome, how that side?
Welcome. How was your trip?
65. Customer: Fine. You get antibiotics?
Fine. Do you have antibiotics?
66. Shop Keeper: Which one? Na you wan use am?
What type? Is the medication for you?
67. Customer: Yes.
Yes

The conversation above occurs in a medicine store where the shopkeeper and the customer are present and standing face to face. The shopkeeper immediately acknowledges her interlocutor's presence and addresses her as 'Madam,' a sign of respect. There is an exchange of greetings, and it is evident that they have a longstanding relationship. After the greetings, the discussion moves to the reason for the customer's visit to the pharmacy: 'You get antibiotics?'(Do you have antibiotics?). The shopkeeper immediately swings into the business mode, all professional. 'Which one? Na you wan use am?' (Which one? Is the medication for you?). Sometimes, when one party is unavailable or visible to the other, the party approaching calls out to the absent individual to assume the participant's position. The following exchange provides an example.

Exchange 8:
Customer: →↑ I dey greet o. Good morning
Hello. Good morning.
Shop Keeper: Who be that? Wetin you want?
Who is that? What do you want?
Customer: Na me o. Ada. I wan buy flit.
It's me. Ada. I want to buy insecticide.
Shop Keeper: Abeg, wait small. I dey come
Please hold on for a little while. I will soon be with you.
Customer: I hear o.
I hear you.

Shop Keeper: Welcome. Which kind flit you want?
Welcome. What type of insecticide do you want?
74. Customer: Raid.
The Raid brand.
Shop Keeper: Big one abi small one?
Do you want the big or small size?
76. Customer: Big.
The big size.
Shop Keeper: One thousand eight hundred naira.
One thousand, eight hundred naira.
(0.5):

Customer: Take. Give me change,
Here. Give me my change.
Shop Keeper: Thank you
Thank you.

In this exchange, line 69 marks the initiation of the identification/recognition sequence as the summoner (shopkeeper), who was out of sight, seeks to know the addressee's identity. 'Who be that?' (Who are you?), Wetin you want? (What do you want?)". The customer responds to the enquiry by identifying herself as "Ada" and stating the reason for her visit: " I want to buy flit" (I want to buy mosquito insecticide).

5.1.5 Greetings

Greeting is a speech act where the speakers intentionally make their presence known to another to show attention to and suggest a relationship or social status between individuals or groups of people encountering each other. (Kim et al cited in Adedokun and Marais 2023, p.147). This is in accordance with the views Amer et al. (2020, p.63) expressed that greetings function as a switch to open or close relations. Ativie (2020, p.199) observes that interlocutors use greetings to establish rapport and give face support. The data reveals that greetings are the most frequently used opening strategy, as more than three-quarters of the recorded transactions show the use of this strategy. The most common greeting form in the data is the "time of the day" greetings such as "Good morning" and "Good afternoon". In addition, the data also show that age does not determine the greeting initiator, as an older customer may initiate greetings to get the attention of the younger service provider. In Exchange 9 below, the shopkeeper uses greetings to initiate the interaction.

Exchange 9:
Customer: → Good afternoon.
Good afternoon
Shop Keeper: → Welcome.
Welcome.
Customer: Give me shampoo.
Give me shampoo
Shop Keeper: E dey the counter wey dey for your back. Any other thing?
It is on the shelf right behind you. Anything else?

Customer: Weave-on gloss. How much e bi?

Weave-on gloss; how much is it?
Shop Keeper: Seven hundred naira.
Seven hundred naira.
Customer: Ok. Put am for nylon for me.
Ok. Put it in a bag for me.

Exchange 9 begins with a greeting sequence initiated by the customer to kick-start the transaction. This is followed by a request for a product stated in the form of a directive. The customer asks for shampoo and is given directions on where to get it. She proceeds further to ask for weave-on gloss and how much it costs. The shopkeeper replies, 'Seven hundred naira'. The data also reveals that the shopkeeper sometimes initiated greetings, as seen in the dialogue below.

Exchange 10:
Shop Keeper: → Good evening, ma.
Good evening, Ma'am.
Customer: → Good evening. Give me one cartoon of Ribena.
Good evening. Give me a cartoon of Ribena.
Shop Keeper: See am. Three thousand, five hundred.
Here it is. Three thousand, five hundred naira.
Customer: How much?
How much?
Shop Keeper: Three thousand five hundred naira.
Three thousand, five hundred naira.

Customer: But I buy am three thousand last month.
But I bought it for three thousand naira only last month.
Shop Keeper: Ah! That na the old price. Things don go up.
Ah! That is the old price. Prices have gone up.
Customer: God help us. See the money.
God help us. Here's the money.
Shop Keeper: Thank you.
Thank you.

The function of greeting in the above is to serve as an ice breaker, establish a bond and keep the flow of the conversation smooth. We see this in the conversation as both parties exchange greetings before delving into a discussion about skyrocketing prices. Both interlocutors share a relaxed and friendly relationship.

5.1.6 The 'how-are-you' Sequence

The How -are-you sequence comes immediately after the initial opening sequence. During this process, the interlocutors enquire about the well-being of family members. After this is done, they proceed to the transaction's main business. An example is shown below.

Exchange 11:
Customer: → How now?
How are you?
Hair Dresser: Mummy, good afternoon
Madam, good afternoon.
Customer: Na only you dey here?
Are you alone here?
Hair Dresser: Na only me o. You wan do hair?
I am alone. Do you want to make your hair?
Customer: Yes, where your other girl?
Yes. Where is the other hair-dresser?
Hair Dresser: E travel.
She's out of town.
Customer: What of your daughter?
What about your daughter?
Hair Dresser: E go village
She's gone to the village.

Hair Dresser: (To an attendant). Help mummy lose her hair.
Help Madam to loosen her weaves.
. Customer: (To attendant) Put towel
Place a towel around me.
106. Hair Dresser: Any time wey work dey na hin e dey travel. When work no dey, e go siddon for saloon from morning to night.
She only travels when there is work to do. She sits in the saloon from dawn to dusk when there is no work.
. Customer: She think say na you e dey do?
She's undoing herself, not you.
108. Hair Dresser: When e come back, I go collect my saloon key from am. No be
school e go; no be hair e learn.
When she returns, I will take the key to my saloon from her. She is neither in school nor learning hairdressing.

It can be observed in the above exchange that the How-are-you sequence precedes the greetings. The customer in this exchange is the older of the interlocutors. In Nigeria, it is considered rude for a younger person to address an older person using this expression. The conversation shows that the interlocutors are familiar with each other and are pretty close. After the opening greetings, they enquire about others ' 'Where your other girl?' (Line 100) 'What about your daughter?'(Line 102).

Exchange 12:
Shop Keeper: Good Evening
Good Evening.
Customer: Evening
Evening.
Shop Keeper: → How you dey?
How are you?
Customer: I dey fine.

I am fine.

112. Shop Keeper: Long time no see. We still be brethren?

Long time no see. Are we still brethren?

Customer: We dey together. I travel na im make am.

We are! It is just that I haven't been around.

Shop Keeper: No wonder. Wetin you want?

It is no wonder. What do you want?

Customer: Bournvita. The medium size.

Bournvita. The medium size.

Shop Keeper: Make I bring am.

Let me get it.

In this exchange, the conversation begins with the greeting sequence (Lines 108 and 109). Lines 110 and 111 show the 'how-are-you' sequence. The tone of the discussion is light and friendly, and it is evident that the participants share a long-time relationship, hence the question, 'We still be brethren?' (Are we still brethren?) (Line 112). After the first two core sequences, the shopkeeper proceeds to the purpose of the encounter as she asks, 'What do you want?' The customer replies, 'Bournvita. The medium size'. The conversation ends with no closing statement other than 'Let me get it. There are no exchanges of thanks or gratitude for services received or patronage.

5.2 Closings

In a sales setting, once the exchange of goods, services, information or money has taken place, it is then up to either of the interlocutors to terminate the conversation. This termination is what is known as closing. Levinson(1983) cited in Sun(2005,p.110) considers conversational closings as very delicate in that while no individual is under obligation to leave while the discussion has not been concluded, terminating a conversation suddenly may offend the other party. Schegloff and Sacks (1973,p.291) state that "conversational endings vary from a wide range of conversations-in-their-course to a regular common closure with 'bye bye' or its variants." Van de Koot-Dees and Sliedrecht (2023,p.6-7) note that as an interactional phenomenon, closings provide insight into interactional mechanisms and relationship management between participants. This present study found that out of the four closing sequences proposed by Coronel-Morina, only one category was found in the data- the final closing. In the data examined, the closing sequences were initiated by both the shopkeepers and the customers. Many interactions ended with the words 'Thank you' or 'Thanks' by the shopkeepers or the customers. For the shopkeeper, the expression of thanks serves as a means of expressing gratitude for the customer's patronage and encouraging future visits. In most cases, the customer did not respond. An example is seen in Exchange 13 below.

Exchange 13:

Customer: Madam, good afternoon.

Madam, good afternoon

118. Shop Keeper: Afternoon.

Afternoon

Customer: You dey sell brush?

Do you sell toothbrushes?

120. Shop Keeper: Yes

Yes

Customer: Give me one brush, paste and small vaseline.

Give me one toothbrush, a small-sized toothpaste and the most miniature jar of Vaseline.

Shop Keeper: Paste? Which type?

Toothpaste? What brand?

123. Customer: Close up.

Close up.

124. Shop Keeper: What of the Vaseline?

What about the vaseline?

125. Customer: Anyone you get, do.

Any brand you have is okay.

126. Shop Keeper: Take

Here.

127. Customer: How much?

How much?

128. Shop Keeper: Three hundred and fifty naira.

Three hundred and fifty naira.

(0.5)

129. Customer: Take.

Here.

130. Shop Keeper: → Thank you.

Thank you.

In this exchange, the shopkeeper ends the conversation with 'Thank you. While it can be argued that 'thank you' is an expression of gratitude, the words serve as a closing initiator because they signal the end of the interaction. Another example is seen in Exchange 14.

Exchange 14:

131. Customer: You get Bournvita?

Do you have Bournvita?

132. Sales Person: Mama no, na milo I get. You no dey drink Milo?

No, Ma'am. What I have is Milo. Don't you drink Milo?

133. Customer: No. For where! If I drink am, e dey get as my belle dey do me. E too sweet.

No, not at all. Whenever I take Bournvita, my stomach gets upset. It's too sugary.

134. Sales Person: Eya! Make I ask my neighbour whether e get am.
Eya! I will ask the shop owner next door.
135. Customer: → Thank you.
Thank you.

The data also contains instances of the conversations ending abruptly without 'goodbyes' and 'thank you', as exemplified in exchanges 15 and 16.

Exchange 15:

136. Shop Keeper: Wetin you want?
What do you want?
137. Customer: I want Chemiron blood medicine
I want Chemiron blood medicine.
138. Shop Keeper: That one no dey
It is out of stock.
139. Customer: Which blood medicine you get?
What other blood medicine do you have?
140. Shop Keeper: Jawaron dey
Jawaron is available.
141. Customer: How much?
How much is it?
142. Shop Keeper: 300 for card
300 for a sachet.
143. Customer: Take, give me change
Here you are. Give me my change.

In the above, the interlocutors do not attempt to exchange pleasantries. Their attention is focused on the task, and the transaction is brought to a close as quickly as possible. The customer terminates the conversation with 'Take, give me change'.

Exchange 16:

144. Customer: Una get Jordan toothbrush for small pikin?
Do you have a Jordan toothbrush for children?

145. Shop Keeper:Yes.
Yes.
146. Customer: Dis one no be Jordan, na Jordan the pikin say e want.

This is not the Jordan brand. My child insists on a Jordan toothbrush.

147. Shop Keeper: Tell am say na de new Jordan.
Tell him that this is the new Jordan toothbrush.
148. Customer: Pikin wey sabi read? No o. Make I go find Jordan own.

To a child who can read? No! I am going to search for the Jordan brand.

The conversation in Exchange 16 is brought to a close by the customer who insists on getting her child a particular brand of toothbrush. She ends the conversation rather tersely 'Make I go find Jordan own' (I will search for the Jordan brand).

6. Conclusion

This study examines sales talk in Nigerian Pidgin to investigate the most common realisation patterns for openings and closings. To a large extent, the opening sequences in most of the data conform with Coronel-Molina's (1998) framework, as all four patterns were found in the data. However, this is not the case with the closing sequences, as only one of Coronel-Molina's categories was found in the data- the final closing. The study also shows that the degree of familiarity between the interactants contributed to how the conversations were initiated and progressed and that age plays a vital role in how conversational openings in Nigerian Pidgin are initiated.

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Contemporary Visual Arts in Africa in the Age of Regeneration and Transformation

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Abstract. This study aims at examining contemporary visual arts of Africa vis-à-vis the tendencies of renewal and hybridization of concepts, perspectives and creative energies on the continent. Contemporary visual arts of Africa have been making headway into global prominence through a number of avenues which include exhibitions, critical discourses, auctions and publications, so much unlike in the past when only the traditional arts enjoyed such visibility. Initially, modern/contemporary visual arts of Africa were derided, with aspersions cast on the authenticity of works produced after contact with the West. The notion that modern/contemporary African arts had dissolved into artistic practices and philosophy of the West and consequently, no longer authentic but an appendage, appears to have given way to the realization that artistic practices all over the world are not static or impermeably exclusive. That it is expected that contemporary visual arts anywhere is receptive and dynamic, capable of being reinvented and influenced by practices locally and elsewhere due to interconnectivity of cultures occasioned by globalization. The recent new expressions in contemporary African arts therefore attest to the rebirth and repackaging of the traditional models and viewpoints on the continent. Contemporary visual arts in Africa comprise of a vast range of practices and products out of which notable ones and their artists are studied. Data are obtained through library research, interview and observation and are presented through verbal and pictorial descriptions.

Keywords and Phrases: contemporary visual arts of Africa, renewal, hybridization, global prominence, globalization.

1. Introduction

Different insights have been given to the meaning of the term, "contemporary" in the visual arts of Africa. A quick discussion of the term is essential to situate and delineate its application in this study. Aniakor, Kasfir, Ikwuemesi, Magnin and Soulillou, Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu's perspectives are relevant and are discussed. Aniakor (1997-1998:15) hinges his definition of "contemporary" on time frame which, according to him includes, "every artist practicing now and those who died within the last forty years". This, also by inference includes every art work produced in the present and in the past forty years. The type of work covered by the term is not specified, it is presumed to include the traditional, the modern, postmodern, the futuristic, etc., provided it was produced in the present or in the past forty years. Such is classified by Aniakor as qualifying as contemporary art.

Kasfir's (1999:10) definition though made in respect of Western art, aligns with Aniakor's. Contemporary art, she states "connotes the art of the present and the recent past". Magnin and Soulillou (1996:10) differ and offer a two-pronged definitions which on the one hand refers to a privileged art, the type that:

… benefits from institutional support through the system of commissions and exhibitions of national or international talents, bolstered by a critical discourse whose panoply of references enable a cultivated public to recognize the figure of the modern artist: school, style, personality, placed in perspective by comparison with a famous figure in Western art…

The other arm of Magnin and Soulillou's definitions describes the unprivileged but ubiquitous art:

… that cares little for the process of legitimation, deliberately side-stepping the official circuits, an art that prefers to ignore its possible claim as 'contemporary,' an art often practiced by artists without any formal schooling, many of whom have no ambition beyond satisfying a local community.

What Magnin and Soulillou have done in their definitions is to highlight the two major artistic clusters in Africa; the celebrated and the neglected, stratified based on the mode of training of the artists, their products, exposure and institutional supports. Contemporary visual arts in Africa no doubt, are products of these two categories; the formally and, the informally trained, with the former being privileged and celebrated and the latter, largely neglected and lacking support. The bulk of the products of the informally trained artists, which by their indigenousness via apprenticeship training and affinity are expected to still retain high percentage of the traditional mode of expression have now become estranged from the traditional style and are more of a parody of the products of the formally trained artists.
Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu (2009:12) latch on to Terry Smith and Arthur Danto's definitions of contemporary as "art pre-occupied with being within its time" and, "as a liberation from the succession of historical periods bound to styles". In essence, contemporary art to them is not just art, assertively descriptive and ensconced within the time frame of its production but also experimental and revolutionary, not desirous of stylistic allegiance to previous epochs. From the point of view of Ikwuemesi (1999:20), contemporary art "is an acquired paradigm … a by-product of colonization". Contemporary art, Ikwuemesi expatiates:
is a problematic term in African scholarship. It can be misleading since it is a part of a binary, a dichotomy apparently created by Western imagination, in the effort to separate newer artistic practices in Africa from what obtained in pristine times.

For this study however, contemporary art is seen in the light of Aniakor and Kasfir's definitions, to embrace all art produced in the present or the immediate past. Such art may include the traditional, the spiritual, the modern, the experimental, the revolutionary, the formally and informally learnt, etc., as long as they are produced in the present or in the immediate past.

2. The Road to the Contemporary

The road to the contemporary for visual arts of Africa is long and tortuous, coursing through broad markers such as the traditional, the modern and the contemporary under which is also the predictive futuristic and the experimental, predicated on the urge to break new grounds. The traditional arts are those of our forebears, surviving mostly as sculptures in wood, stone, metal, ivory, terracotta, bones, etc., and which according to Willett (2000:27), are "the greatest contribution Africa has made so far to the cultural heritage of mankind …" Others, done in perishable materials have been lost to agents of degradation. The traditional arts, on discovery by the West, were coveted for their uniqueness of presenting different philosophical and creative viewpoints from the West's and consequently, they have inspired a new mode of seeing and expression which led to cubism and modernism, and was responsible at a time for their being celebrated above the modern and contemporary expressions in Africa.

So much has been written about traditional arts of Africa; the motives for their production, the materials, the forms, their composite nature, the functionality, the patrons and the society for which they were produced, among others. The idea that modernism came upon African art as a result of the contact with the West and Western-styled education has been countered by Okeke (2013:28) who argues that modernism came:
because of a few individuals to whom art as an autonomous practice became a medium for expressing their subjectivity and coming to terms with their sociopolitical circumstances – with their own emergent modernities.

Kasfir (1999:10) and Nicodemus (2013:17) agree on the description of modern art as representing a break with the past, with modernism being a multifaceted phenomenon, meaning different things to the different cultures coming under its influence. For Africa and the West, modernism on the face value appears to have been the exchange of the representational formats of the two divides. While modernism in African art entails breaking away from the traditional style predicated on mystical attribution and taking on of art for art's sake, or, naturalism, as typified by Aina Onabolu, Pablo Picasso with his *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, in 1907, also broke away from Euro-naturalism for the African mode of representation, both of which were significant departures from their respective pasts. However, to reduce or restrict the beginning of modernism in Africa art to the taking up of naturalism by African artists and attributing the influence wholly to the West is to have overlooked or be unmindful of the naturalism inherent in Ife art which sufficed as inspiration to any African artist desirous of the style at the time. Contemporary art is an offshoot of modernism although it goes beyond its scope as departure from artistic practices of the past to encompass all artistic practices done in the present or in the immediate past.

2.1 Components of the Contemporary

The contemporary art scene in Africa is a hive of activities which, as already defined, comprises all

shades of artistic practices and products in the present as well as in the recent past. The fact that contemporary African art and artists are presently enjoying global promotion and visibility is an attestation to the acceptance of artistic products and personalities on the continent. Art genres on the continent include paintings, sculpture, textile/fashion design, ceramics, installation, performance art, graphics, print making, digital/new media art, mixed media, etc. Besides, there are crafts and, souvenir art, which Mount (1973:39), describes as "perhaps the best-known category of present-day African art …" These are the type made to please tourists, based on their preferences and therefore considered flattering and inauthentic.

There are also works made by the formally trained artists, produced by the various higher institutions where art is offered as a course of study on the continent. Institutions such as Makerere School of Fine Arts, Kumasi College of Science and Technology, Yaba Technical Institute, Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Zaria, and many more. This category is influenced by both the Western and African viewpoints. The materials and techniques are mostly Western while the themes are drawn from local and global issues. The works produced by this category are seen as elitist because of the predominance of abstract mode of presentation which are far different from the familiar traditional methods. The works are believed to mostly glorify foreign artistic tastes and conventions.

Among contemporary artists in Africa are those who are self-trained or trained in workshops facilitated by expatriates or by indigenous artists. The earliest of these workshops, observes Fosu (1986:47), started in the 1940s and were established, according to Beier, as a "short cut" to achieving a fusion of African and modern art (qtd. in Fosu 1986:47). Prominent among the workshops were the Lubumbashie Centre, Democratic Republic of the Congo (1943), Oye Ekiti Workshop, Nigeria (1947), The Cyrene Mission Centre, Zimbabwe (1948), Polly Street Art Centre, Johannesburg (1949), The Abuja Workshop, Nigeria (1951), The Salisbury Workshop, Rhodesia (1957), The Potopoto Centre, Congo Brazaville, (1958), The Osogbo Workshop, Nigeria (1962), The Ori Olokun Workshop, Nigeria (1968), The Abayomi Barber School, Nigeria (1972), The Harmattan Workshop, Nigeria (1998), (Fosu 1986:47-60, Mount 1973:124).

The method of the workshops, with the exception of the Abayomi Barber School, was to encourage participants, many of whom may not have had any previous training in the arts to freely express themselves based on their natural talents and rich cultural backgrounds. The Cyrene Mission Centre, Zimbabwe only admitted physically challenged individuals (Fosu 1986:48), while the Abayomi Barber School regulated its practice as participants were not permitted to turn out works without first attaining technical capability to do so. On the whole, a tag of naivety of expression has always been attached to artistic products of these workshops. Artists produced by the workshops include, Bamidele Areogun, Lamidi Fakeye, Sydney Kumalo, Lucas Sithole, Zigoma, Thango, Pili Pili, Benson Dube, Ladi Kwali, Adebisi Akanji, Asiru Olatunde, Taiwo Olaniyi, Jimoh Buraimoh, Muraina Oyelami, Rufus Ogundele, Muri Adejimi, Wale Olajide, Toyin Alade, etc. (Fosu 1986:47-62). There is presently in Africa, artistic traditions built after these pioneer workshop-trained artists. These traditions are among the artistic currents defining the contemporary visual arts scene in Africa.

Closely related to the workshop trained artists are the carvers and sculptors who Wangboje (1984:3) refers to as "contemporary traditionalists." This category he observes, "acquired their training through the long-established tradition of apprenticeship and … have contributed immensely to the corpus of contemporary Nigerian art". Their work, states Wangboje, "has been developed and adapted to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding urban society and modern architecture".
Some notable art movements, groupings and philosophies have contributed to the fame that contemporary African art is enjoying globally. Movements/philosophies such as Negritude, Natural Synthesis, *Ulism, Sankofa* and *Onaism* have continued to influence generations of African artists who have built their practice on concepts such as the "African personality", the fusion of the best from the indigenous and Western artistic practices, and, as Ikwuemesi (1999) elucidates about Sankofa, looking backward into African rich artistic background to get ingredients for contemporary practice.

2.2 Agencies and mediums

Contemporary visual arts in Africa have benefitted from promotional and developmental programmes of some cultural institutions and individuals internationally. There have been lots of high-powered projects such as exhibitions, media publicity, discourses, auctions, workshops and residencies specifically organized to boost contemporary visual arts in Africa. Auction houses such as Sotheby, Bonhams, Arthouse, Terra Kulture Mydrim Gallery Auction House have organized auctions where groundbreaking sales and representations have been made for artists such as El Anatsui, Ben Enwonwu,

Bruce Onobrakpeya, Ablade Glover, Cheri Samba, Uzo Egonu, Godfried Donkor, Onwusu-Ankomah, Njideka Akunyili, etc (info@omenkaonline.com).

Exhibitions such as "*Changing Traditions* (1990), *Africa Explores* (1991), *Africa Now* (1992), *Africa 95*, *Seven Stories about Modern African Art* (1995), *Africa Remix* (2004), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994* (2001), *Fiction of Authenticity: Contemporary Africa Abroad* (2003), *Looking Both Ways: Art of Contemporary African Diaspora* (2004)" (Silva 1996:30-35, Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009:6), have helped to give prominence to contemporary African arts internationally. So also are Biennales such as the Venice Biennale, Sao Paulo Biennale, Documenta, Biennale of Sydney, Havana Biennale, Istanbul Biennale, Lyon Biennale, Dak'Art Biennale, etc. (https://www.thebalancecareers.com).

African artists such as El Anatsui (Ghana), Bruce Onobrakpeya (Nigeria), Cheri Samba (Democratic Republic of Congo), Aboudia Abdoulaye (Cote d'ivoire), William Joseph Kendtridge (South Africa), Nnenna Okore (Nigeria), Goncalo Mabunda (Mozambique), Victor Ekpuk (Nigeria), Jelili Atiku (Nigeria), among others have been promoted and given platforms to international limelight (https://www.huffingtonpost.com).

The press, art writers, scholars, researchers, curators and critics have also lent their weight to the vibrancy of contemporary visual arts in Africa up to the extent of internationalizing it through in-depth discourses and evaluations which have shown their merits and prospects. The fashion then was to lament the dearth of publications on contemporary African arts in contradistinction to the surplus on traditional arts. The situation has improved as there are now books and journals which have deepened knowledge on various aspects of contemporary arts in Africa. Closely related to the issue of books is the increase in the number of resource individuals and stakeholders such as, curators, gallery owners, art teachers, patrons, collectors and even artists themselves. This has also bolstered activities within the sector and are contributory to the effervescence of contemporary African arts. The good news in all of these is that the progress made in acceptability of contemporary African arts were not brought about by foreign institutions and resource individuals alone, African institutions, platforms, scholars, researchers, curators, critics, media, etc., have also contributed to it.

2.3 Regeneration and Transformation

Contemporary visual arts in Africa have witnessed the repackaging and rebranding of some old practices in the traditional arts. *Uli*, *Ona*, *Nsibidi*, for example were derived from artistic practices in Nigeria and have been transformed, in the spirit of the ideology of Natural Synthesis, to contemporary styles and movements. Also, new genres in contemporary arts, such as Installation and Performance art are believed to have taken their roots from practices in traditional Africa, which may not have been considered art in the original context of use but are now repackaged and rebranded as art globally (Balogun 2007, Filani 2004).

Fig. 1 for example, captures a common practice which is used to ward off intruders or thieves from belongings in many parts of Africa. The magical construct which varies in material-component, depending on the purpose of use, and is usually fortified with incantations, is believed to be capable of imposing curse or ill luck on trespassers. This particular construct is made with stick, old serving spoon, a disused slipper, broom and other items. Every item in the construct is selected for a purpose. The symbolism of the slipper in the construct, for example, may be that trespasser's life will experience the same fate as the slipper, which is daily worn, trampled and dragged on the floor. Contemporary artists in Africa and globally have adapted and regenerated this preventive African magical practice to produce art genres such as installation and mobile sculpture. Also, the natural arrangement of artefacts and items on ancestral altars in Benin for example (Fig. 2), has inspired contemporary artists such as Bruce Onobrakpeya in his sculptural installation, Fig. 3.

Fig. 1: *Aale* (A magical construct), drawn by Lukman Karounwi after a photo by Paul Ben, in *A History of Art in Africa*, by Visona, Poynor and Cole

Fig. 2: Royal ancestral altar for Oba Ovoranmwen.
Photo: Paul Ben–Amos, in *Benin Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria*

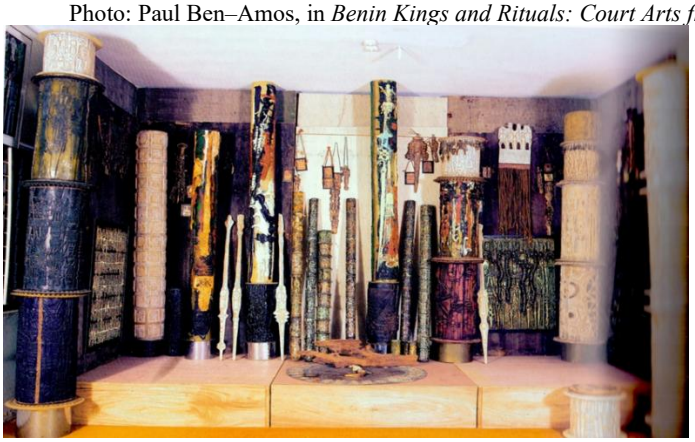

Fig. 3: Bruce Onobrakpeya, *Akporode*.
Source: *Benin Kings and Rituals*: *Court Arts from Nigeria*

Fig. 4: Dil-Humphrey Umezulike. *Waiting for the Bus*, 2003. Mixed Media Installation
Source: Artists of Nigeria by Onyema Offoedu-Okeke

Added to the foregoing is the continuous experimentation with materials, forms and concepts which has led to new art forms such as Junk Art (Fig. 4) which also has found currency in contemporary times. As buttressed by Gombrich (1991:24), "… the whole story of art is not a story of progress in technical proficiency, but a story of changing ideas and requirements".

3. Regeneration and Transformation in Selected Works by Contemporary African Artists

Selected works of artists such as El Anatsui, Ablade Glover, Nnenna Okore, Jelili Atiku, Ibrahim El Salahi, Nandipha Mntanmbo are examined to show the verve of contemporary art in Africa and their regenerative and transformative bents. They are also selected because of their international visibility and spread. El Anatsui (b.1944) is a Ghanaian artist resident in Nigeria since 1975. He is an experimental sculptor whose colourful works are derived either through direct application of pigments onto them or by taking advantage of the hues on the various materials he uses which are mostly scavenged and repurposed. He works mostly with clay, wood and metal and have attained global renown through hard work, consistency and most especially, the unusualness of his massive creative adaptation of "wastes", emanating majorly from consumer goods. In many of his works, wastes of human consumerism, such as tins, cans and aluminum bottle tops which daily constitute environmental nuisance are repurposed and transformed to art, thereby achieving the dual benefits of having a clean environment and producing astonishingly creative works. Vogel (2012:89) attests that, "Anatsui's art had evolved to become a complex statement that was now globally relevant, conceptually original and visually magnificent".

Ablade Glover (b.1934) is also a Ghanaian artist and educator who trained in Ghana, Britain and the United States (http://www.octobergallery.co.uk). He has distinguished himself as a painter of note to the point of being featured in international exhibitions and Sotheby auctions alongside El Anatsui and other notable contemporary artists from Africa (info@omenkaonline.com). Glover's paintings are in many public and private collections globally and are remarkable for their portrayal of the elegance, beauty and strength of the African woman cast in various occupational and attitudinal roles. His paintings are usually thickly layered with colours which in most cases are feverishly applied to suggest human gestures and, vistas. Female figures are a favourite theme of African artists even in the traditional setting. Many of the traditional sculptures are of female figures, cast in different cultural roles. Glover in his paintings has reinvented the female forms from their traditional sculptural representation into a two-dimensional format which nevertheless captures the dignified essence of the African woman.
https://www.google.com.ng/search?q=ablade+glover&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=

Jelili Atiku (b.1968) is a Nigerian performance artist who has enjoyed a great deal of local and global support and promotion. Trained initially as a sculptor in Nigeria, his interest in performance art, he states, was kindled as a result of his team's visit to a prison yard as a youth corps member, where he saw the prisoners in the most inhuman and deplorable state imaginable, consequent upon which he resolved to use his art to correct the treatment, and performance art, he states, appeared to be the most suitable medium to fight and correct such societal anomalies (interview 2015). Performance art is one of the genres believed to have been inspired by practices in Africa. His

performances have continued to resonate and connect with masquerades and masking traditions in his native Yoruba land, thus supporting the claim of African origin of performance art. Atiku's themes are drawn widely, they are cultural as well as political and they have cast him the role of an activist. He has taken on such local and global issues as "prison congestion, freedom of information, child marriage, political assassination, proliferation of nuclear weapons, and deification of global icons" (Onipede 2016:26-33). With his performance art, the masking traditions of the Yoruba culture has been repackaged as contemporary medium of artistic expression.

Figs. 5 and 6: Jelili Atiku, *Aragamago oo* and his performance at Venice Art Biennale
Source: https://www.google.com.ng/search?q=jelili+atiku&source

Ibrahim El Salahi (b.1930), the Sudanese artist, politician and diplomat holds a belief similar to natural synthesis' philosophy in his combination and transformation of Sudanese indigenous forms into modern mode of artistic expression. Salahi combines African and Islamic cultures to form a mode of expression which imbues human compositions with calligraphic attributes (Fosu 1986:84). This blend of the traditional and modern in Salahi's works, impressed and inspired Denis Williams, the Jamaican artist and scholar, who, according to Shibrain referred to this development as the Khartoum School (qtd. in Fosu 1986:84). Salahi's works display elegant linearity and simplicity.

Nnenna Okore (b.1975) trained under El Anatsui, in Nigeria before proceeding to the United States of America for her postgraduate studies. She is a Nigerian and an experimental sculptor inspired by surfaces, colours and forms in her surroundings. She, like Anatsui, also uses rejected objects which she repurposes and transforms as art works which have attracted great admiration for her resourcefulness, experimentation, depth and currency. Her materials vary and they include clay, twine, paper, stick, textile, etc. Her works have been exhibited widely, globally and have received appreciable acclaim.

Nandipha Mntanmbo (b.1982) is a Southern African artist who trained in Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. Her sculptures, videos and photography are exploratory of the symbolism of identity and, the human body, usually modelled with materials such as the hide of cows, using her body as the mold. Her sculptures are thus to her, mediums to interrogate the animals in humans (https://www.google.com.ng/search). Her works reference those of another highly experimental African artist, Peju Alatise, a Nigerian who uses textile materials to mold sculptural forms of the human body. Hides are edibles in different parts of Africa. In Nigeria for example, it is believed that human consumption of hides poses a threat to tanners and industries relying on hides as raw materials for their goods. The transformation of hides from edibles to materials and medium for life size art is no doubt ingenious, notwithstanding that smaller crafts have also been made with hides. All these reinventions add to the creative effervescence which has come to be identified with contemporary visual arts in Africa.

Figs. 7 and 8: Nandipha Mntanmbo's sculptures made with cow skin.
Source: https://www.google.com.ng/search

4. Conclusion

The study has examined the meanings of the term, "contemporary" as it relates to the visual arts of Africa and as proffered by different authors and also, as applied in the context of the study, to refer to all art produced in the present or the immediate past. The evolvement of art from the traditional, through the modern, to the contemporary is discussed, so also the component practices and products that constitute the contemporary, some of which have been proven to be carry-overs from the traditional past but which are

repackaged and rebranded to assume new functions and relevance. The agencies and mediums through which contemporary arts of Africa have been flourishing are also studied, their increase attesting to the vibrancy of artistic practices and, the acceptability of their products. Contemporary arts of Africa, going by the attention it is getting globally has no doubt blazed a trail in the tradition of its glorious forebears and is now seen, not as an appendage of Western art but an art that is original, assertive and self-determining.

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Rupture and Resistance in the Poetry of Ogaga Ifowodo: A Postcolonial-Ecocritical Perspective

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Abstract. The rupture and the revolutionary movement to resist the exploitation of resources in the Niger Delta based on the obnoxious land tenure system government policies which have led to the degradation of the environment has been explored by writers from the region. The impact of the pollution of the environment on the people includes decrease in economic production as the environment is no longer sustainable. The issue of the loss of land through acquisition by government laws as oil exploration and exploitation sites has also made many communities homeless. The result of this dislocation is protest and resistance of the inhabitants of the region against the oil companies and their government backers. This paper argues that it is the conflict over the control of land between the indigenous people and the government that forms the basis for the ecological degradation of the Niger Delta through irresponsible exploitation of resources. The study uses the postcolonial-ecocritical theory to assert that the conflict over the ownership and control of the land is the major cause of the degradation in the region. The paper draws illustrations from Ogaga Ifowodo's *The Oil Lamp* to prove that through the motifs of paradise, care, seizure, abandonment, exploitation and resistance, the government and the oil companies have turned the once pristine environment of the Niger Delta into an environmental dystopia. The result is resistance by the indigenous people as the land has stopped providing sustenance for them. The use of analepsis, repetition and contrast enable the poet to present a picture of the past, present and the future of the Niger Delta.

Keywords: Paradise, Environmental Degradation, Land Seizure, Resistance, Remediation

1. Introduction

Ecocritical African literature has been engaged with the study of the impact of the exploitation of natural resources on the environment. More so, there has been the engagement of modern African literature on several issues including that of environmental degradation as an offshoot of the colonial experience. As part of the commitment of contemporary writers in Africa, they have engaged in the description of how man has destroyed the environment due to the high level of mineral exploration and exploitation. The first step to this exploitation of the natural resources is the seizure of the land where such minerals are domiciled. Thus, the history of man has been dominated by the subjugation of the colonized people and their land by the colonizer. Fanon (1962, as cited in DeLoughrey and Handley, 2011) surmised that "for the colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (p.3). In this vein, land becomes the most priced commodity the colonizer has sought in the process of dominating other nations.

The loss of the land resulted in what Babette (2008) refers to as "land conflict" which he defines as "the different interests over the property rights to land, the right to use the land, to manage the land, to generate income from the land, to transfer it and the right to compensation from the land" (p.9). Land is at the root of the conflict between the colonizers and the colonized in whatever place colonization has occurred. Once the land of the colonized has been taken away from them, the result is the massive exploitation of the land and its resources by the colonizers. As the colonizers exploit the land on a massive scale without regards to the indigenous knowledge of how to care for the environment, the result is pollution and degradation of the environment. This forms the argument of this paper. The paper argues that the rupture between man and the environment can be traced to the seizure of the land by government and the multinational oil companies through the land tenure laws which have resulted in the revolt and resistance by both man and the environment.

The people of the Niger Delta have lived in their land for thousands of years. The land has always been theirs. Therefore, the relationship between the traditional owners of the land and the environment has to be ruptured for the new owners of the land to legitimise their right over the land. This often culminates in unwholesome and unsustainable use of the land which eventually results in the degradation of the environment. The disconnection in the relationship between the traditional owners of the land and the seized land leads to resistance by those whose land is stolen. The resistance is also environmental in nature as the land also tries to resist the degrading practices of the exploiters. It is this state of rupture and resistance that this paper investigates. This paper argues that the struggle over the ownership of land in the Niger Delta area is the cause of the revolt by both the indigenes of the area and the environment. The paper uses illustrations from Ogaga Ifowodo's poetry to portray the relationship between land, the environment and the unending struggle between the people of the Niger Delta and the exploiters of the environment. The selected collection is *The Oil Lamp* (2005). In drawing illustration from the selected collection, the paper harps on the poems that reflect the postcolonial ecocritical theory in the argument that there is a relationship between the loss of land and the twin issues of human resistance and ecological resistance in the poetry of Ogaga Ifowodo.

The postcolonial ecocritical theory accounts for the nature of political and social control of colonized territories, and the cultural and material tensions that are associated with the colonized people's resistance to the colonizer's occupation, exploitation of natural resources, and the bureaucratic strategies the occupiers develop and exercise to earn themselves legitimacy, to continue the perpetuation of such control. The land is also the root of the environment of a place. This means that place becomes the point of convergence between postcolonial and ecocritical studies. Therefore, Jonah (2020) asserts that "both fields are concerned with the idea of the representation of place, postcolonialism focuses on the historicity of place and ecocriticism hinges on the aesthetics of place" (pp.38,39). The discourse of place and land becomes the focal point as it is the inhabited land that houses both the people and the environment. Therefore, when the land is cared for, the environment will be habitable but when the land is devastated, the environment will become degraded. This is the importance of the merger of the postcolonial and the ecocritical theories in this paper.

2. Analysis and Discussion

The poetry of Ogaga Ifowodo reflects this interrelationship between the control of land and the health of the environment. Ifowodo is one of the contemporary Nigerian poets who is committed to both the political and environmental concerns of the nation, Nigeria. Akingbe (2012) argues that an African work of art that fails to address issues of socio-political or historical significance is considered to be outside the scope of African aesthetics (p. 2). Thus, the work of Ifowodo follows the same trend in the explication of the challenges militating against the development of the emergent nations of Africa. In the poetry of Ifowodo, there is what Nixon (2005) describes as the parameters of both "cosmopolitanism and bioregionalism" (p. 248). Nixon explains bioregionalism as "one's local part of the earth whose boundaries are determined by the location's natural characteristics rather than by arbitrary administrative boundaries" (p. 256). As such, Nixon can surmise that "in an era of giga mergers and nano second transnationalisms, we cannot persist with the kind of isolationist thinking that has in different ways, impeded both postcolonial and ecocritical responses to globalization" (p. 248). The implication of Nixon's argument in the investigation of Ifowodo's poetry is that in tackling the political, social and environmental challenges of the Niger Delta, the poet has used the explication of the local issues to reflect on the situation of the nation, Africa and the world at large. One of the thematic preoccupations of Ifowodo that has found expression in a globalised world is the concept of paradise.

In the poetry of Ifowodo, there is a noticeable description of the paradisiac nature of the land of the Niger Delta before the displacement due to loss of land caused first by colonialism and then by the neocolonial forces of emergent African States. As used in this paper, neocolonial forces mean the relationship by the government of the independent African states and their former colonizers represented mostly by western multinational corporations. Neocolonialism is usually engineered by a collusion necessitated by the incompetence or economic reliance of these nations on their colonial exes. Usually, these collusions have economic and political undertakings fueling them, such that short-term gains and grants go one way, and access to natural resources as loan collaterals go the other way. On one side of this presentation is the idealic description of the environment. Ifowodo describes the pristine and virgin environment that is the foundation of nations and the universe. In *The Oil Lamp*, Ifowodo idealizes the environment of the Delta from a firsthand experience of the pristine

environment when he was growing up as a child. In the poem "A Waterscape", the poet proffers a glimpse of the pristine and paradise nature of the environment that:

Hung above water, hands in the hair,
whited tongues and breathing fibrous air:
roots, white mangrove roots.

Blacker than pear, deeper than soot
massive ink-well, silent and mite:
water, black water.

Floating hats of lily, yellow plume,
plankton and shrimp, egg-and-fish in bloom:
Lakes, ancestral lakes.

Rich mud of eels, water-holes of crab,
sink-place for fisher dig-and-grab:
bog, mudskippers' bog

And in the mangrove waters, when tides
free the creeks of weeds, fishermen glide
home to the first meal (*The Oil Lamp,* p.xi)

In this introductory poem, the clean, rich and pristine environment of the Delta is presented. Through the use of the technique of analepsis, Ifowodo takes the reader to the idealic past in the Niger Delta. Though the environment described by the poet is not obtainable again in the present circumstances, the idealization of the environment in the poem reminds the reader of the past in the Delta region. The poet substantiates the paradise beginning in several ways. One way he idealizes the Delta is through the description of the agricultural bountifulness of the environment. The poet says:

...What did they know of oil
other than the fruit – red extract of palm trees?
The bounty of the sea, of the creeks and rivers,

The barn –busting yield of arable land
rich in organic silt and loam
had not caused a quest for riches
hidden deep in the heart of the earth.
When they dug wells, it was for water;
They didn't have to dig too deep for the table,
They didn't have to drill to the heart
or mine every vein for fossil ooze,
until the colonial find in '58. (p. 42)

Apart from idealizing the environment as producing clean water from "wells" without any purifying materials, an environment that yields "fruits" and bounty of the sea ', the poet also articulates the relationship between the land, environment and the people in the past. In the poem "Ogoni", Ifowodo foregrounds the shift in the ownership of the land as the beginning of the rupture and the eventual resistance by both the people and the environment of the Niger Delta.

Ifowodo uses the technique of contrast to show that in the beginning, the land of the Niger Delta belongs to the people dwelling in the area. The poet contrasts the views of Major Kitemo representing the neocolonial forces and an old man. According to the Major, "the land is Nigeria's" (p. 38). He backs his arguments with "decrees duly made in the books" (p. 37). In contrast, the old man argues with an interrogative that "can you tell, my son, how old Nigeria is?" The Major replies that Nigeria "born in 1914, she's seventy-nine this year". At this point, the old once again queries the Major:

That's Lord Luguard's colony, the cartographer's
trade map for British expropriation. But I

will take your word for it, So tell me, my son,
How long do you think we have been on this land,
how long the oil, the trees, the creeks and the rivers?" (p. 39)

In this excerpt, the use of the conversation technique enables the poet to establish the original owners of the land. In the quest to create farmlands for their sustenance, the people of the region have felled the trees which constitute the original and virgin forest of the area where they have planted cash crops and food crops. The question is who is responsible for the clearing of the forest that has paved the way for the farmlands in the region? It is the indigenous people of the Delta. In this vein, it can be established that from the beginning, the people of the Niger Delta have been the owners of the land and they have been able to manage the environmental harmony between themselves and the land. These lines buttress the argument that the land of the Niger Delta has been managed sustainably by the people of the area. The people of the Delta were satisfied with the resources the land offers them. In turn, the people "didn't have to dig too deep for the table" nor did they have to "drill to the heart/or mine every vein for fossil ooze" (p. 42). The significance of the care for the land by the people is that the relationship between man and the environment becomes mutual. While the care for the environment leads to increase in the production of food for man, the waste produced by man serves as manure that nourishes land for a sustainable environment. According to Ifowodo, this was "until the colonial find in '58" (p. 42).

The quest for oil and the subsequent exploitation of the land by the colonial government in the late 1950s ruptured the harmony between the people of the Niger

Delta and the environment (Chukwueloka & Adoromike, 2020, p.11). The colonial power's "theft by law" of the land of the colonized is well known in history. In describing the land tenure in pre-colonial Benin, Bradbury (1957) explains that:

No rights in fallow land are recognized. Once a man has cleared land, planted it over two or three years and then let it go fallow, it reverts to the community though it is not likely to be recleared till some years later. In fact, some individuals return to the same piece of land after a period of years but they do not thereby establish any additional claim to it (pp. 44,45).

This land tenure system which may also be applicable to other areas of the Niger Delta ensures that land is cared for. This is because, for the African, land is more than just a place to grow food and harvest crops. In the words of Osagie (2013), "land was regarded as sacred gift from Almighty God to the people for their sustenance… land does not belong to the living alone, but also to the dead (ancestors) and those unborn" (p. 138). This practice of communal ownership of land for both farming and religious purposes continued for some parts of the Niger Delta during the colonial rule. But a noticeable shift from communal ownership of land to that of government ownership began with the discovery of crude oil in Oloibiri, in the present Bayelsa state in 1958 (Montesano, 2021, 93). The paradox of the situation is reflected in the poem Ogoni XXIX that,

… what a half-breed the people were
To claim and fight for what they did not own,
To deny the owners what was theirs

By decrees duly made and in the books; (p. 37)

This excerpt buttresses the shift from the communal ownership to that of the government. Once the government appropriates the land, all the resources on and in the land also belongs to the government. Once again, this argument is substantiated by the conversation between Major Kitemo and the Old Man. Major Kitemo asked;

"Do you really believe you own the oil?"

"Yes", they said, as I knew they would.
"And how did you come to own it?"
"By its being on our land," they said.

"The land is Nigeria," I corrected them…
"And how did Nigeria come to own the oil?"
Oh, I should have paused to give thought,

should never have presumed a hoary-headed man,
But I answered too quickly, "By its being on her land." (p. 38)

In the poetry of Ifowodo, the motif of land seizure is developed. In order for both the colonial and neocolonial governments to lay claim to the oil resources of the Niger Delta, they have to strategize to change the land tenure system through decrees and laws. Major Kitemo, in the poem Ogoni XXXII makes this idea clearer when he says that,
"By decrees and edicts

duly made, the land is not yours
nor all that lies in it. The powers
That rule the country-your colony-

that make you citizens
of a nation, known to law
and safe from plunder,

decree the land and its wealth not yours". (p. 40)

Once the land tenure system changes from communal ownership to government ownership, the rupture in the harmony between the people and the environment is complete. The motif of abandonment is developed at this stage by the poet. The lamentation by the former teacher that "but for the theft by law, we would in time have seismographed and drilled, or hired Shell" is like a medicine after death. The government has seized the land and the connection between the people and the land is broken (Ogbinaka, M., Akpome, A. & C. Addison, 2024, 167). A direct consequence of the seizure of the land is the exploitation of the natural resources of the land without any mutual respect for the environment unlike what has been the norm in the pre-colonial era.

The abandonment of the status-quo by the new system leads to neglect of the environment. In turn, the neglect of the environment begins to bend towards apocalypse which Thompson (1997) describes as a word taken from "the Greek *Apo-calyptein* meaning 'to unveil'. Apocalyptic literature takes the form of a revelation of the end of history. Violent and grosteque images are juxtaposed with glimpses of a world transformed; the underlying theme is usually a titanic struggle between good and evil …" (pp. 13,14). The history that just ended as rendered in the reviewed poems is the control of the land by the indigenous groups in the Niger Delta. The major aim of the seizure of the land by the neocolonial forces is to gain unfettered access to the rich resources of the land (Dick 2010; Darah, 2011). At the same time, since the new forces who seized the land have no ancestral connection to the land, they have no obligation to care for the land, its environment

and inhabitants. Just a few decades into the seizure of the land of the Niger Delta, the environment becomes degraded and devastated. Ifowodo portrays the apocalytic situation of the area in the poem "Ogoni XLII" that;

Can anyone think of the Niger Delta
and not feel an ache in his heart?
So inhospitable, it is like all terrains

in the world where oil might be found: under
seas, desert dunes, snow-capped wilds, malarial
swamps. As if He who desolated

those places thought it too cruel to plant
humans in some of them without recompense …

But a good man's conscience
will sting him like bees to see how abject

they are that live amidst such wealth in our
land; to hear them bewail the dissipation
of their share of earth's bounty, the devastation

that pours oil on rivers to float fish
lure the flamingo to a lethal meal
and quill the secretary bird's death on sludge;

that irrigates lowland crops to rot their roots,
and wells resentment like ocean tides above their heads. (p. 52)

The effect of the shift from pristine environment to the "oil" environment is described by Temi Ologunorisa (2009) that:

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has suffered all forms of pollution and degradation arising from oil and natural gas exploitation. These include decrease in agricultural yield, depression in flowering and fruiting in okra and palm trees, deformities in children, liver damage and skin problems, increasing concentration of air borne pollutants, acidification of soils and rainwater, corrosion of metal roofs and significant increases in concentration of sulphates, nitrates and dissolved solids, with associated socio-economic problems. (p.1)

The devastation of the land which was the pride of the people of the area wrings feelings of nostalgia from the generations spanning the time when the people were in control of their land and the present time of neocolonial control. An example of a member of this generation is Madam Edoja. Madam Edoja is "ninety years of age". She was happily married till her fiftieth birthday when she loses her husband to an accident. The husband "fell off a rig and drowned at sea"; this is one of the new and emerging cause of death in the Niger Delta after the seizure of the land and the subsequent exploitation of the land for crude oil by multinationals (p. 17). Through the use of a dirge, Ifowodo is able to show that the people of the area did not consent to the seizure of their land. According to Madam Edoja in the poem "Jese XV",

Oil is my curse, oil is our doom.
Where is my husband, where my only love?
At the bottom of the sea, the bottom of the sea.

Oil is my curse, oil is our doom.
Where is the fish for palm-oil soup?
Dead in the creeks, dead in the lakes …

The fields are tarred where cassava once grew,
you know the fields are tarred and harder
than a shell, too hard for our hoes.

Oil is my curse, oil is my doom.
Where are my children? Where is my husband?
Ashes and bones. (p. 17)

In this dirge by Madam Edoja, the transition from the bountifulness of the past is contrasted with the bareness of the present. The lamentation of Madam Edoja goes further to establish the idea of lack since the loss of the land to the neocolonial occupation forces. The theme of lack is developed further when the persona laments the lack of social amenities like electricity and pipe borne water. This is the preoccupation of the poet in "Poem XLIX" where the poet says that:

And this from a man with a grudge in Warri:
The whole town in darkness
Because Never Expect Power Always
is working hard for its name.

First, there was light every other day,
then every two days; then four, then,…
Forty five days! Can't sleep at night-
Without the fan to stun mosquitoes. (p.62)

Though the Delta is an oil bearing region, the lack of petrol or fuel for domestic consumption is also a continuous occurrence which has led to tragic consequences. The poet in "Poem I" says:

It was the fourteenth month of the fuel crunch
and stoves cooked cobwebs in cold corners.
Dreading the spirits that live in trees,

they would not break green twigs to make a meal
till the fuel crunch compelled choice between
tree and human, today and tomorrow (p. 3)

In another level, the theme of lack or scarcity of the basic necessities of life is developed in terms of the human biological and psychological makeup. The scarcity of basic needs becomes injurious to the physical development of the people. The idea of hunger is also related in "Poem XVIII" where the persona relates the story of those driven from their home by the forces of evil that:

Crickets, outshouted, scurried
in dazed circles around children too stunned
to stretch out a hand, until hunger matched fear

and the men, far from yam or fish, turned insect
hunters, wild root diggers. Banished
from fire by fire, they ate their food fresh (p.23).

Hunger or the inability to get food to eat is the worst form of deprivation a man can encounter. The degradation of both the physical environment and the human psyche ignited the unrest paving the way for the next level of activity in the Niger Delta which is the struggle to recover the land from the neocolonialist.

A direct consequence of the rupture in the ownership of the land of the Niger Delta, the degradation of the environment and the lack of social amenities is the confrontation between the people of the area and the neocolonial forces. In the bid to recover their land or worse still get recompense from the wealth that is flowing from their land, the people confronted the government. In *The Oil Lamp,* the government and the oil multinational companies are represented by Major Kitemo. So, the people of the Niger Delta on the one side and the neocolonial forces on the other become locked up in a struggle to determine who controls the land and its wealth. This struggle yields the motif of resistance in the poetry of Ifowodo. The theme of resistance is developed along a tripod approach of environment al and ecological resistance, the human resistance to the neocolonial forces and the counter-resistance of the neocolonial forces.

On the first level, there is the environmental and ecological resistance. The 1979 constitutional amendment to the land use tenure system moved the ownership of land including those in the Niger Delta in the hands of the federal government. The implication is that the compensation for any land allocated to an oil company will be based on "on the value of the crops on the land at the time of its acquisition, not on the value of the land itself" (p.55). Once the mutual relationship between the indigenous people of the Niger Delta is shattered by the seizure of the land by the occupational forces, the care that the environment enjoys in the way of both physical and spiritual care is ruptured. Hitherto, the people of the Niger Delta before the seizure of their land have engaged in the remediation of the environment in their own way. This is what the poet describes in the poem "Ogoni L" that:
… we

are silted gutters, swamp and swampdwellers.
The Niger flows down to us its floodwaters,
swells our rivers with the dread tributes

of seasonal carnage washed in from the fields.
And we stay afloat by treading tears, reclaiming
footholds with the humus of hate and envy (p. 63)

The people of the Niger Delta are engaged in the reclamation of the environment through the "treading tears" of both physical and spiritual care because "at one with nature's lore, they left no graves" (p. 66). This care has been replaced with the machines of destruction; the canoe is replaced with the trawlers and tanker which "sail away/with Bonny Light crude" (p. 55). The gods and the spirits of the mangrove have been replaced with the "Iron Dragon/the gas-flaring stack whose awful mouth spits fire/without cease … (p. 55). Therefore, with the introduction of the unknown into the area, the environment revolted. The environment which has been known to yield good harvest seizes from doing so. Instead, the environment begins to yield twigs and thistles. In the poem, ""Memory was His Saviour and His Death", the poet portrays the contrast between the past and the present this way:

… He remembered the swamps and the rivers,
the fish shivering in a choked net,
the colony of creeks and mudskippers

founded by the retreating tides. And farms
swollen with roots and bulbs. He remembered
a bounty whose slendour wrote psalms
chanted by the peasant to winds and birds …

He had known the floods, the tides and the waves
that soften the land and brought the fish home;
at one with nature's lore, they left no graves. (p. 66)

This is the glorious past when the environment yields plentiful harvest. But presently, the environment is resisting man because,

when the housewife stood aghast by her plot
of cassava and herbs swallowed by slick

when trees, fish and animals in mourning

surrendered to acid rain and gas poison

when the canoe paddling children to school
capsized far from the bridge or motorway. (p. 67)

The resistance by the environment is disastrous to man. For instance, instead of rain water, there is soot water in some communities in Rivers State. With no hope of surviving from the environment which has hitherto been his means of survival, the people of the Niger Delta began their own resistance to the occupational forces. This resistance manifests in several ways.

One of the manifestations of the human resistance is peaceful agitation for a share in the oil proceeds or stoppage of the oil drilling in their land. The persona in the poem "Ogoni XXXV" reechoing the words of Major Kitemo, points to the agitated spirit of the people of the Niger Delta when he says that "No child, man or woman could be swayed; /they had the script in their heads, /answer for every question (p. 43). Another level of the human resistance is the resort to violence. When the peaceful agitation does not yield the desired result, the people resorted to violence. At this time, the narrative is taken over by the propagandists of the neocolonial forces, the foremost of whom in the poetry collection under study is Major Kitemo. The killing of the "four men, calling/them traitors" is one of the first acts of violence (p. 47). At the same, in other parts of the Niger Delta, physical violence by the people of the area is springing up daily. At Odi, "a case of homicide: five cops and four/soldiers sent to break a youth revolt/lay dead in the dark labyrinth of the delta" (p. 21).

In order to stop the continuous agitation and pave the way for the eventual use of force, the occupational forces launched a counter-resistance. In "Ogoni", the counter resistance force is led by Major Kitemo. Due to his insistence on wiping out the indigenous population to gain unfettered access to the drilling of oil in the Ogoniland, Major Kitemo said the killing of the four traitors in Ogoni gave him the pretence to launch the "aggressive act of folly, so I said: "Kill-/Them-All …" (p.47). Due to his obsession with genocide of the local people, the people named him Major Kill-Them-All. This pun on Major Kitemo (Major Kill-Them-All) reflects the severity of the counter-resistance. The resistance by the environment, the indigenous people and the counter-resistance by the neocolonial forces culminated in a state of war. The poet describes this situation in "The Pipes War XLIV" that:

Such folly
as Major Kitemo's pretext in Ogoni,

as flattened a town for a felony,

as burned one thousand officially dead,
as turned a scrapping for used pipes
-so rusted Shell could dig them up!-

into a war for territory
between Oleh and Olomoro …

leapt into hordes of hands, and there was a pretext
to shoot and burn, and drive more into the bush. (p. 54)

The images of the towns of Ogoni, Oleh and Olomoro are a symbolic reference to the devastation that has happened to places where there has been resistance to the degradation of the environment by the multi-national corporations exploring oil in the area. The image of Major Kitemo is symbolic of the state forces that provide protection for the oil companies. At times, the oil companies use subtle means of divide and rule to create a clash between oil bearing communities who are in a constant mutual suspicious of each other. This is the case of Oleh and Olomoro who fought a fratricidal war because of the suspicion that the other has ambushed the compensation accruing from the oil companies. At other times, the resistance is quelled by the state. This is the case of Odi where the state forces have to level the community in order to avenge the killing of soldiers and police by resistance forces. In this scenario, the crisis between the hegemonic forces and the resistance fighters transform into war.

The illustration of the trope of war is the destruction of Odi. Odi is an Ijaw community in the present Bayelsa state. The resistance to the unbridled exploitation of oil and the despoliation of the environment in the process took a new turn when the resistance forces are accused of killing twelve members of the government in 1998. In order to dislodge the militants, as the government calls the resistance forces, the government forces launched an attack on the town in 1999. The attack on Odi led to the destruction of the town and the killing of more than nine hundred persons. This is what is captured by Ifowodo in "Poem XVII" that:

The first grenade, lobbed by a hand
too eager for live cremations, landed
on the roof of the village school.

The fire and the alarm started there
with the wiping out of the house of learning.
They had come to perfect what rain and wind

began weeks before try stripping the mud-
walled classroom blocks of their thatch roofs
In the thick of the season's night – and – day (p. 22)

The destruction of Odi catapulted the Niger Delta region into a state of war. The resistance forces used the events at Odi as a launchpad for revenge attacks on the hegemonic forces in the region. The poet uses the events at Odi to symbolise the conflagration that enveloped the Niger Delta region. In this vein, the poet further describes the state of warfare in the Niger Delta that:

... over
its ribs than a drum of war . . .
but the murderers, crouched in ambush
behind off- hinge doors, armed and ready
for battle, had fled. It was time

for the house- to – house search
to fish them out. In the light noon
hazed by the just and smoke

of their bombs, in the silence
heavier than a ghost-town's,
they kicked in doors, but remembering
. . .

This is the army! You cannot win!
Come out with your hands above your heads!
(*The Oil Lamp,*p.26)

The extent of destruction at Odi, and indeed, the Niger Delta, is a further proof that the clash between the resistance and the government forces is a debilitating one for the Niger Delta. Describing the destruction further in poem "XXII" the poet portrays the gory nature of warfare and the destruction that follows that:

And they shot grenades into houses
suspiciously unmarked, dropped
on bellies, machine guns on the ready,
to await the squealing caved –in faces of fear
and surrender. Still, they heard only
their thumping boots, the tumbling-in

of roofs and walls crumbling
before the charge at the blasted door (*The Oil Lamp,* p.27)

In the midst of the crisis that the seizure of the land of the Niger Delta has brought to both the environment and the people of the area, the poet also projects a hope for the redress of the breach between man and the environment. But this is hinged on the return of the land to the people that owns it. It is only then that they can resuscitate and rejuvenate the environment through a physical and spiritual remediation based on a mutual relationship between the land and those dwelling on it because "Luckily for him, he was in the right place.../his act will glitter like rubies of blood and blaze/his name" (p. 68). Surely, the Niger Delta people will regain their land and resources after so many struggles.

3. Conclusion

This paper argues that it is the conflict over the control of land that forms the basis for the ecological degradation of the Niger Delta. With adequate illustration from Ogaga Ifowodo's two collection of poetry, this paper has proved that the people of the Niger Delta have cared for the environment of the region when the communal land tenure system was operated by them. But the multinational oil companies and the hegemonic forces use the decrees and laws of government to appropriate the mineral resources of the region for themselves. The massive exploitation of the resources leads to a polluted land and in turn to a degraded environment. The environment c=becomes unsustainable and the livelihood of the people threatened. This disenchantment leads to confrontation between the people and the hegemonic forces. The peaceful resistance soon gives way to a violent confrontation. The result is the destruction of the communities in the Niger Delta. The people of the region did not lie down and wait for fate. Instead, they engaged the multinationals and government forces in armed struggle.

The rupture between man and the environment is one of the impacts of this conflict. The appropriation of the resources of the land of the people of the Niger Delta and their eventual reaction is paralleled with the reaction of the environment to the loss of care it is getting from the indigenous people of the area. This convergence between the postcolonial and ecocritical theories forms the basis of this paper which argues that the transition from the pristine environment where the indigenous people of the Niger Delta own and care for the land to the desolated and dystopic environment of the present is all due to change of the ownership of land. This struggle for the control of the resources in the land of the Niger Delta people has generated the movement from the paradise nature of the environment to a polluted land, abandonment of the principles for the sustainability of the land, degradation of the environment and the eventual resistance by both the environment and the people of the Niger Delta.

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Representations of Child-Soldier Trauma in Biyi Bandele's *Burma Boy*

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Abstract. The exploration of child trauma in literature has received robust attention in Africa. Though, this study is focused on the phenomenon of child-soldier trauma narratives in African literature. This study, investigated the representations of traumatised child-soldiers in Biyi Bandele's *Burma Boy* (2007). The selected text was subjected to qualitative, literary analysis, identifying the traumatic experiences suffered by the child-fighters featured in them. The study utilised the tenets of trauma theory to account for the mental state of the characters. The analysis reveals that there are different episodes of trauma like fear, anxiety, aggression, depression, hallucination, manifested by the child-soldiers in the novel. Bandele's *Burma Boy* imaginatively explores how young fighters (Chindits) were traumatised during the Second World War. In the novel, the child-fighters including Ali Banana, became traumatised as a result of their exposure to the devastating experience of war and deaths. The examined novel highlights the traumatic experiences of child soldiers especially Ali Banana thereby resulting in anxiety and depression. It also facilitates psychological health awareness, and this makes the research relevant to fields like clinical psychology and trauma studies.

Keywords: Trauma Studies, Child-Soldier, War, Mental Health, Fear.

1. Introduction

The exploration of traumatic experiences is a major theme in contemporary African literary works. The field of trauma studies has continued to intersect with literature as an aspect of its social and psychological functions (Buelens and Craps, 2008). Over the years, writers imagine and express different accounts of psychological anguish that are suffered by people. Perderson (2020), in his discussion of cognitive approaches to trauma and literature, reveals that, literary writers address issues of trauma in their works. According to him, in the characterisation of trauma in literature, writers recount the psychological and emotional challenges they suffer, which also apply to other members of the society. The depiction of traumatic experiences in literature is informed by the quest to facilitate psychological, physical and social health. For instance, Winning (2020) observes that the narration of trauma and illness falls within the domain of the medical humanities. In other words, trauma narratives are relevant to the field of medical humanities (Winning, 2020 and Eaglestone 2020). This shows that writers that focus on issues of trauma in their works do so to create a kind of consciousness towards health and healing. The human mind constitutes the thrust of literary imagination and expression, what is regarded as psychological dimension of reality (Kekeghe, 2017).

This novel examines the representation of child-soldier trauma in Biyi Bandele's *Burma Boy*. It is a fictionalised history of the Second World War, which underscores the trauma of some Nigerian child-soldier recruits. The relationship between trauma and literary studies has proven to be beneficial, especially as it shows the relevance of literature in creating awareness on psychological wellness.

Trauma is a psychological illness that manifests in the form of deep distress (Caruth, 1995). This implies that traumatic experiences affect the mental and emotional states of those exposed to it. As a broad field of study, trauma studies manifests in disciplines like cultural studies, medicine, psychology, sociology and literature. It was formulated by notable scholars who drew their ideas from the psychological studies of Sigmund Freud. Some of such foremost scholars and theoreticians of trauma studies are: Cathy Caruth, Judith Lewis Herman, Shoshana Felman, Geofrey Hartman and Dominick LapCapra.

Scholars have examined some of the common triggers of trauma as reflected in literature, which include exposure to war and social violence, death of loved ones, lover's betrayal, loss of job, loss of power, loss of business, sexual violence, gender hostilities, among others (See Caruth 1996; Omobowale & Kekeghe,

2018). That is to say that obvious social factors and experiences provoke traumatic memories.

Existing works on literary representations of child soldier narratives have shown the agonising effects which child-fighters face in war situation. Studies like Vinod (2021) and Hynd (2021) attest to the phenomenon of child soldier narratives and the psychological trauma suffered by child-fighters. Hynd emphasises that "child soldiers have been heavily involved in contemporary African warfare". It is, however, important to examine how child-soldiers exposed to the devastating experiences of war psychologically respond to such situations as represented in literature.

The portrayal of trauma in literature has attained a significant place in African literary scholarship. Whitehead (2008) examines the literary representation of traumatic episodes in postcolonial Nigeria, drawing examples from the fictional works of Wole Soyinka. In a similar vein, Amy Novak discusses colonial-induced traumas in two Nigerian novels, specifically, Chris Abani's *Graceland* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun.* Shane Graham's examination of traumatic memory in Zoe Wicomb's *David's Story*, Laura Murphy's investigation of trauma in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* and Mairi Emma Neeves' analysis of post-apartheid trauma in Lisa Fugard's *Skinner's Drift* are some worthy contributions to trauma studies in African literature. Whitehead's research is a major contribution to trauma studies in African literature.

The current study examines the representations of Child-Soldier Trauma in Bandele's *Burma Boy*. The essence of this study is to ascertain the interplay of war and violence on the psychological make-up of children. The study will adopt Trauma Theory. The study is significant because it will help create mental health awareness on trauma and recovery. The characterisation of traumatised child-soldiers in the novel is a conscious effort by the writer to expose the negative effects of war and violence on the mindscape of children. That way, they stimulate consciousness on mental health, from the angle of children. Its findings will create awareness on some of the social triggers of trauma that manifest in people, specifically trauma caused by war and violent situations that manifest in children. This may foster better mental health awareness and management in Africa and elsewhere. The study will be anchored to the literary and analytical method of research, which is a qualitative method of research.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Trauma theory which is an offshoot of psychoanalyis, to account for the psychological distress suffered by the child-soldiers in Bandele's *Burma Boy*. Trauma theory was developed in Euro-America in the 1980s and it has since become a contemporary multidisciplinary area of studies that cuts across different disciplines like literature, psychology, medicine, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies. The adoption of Trauma theory, as critical framework in the humanities, especially literature, witnessed an upsurge in the 1990s, (Felman and Laub, 1992; Antze and Lambet, 1996; Radstone, 2007). Though the application of Trauma theory to literary studies is relatively recent, it has, for decades, been prominently incorporated into film and media studies. Either in the written word or motion image, the use of trauma theory in literary scholarship is to engage a robust discussion of traumatic episodes, using the tools of psychoanalysis. This multidisciplinary branching, has, over the years, enabled a fuller explication of devastating effects of wars and other calamitous events, capable of causing emotional anguish. In trauma studies, literary images and media objects explore individual's mental processes in relation to traumatic memories.

Pioneering and background studies on trauma theory have mainly examined the Holocaust of World War II. The Holocaust, as different trauma theorists have highlighted, has been significantly germane for trauma theory. Antze's and Lambek's study, *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory,* is an interdisciplinary volume of essays that conceptualise and problematize trauma as a theory of the mind, which can be adopted by varying disciplines of human endeavour. Similarly, Radstone's essay, "Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics" offers a deep critique of trauma theory, highlighting its applicability as well as challenges of its suppression by more sophisticated theoretical approaches, which have been previously established in different humanistic discourses. Studies like Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, and Hirsch's *Family Frames: Photography Narrative and Postmemory*, have concentrated on the representation of trauma through literature, film, and photography. Also significant, are studies like Felman and Laub (1992), LaCapra (1994) and Leys (2000), which highlight both theoretical and clinical aspects of psychoanalysis and how they inform our contemporary understanding of individual and collective psychological damage.

The essence of this discussion is to highlight the tenets of the trauma model like repression, fragmented language, incoherent thoughts, unconscious instincts, aggressive instinct, as foregrounded in the works of Freud and Caruth and apply them to the text. Trauma theory is suitable in examining traumatic experiences manifested by the child-soldiers in the novel studied in this study. It will enable a close investigation of war-induced traumatised child-characters in the novel under study; this is because the study is focused on the representations of the Second World War and psychological responses of the characters in relation to the distressing moments of war and violence. Through a close application of the tenets of Trauma theory, the researcher will be able to account for the mental state of the characters as well as the social factors that triggered their mental distress. This will be done through a close reading of the characters and events in the novel.

3. Child-Soldier Trauma in Biyi Bandele's *Burma Boy*

Burma Boy by Biyi Bandele is a fictionalised history of the Second World War, which underscores the trauma of some Nigerian child-soldier recruits. The novel explores the devastating episodes of the 2nd World War on the psyches of such children fighters recruited by the British to fight the Japanese at the Burma Jungle. Historical accounts show that during the Second World War, thousands of Africans, mostly Nigerians, were recruited by the British to fight against the Japanese. In this novel, Bandele recreates the traumatic effects of the war on the young Nigerian fighters especially, the protagonist, Ali Banana. The novel gives a vivid account of how child-soldiers get traumatised due to their exposure to episodes of social violence.

The novel explores the psychological state of Ali Banana, and other young Nigerian fighters recruited by the British to fight the Japanese at the Burmese jungle. The trauma of the young fighters is as a result of their exposure to different episodes of social violence and war. The fourteen-year-old Ali Banana, who underestimates the destructive consequences of war, lies about his age so that he will be recruited into the army. Ali Banana was dissatisfied by his initial engagement as a muleteer, driver of the fighters. After expressing his resentment, he was engaged as fighter under platoon D-Section, which is commanded by Sergeant Damisa (Samanja). Out of naivety, Ali Banana craves war and he is ignorant of its devastating consequences on the mind.

As the narrative progresses, it is learnt that the stormy and horrible experiences of the war affect Banana's psyche and he begins to manifest traumatic memories. As Ali Banana and his colleagues (the Chindits), embark on a long-distance march in the Burma jungle, his interest in the war begin to wane. At this point, the stern violence and the gory sight of death leave him traumatised. From the beginning of the narrative, Ali Banana had underestimated the consequences of war. Gradually, he is exposed to the dehumanising and devastating atmosphere of war. For instance, when Ali Banana realises that the British soldiers that collapse in the jungle gets no assistance from their team members, he starts expressing regret over his conscription into the army. The narrator reveals that Banana is shocked that his teammate, Bloken, 'had fallen and there was nothing anyone could do for him. Only Bloken could save himself' (80). This realisation attests to the tense nature of the atmosphere of war which he had voluntarily joined out of infantile thoughts. From this moment, it begins to dawn on Ali Banana that war is destructive but he can no longer retreat. He had urged to be recruited based on his childish emotions based on his admiration of soldiers' boots. That is the trivial infantile sentiment that informed his negotiation into the battle field. When the child-soldiers (Chindits) approach the Japanese, Ali Banana's apprehension becomes very glaring. The passage below underscores Ali Banana's psychological and emotional response to the violence in the battlefield of Burma:

The fire which earlier had frightened Banana and made him nearly flee had ceased to trouble him. That fire, which wasn't fire at all, but a million fireflies fused together into one giant piercing flame, had long ago disappeared. But the fear had not left him. He no longer remembered the excitement he'd felt only three days earlier. That feeling was gone, replaced by this numbing, if not disabling anxiety (p.81).

Bandele exposes the precarious nature of war, and shows that it is dangerous for children to be exposed to the atmosphere of violence engendered by war. For example, as the British army confronts the Japanese fighters in the novel, Ali Banana who is recruited to fight on the side of the British, manifests intense fears and apprehension. He nurses the terror of being killed by the Japanese fighters. He begins to manifest intense anxiety of fear. It becomes obvious that Ali Banana could not mentally withstand episodes of violence. His infant mind of fear comes to bear, and his initial naive urge to join the army disappears. The narrator says:

Farabiti Banana wiped his face with the back of his hand and realized he was trembling. His head felt heavy and his mouth tasted of bile. He was no stranger to fear but as he stood on that mountain track in the

wildest reaches of the Burmese jungle…Ali Banana knew he was about to die and a great terror took hold of his mind (p.27-28).

The terror and tension faced by Ali Banana as a child-soldier is evident in the excerpt above, and it shows signs of trauma. This is the same tension faced by the other young fighters at the Burmese jungle. As conveyed in the excerpt above, Ali Banana is seen, showing symptoms of trauma that manifest in the form of extreme anxiety and fear. The other child-soldiers, like Banana, also manifest traumatic memories, arising from the tension and devastation caused by the war at the Burmese jungle. This display of terror is at the very first instance of the child-soldiers (Chindits) meeting with their enemies, the Japanese soldiers, in the novel. Guntu, one of the Chindits, is psychologically affected. For example, in some instances, he would see Japs turn into his own shadow, and in other cases, he sees them turn into trees. This is as a result of the mental burden the Chindits bear as a result of the terrifying experiences of war. The Janar had told the Chindits that the Japanese would come to kill them, and he admonished them to always resist them by fighting back. The words of the Chindits leave serious fear in the mind of the child-soldiers.

Guntu, one of the child-soldiers is mentally devastated as a result of the experiences of the social violence. What engenders such reaction is the trauma provoked by the war. Guntu's psychological trauma is elicited by the unpleasant experiences of war and violence, especially the gory sight of dead and decomposing Japanese that litter the entire Burma jungle. The reader is made to understand that the "bloating corpses" of the Japs have flooded the Muddy River where the Chindits, including Guntu, regularly frequent to wash themselves. It is therefore, not surprising that the war affects their mental state. Giving the gory sights and the fear of getting killed by their enemies, the Chindits, especially Banana, pray for the war to end. The Chindits engage in the consumption of weeds and other drugs to transcend the reality of the war. The narrator recounts the dehumanisation and gory images which the child-soldiers are exposed to in the Burmese jungle:

The smell emanated not only from the men who had ceased washing themselves since Muddy River became a floating morgue; it came not only from the dead mules scattered all over the block; it came not just from the epidemic of flatulence that had worked its way through every second man in the block; it came most of all and with pungent, unrelenting force from the decomposing bodies of nearly two thousand Japs strung in an endless array of morbid contortions on the concertina wire encircling the stronghold (p.178-179).

These gory images create tension and revulsion in the minds of the child-soldiers in the novel, and they begin to manifest traumatic episodes. As shown above, the entire environment looks tense and horrible. The Chindits are exposed to the shocks of war and its devastating effects, which further affect their mind. At this stage, the Chindits begin to regret their decision to adventure for a combatant mission and the Burmese jungle. They had underestimated the consequence of war. After the amputation of Pash's leg due to a snake bite in the jungle, the Chindits, especially Ali Banana, begin to manifest episodes of severe trauma. The killing of their colleague, Dogo, by the Japanese intensifies their psychological trauma. Every moment, Banana sees himself as the next to die. Banana manifests his inner burden by lamenting. For instance, "to think of Pash with a wooden leg" (187), leaves Ali Banana heart-broken. All of these episodes are deployed by Bandele to make a statement on the devastating effects of war on the mind of young fighters.

Ali Banana appears to have received the fiercest traumatic torture in the novel. Damisa's death completely alters Banana mind. After being gunned down by the Japanese, half-dead Damisa pleads with Banana to help end his breath for fear of being further dehumanised by the Japanese and wild creatures in the Burmese jungle: "You know what the Japs do when they come upon our wounded. They cut off their limbs and rip open their stomachs. It's either Jap or the leopards and tigers if you leave me here" (200). After much plea, Banana helps to facilitate Damisa's final death. This experience plunges Banana to extreme display of trauma. The excerpt below conveys Banana's mental state:

He was alive. Damisa was alive. Such was the sheer relief that he forgot the torrential downpour. He forgot his terror of the trees swaying like drunken evil spirits everywhere he looked. He forgot the roaring forest around him and the fearsome beasts prowling in the dark. He sat there in a crouch, rocking back and forth, vaguely wondering where he was, how he got there and what had happened to Damisa (p.195).

Banana manifests intense trauma each time he thinks about the death of the other child-soldiers (Chindits) he had witnessed, especially Damisa's death which he facilitated. Though Ali Banana is subjected to treatment at the end of the novel, the reader is exposed to the extent in which the episodes of war ravage his mind. His traumatic state is engendered by the devastating effects of war and violence.

4. Conclusion

The study reveals instances of child-soldier trauma in Biyi Bandele's *Burma Boy*. It also reveals that there are obvious social factors like war and social violence that engender traumatic breakdown of child-soldiers, as evident in the novel under study. As the study highlights, human beings respond to varying socioeconomic and political pressures in their environment which impact negatively on their mental wellness.

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'We Don't Know When to Insert Them': Misuse of Comma and Full stop among Students in Selected Institutions in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The paper investigates the misuse of comma and full stop among students of University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, and Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba— all in Delta State, Nigeria. Through a simple random sampling technique, 600 students admitted to the institutions during the 2023/2024 academic session were selected from the three institutions (200 from each). The students chosen were students who offered the Use of English course which is a compulsory course for all students in their first year of study. Data for the study were obtained from answers to structured quiz on punctuation, long essays, examination scripts of the students during their first semester and interview. Data for the study were analysed using the theory of error analysis. Findings reveal that poor knowledge of word classes, phrasal and clausal elements, over generalizations among other factors affect students' placement of the two punctuation marks. Again, the study reveals the relationship between good knowledge of punctuation marks and effective written communication. The paper recommends that teachers should devise activities and tasks on the rules of punctuation and encourage students to put them into practice both at sentence and discourse levels.

Keywords: punctuation, comma, full stop, error analysis, effective writing

1. Introduction

Every human society uses language to communicate which is usually spoken or written. When it is spoken, it makes use of sounds which are systematically arranged to form meaningful and understandable utterances. When language is written, it makes use of alphabet or letters which are equally combined to form meaningful words. It would be observed that in spoken forms, there is a set of prosodic devices through which differentiation of various kinds could modify the stream of speech, thus, endorsing and helping users communicate the grammatical and other distinctions in English.

In Nigeria, the English language has remained a lingua franca and the official language in which the activities of the nation are conducted in. The obvious importance which is attached to the English language in Nigeria has made Nigerian learners aspire to be competent in both the spoken and written forms. Unfortunately, most undergraduates still show gross ineptitude in the mastery of both the spoken and written forms of the English language. Ekah (2018, p.29) citing Essen (2003) and Jowitt (2013) believes that the poor performance of students in writing 'revolves around ungrammatical expressions, wrong choice of words, poor sense of punctuation and failure to understand the fundamental principles of writing'.

Evidently, in spoken words, pauses and inflexions are indicated through voice while in writing, they are indicated through plethora of devices recognized as punctuations marks. In reiterating the importance of punctuation, Babalola (2005, p.269) remarks that the 'purpose of punctuation is to examine the visual devices that perform a similar role for the English we write'.

Commenting on the importance of punctuation marks, Ezugu (1998, p.46) citing Edger Allan Poe maintains as follows:
That punctuation is important, all agree but few comprehend the extent of its importance. The writer who neglects punctuation, or mispunctuates, is liable to be misunderstood. This according to the popular idea, is the sum of the evils arising from heedlessness or carelessness. It does not seem to be known that even where the sense is perfectly clear, a sentence may be deprived of half its force, its spirit, its point, by improper punctuation.

Despite the importance of punctuation in the English language, the researchers as teachers of communication skills/use of English to students in higher institutions, have observed over a long period of time that the students have perennial problem of punctuation especially in the use of comma and full stop.

In the light of the above, the current paper attempts to investigate the extent to which comma and full stop have been misused among students of selected institutions in Delta State. The study tries to find answers to the following questions:

- To what extent have comma and full stop been misused among students of the selected institutions?
- In what aspects of writing have the comma and full stop been misused among students of the selected institutions?
- How has the misuse of comma and full stop affected effective communication in students' writing?

2. Previous Studies on Misuse of Comma and Full stop in Students' Writing

Over the years, the study of punctuation among students has gained increased significance within the field of language teaching. As such, different studies have been carried out on punctuation among undergraduates. These studies include Raheem and Ghafar (2024) who investigated the punctuation and spelling errors EFL learners face in their academic writing. Findings from their study reveal large prevalence of punctuation and spelling errors among Iraqi EFL learners which is mostly noticed in the use of capital letters and full stops. In like manner, Ahmed, Awais and Nawaz (2024) examined the misjudgment of English comma sense and types of errors among EFL students at different educational levels. The researchers used 7 unpunctuated sentences in English and 7 unpunctuated sentences in their mother –tongue (Urdu language) to investigate if the mother tongue affects the students' knowledge of punctuation. Findings from the study reveal that errors of omission were more frequent among other errors which shows the interference of the grammatical rules of their first language (Urdu) on the target language (English). More so, Pangke, Maru and Liando (2024) interrogated how students' writing skills can be improved through the use of punctuation in writing descriptive texts at SMP Neger 3 BEO. The researchers used multiple-choice test with ten questions, pre-tests and post-tests. The pre-test showed a standard deviation from the acceptable punctuation marks while the post-test revealed a significant improvement. The study concludes that mastery of proper punctuation can significantly improve students' descriptive writing abilities. Again, Putri, Suhalmi and Erniyati (2024) analysed capitalization, punctuation and spelling errors found in students' theses in the Department of English IAIN KERINCI. The researchers obtained their data through manual collection. Findings reveal that while capitalization errors were most prevalent, punctuation errors were minimal. Also, Sülükcü and Kirböga (2020) investigated the punctuation knowledge levels of fresh men students. Their study holds that the students made the most mistakes when using the dash and that female students made use of quotation marks better than male students. Shweba and Mujiyanto (2017), in their study of error of spelling, capitalization and punctuation marks in writing encountered by first year college students in Al-merghib University, Libya observe that the students commit errors in punctuation due to lack of knowledge, lack of balance in the curriculum and the influence of mother tongue. Still contributing to the discourse, Akampirige and Apam (2014) worked on errors in the use of punctuation marks among polytechnic students in Ghana. Drawing their data from test results of unpunctuated passages and a written speech, their study reveals that students have great challenges in identifying punctuation marks in written texts. In like manner, Similarly, Al Murshidi (2014), analyses subject-verb agreement, grammatical errors and punctation errors in submissions of UAE University male students. The study concludes that causes of grammatical errors vary from students to students but errors in subject-verb agreement is mostly as a result of a misconception in students' minds. Using Science College, Taif University, KSA, Abdulamir and Sawsan (2012) examine the syntactical and punctuation errors analysis of technical writing of university students. Their work discovers that learners' failure to understand basic English grammar is ascribed to intralingual interference associated with the developmental sequence of learning English for technical communication in the four language skills rather than to interference of the mother tongue. Within Nigeria, scholars like Abdulmumini and Shehu Musa (2024) appraised the use of punctuation marks by 400 Level English Students in Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria and Federal University, Gusau (FUG) during the 2023/2024 academic session. Using the in-class test and questionnaire, the study discovered that students from Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria have higher knowledge in the use of ellipsis and dash but have poor knowledge in the use of semi colon. Similarly, students in Federal

University, Gusau have higher knowledge in the use of colon. The study concludes that the misuse of the punctuation marks is as a result of carelessness. Also, Abdulmumini and Shehu Musa (2025) compared the use of punctuation in handwritten and typed essays of 400 level undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria and Federal University, Gusau (FUG). The researchers compared the typed assignments in Microsoft word format and hand written in-class test scripts among the students of the institutions. Findings reveal that students commit more punctuation errors in handwritten essays compared to typed essays. Finally, Ekah (2018) looks at the use of comma in students' writing from the grapho-syntactical considerations. The study reveals that there is a relationship between grammar and effective punctuation among students and further recommends that punctuation should be an integral part of language teaching.

Evidently, these scholarly works mentioned above provide insight into the present study. Although the studies examined punctuations in students' writing, none of the studies investigated the misuse of comma and full stop across the three different levels of higher institutions. The present study is set to fill the gap in knowledge by investigating the misuse of comma and full stop among undergraduates of University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, and Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba— all in Delta State, Nigeria.

3. Theoretical Underpinnings

Error analysis involves 'analyzing independently or objectively learners' interlanguage' (that is their version of the target language) and the target language itself, followed by a comparison of the two, so as to locate mismatches (James 2013, p.5). Re-emphasizing the point, Richard and Schmidt (2002) hold that the major reason for error analysis is: first, to identify approach which learners use in language learning, in terms of the methods and strategies used in teaching and learning. Second, to try to identify the causes of learners' errors, that is, investigating the motives behind committing such errors as the first step to eradicating them. Third, to find out the common difficulties in language learning, as an aid to teaching and in the preparation of instructional materials.

The two major causes of error as identified by the error analysis approach are the interlingual error and the intralingual error. While interlingual errors are as a result of the learner's linguistic background and native language interference, intralingual errors are caused due to misuse of some target language rules. The errors identified in the study are due to misuse and non-mastery of the grammatical rules of the target language.

4. Research Methodology

The researchers randomly selected 600 students (200 from each of the institutions) admitted during the 2023/2024 academic session in University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, and Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba — all in Delta State, Nigeria. Only first year degree students were selected from three institutions. The justification for the selection across the three levels of higher institutions is to find out if the misuse of comma and full stop is common to students in all the institutions selected for the study or if it is peculiar to students in a particular institution. Data for the study were collected from answers to structured quiz on punctuation, assignments on long essays, examination scripts of the students during their first semester and interview.

The sentences analysed are considered to be erroneous in terms of comma and full stop placements. However, after a careful scrutiny of the erroneous sentences from the three institutions, it was observed that the errors found in the sentences are similar. So, the researchers selected 67 sentences considered to be representatives of the errors observed across the three institutions. The errors identified were grouped according to grammatical rule misuse and frequency of such errors was counted according to the number of students and presented in percentages. The full stop is presented first followed by the comma.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1: To what extent have comma and full stop been misused among students of the selected institutions?

Table 1: Showing the extent of misuse of comma and full stop among the students of the selected institutions

S/ No	Grammatical Rule Misuse	University of Delta, Agbor	Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-Uku	Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba
1	Full stop in Subordinate clauses	136 (68%)	124 (62%)	116 (58%)
2	Full stop in Phrases	42 (21%)	38 (19%)	32 (16%)
3	Omissions of Full stop in Indirect Questions	166 (83%)	173 (86.5%)	122 (61%)
4	Comma in Relative Clause	99 (49.5%)	103 (51.5%)	76 (38%)
5	The Use of Comma in Separation of Syntactic Structures	97(48.5%)	106(53%)	111 (55.5%)
6	The Use of Comma in Coordinate Structures and Compound Sentences	175 (87.5%)	162 (81%)	158 (79%)
7	Comma Error in Defining Relative Clauses	144(72%)	156 (78%)	139(69.5%)
8	Comma Errors in Non-Defining Relative Clauses	138 (69%)	147(73.5%)	125(62.5%)
9	Comma Error in Subordinate and Parallel Clauses	63 (31.5%)	78(39%)	77(38.5%)
10	Comma in Interpolated Introductory Expressions and Vocatives	151 (75.5%)	165(82.5%)	156 (78%)

Source: *Field Research 2021*

From the table, students of University of Delta, Agbor, violated the grammatical rule of full stop in subordinate clauses more, followed by students from Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku and lastly, students from Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba. Again, the students in the three institutions, to a greater extent, understand that full stop should not be used in phrases. This is evident in the low percentages recorded by the students. In addition, omissions of full stop in indirect questions, use of comma in coordinate structures and compound sentences, use of comma in interpolated, introductory expressions and vocatives, and how comma should be used in defining relative clauses pose great challenges to students in the three institutions under study. This is revealed in the higher percentage recorded in the number of violations. Finally, it is evident from the table that the misuse of comma and full stop is peculiar to the three institutions with almost the same degree.

Research Question 2: In what aspects of writing have the comma and full stop been misused among students of the selected institutions?

The data presented below show the aspects of writing where comma and full stop have been misused among students of the selected institutions.

Full stop in Subordinate Clauses

*The external parts of the computer are the monitor, keyboard, floppy disk and printer (.) Because they are the parts that people touch always.

*The Rector advised the newly admitted students to work hard (.) Because their CGPA will reflect the extent to which they have worked hard.

*Students in the School of Engineering are very good at drawing (.) Because they are taught how to draw in technical drawing.

*The students were asked to leave the campus (.) When they started destroying the schools' property.

*She said she has graduated (.) Although she did not finish her project.

* We decided to change everything (.) When you advised us to adjust the title of the project.

In writing, sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark Leech (2006). In the structures culled from the students' writings, subordinate clauses have been made to stand as sentences with full stop leading to sentence fragments. The following structures: *Because they are the parts that people touch always*, *Because their CGPA will reflect the extent to which they have worked hard, Because they are taught how to draw in technical drawing, When they started destroying the schools' property, Although she did not finish her project and When you advised us to adjust the title of the project* are subordinate clauses which have been made to stand on their own. When students write in fragments it gives the impression that they do not know 'the rules' (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002, p. 184).

Full stop in Phrases

* Having read the book (.) The lecturer went back to his office.
* Saying goodbye (.) He left the room.
*To approve the course forms (.) The HOD refused.
* She was the one that taught us how to write essays (.)The new English lecturer with a tribal mark.

In sentence 7, a present participle phrase, *having read the book* has erroneously been used as a sentence. Similarly, a gerund, *saying goodbye,* an infinitive phrase, *to approve the course forms*, and lastly, a noun phrase, *the new English lecturer with a tribal mark* have been made to stand as sentences. Sentence 7 would be grammatical if a comma is inserted after *book* and the capital letter in the definite article changed to a small letter. In sentence 8, and depending on the sense of usage, the clause, *he left the room* would be joined with a preposition, *without,* to read: *He left the room without saying goodbye* or a dash, to read, *He left the room− saying goodbye*. In sentence 9, an infinitive phrase, *to approve the course forms* has been used as a sentence. To correct the sentence, the phrase, *to approve the course forms* should be joined to the clause to read: *The HOD refused to approve the course forms*. Finally, the noun phrase, *The new English lecturer with a tribal mark* should be linked to the independent clause in order to make a grammatical sentence: *The new English lecturer with a tribal mark taught us how to write essays.*

Omissions of Full stop in Indirect Questions

16 * He asked to know who signed the attendance list?
17* I wonder if he would come to school?
18* He asked me about the academic problem that I have?
19* The security asked me where I was coming from?.

Grammatically, there are three ways to end a sentence− a full stop, exclamation or a question mark. The three question marks are mutually exclusive. Sentences 16, 17 and 18 which are indirect questions ended with question marks which make the sentences deviant. Similarly, sentence 19 ended with a question mark and full stop which is a wrong way to end a sentence.

Comma in Relative Clauses

20 *The boy who won the essay competition (,) is in the School of Engineering.
21* The man (,) who was appointed the Dean of Students' Affairs is in the Department of Languages.
22* The new hostel which many students liked (,) is very expensive.

23* The book that she took (,) was not hers.
24 *The department (,) that I liked was not accredited.

Relative clauses begin either a structure modifying a preceding noun or nominal group, or a structure for which a nominal group could be substituted. Relative sentences are usually introduced by who, whom, whose, which, that, what and others. However, not all relative clauses are separated by comma. A defining relative clause is closely tied to the word it refers to; therefore, it is not marked off by a comma (Carter et al. 2011, p. 451). The excerpts above which are defining relative clauses have been marked off by commas which make the sentences erroneous. While sentence 20 was marked off with a comma after *competition,* sentence 21 has a comma after *man* and in sentence 22, a comma was inserted after *liked.* Sentence 23 has a comma after *took* and in sentence 24, a comma was inserted after *department*. The insertion of comma in the sentences makes the structures deviant.

Conversely, a non-defining relative clause is not closely related to the noun or nominal group it refers to. It does not give any specific information that is relevant to the sentence but only gives additional information which may be omitted without affecting the structure of the sentence. Non-defining clauses are 'marked off with commas' (Carter et al. 2011, p. 429). From the students' scripts, the following sentences were extracted:

25 * Examination malpractice (,) which is one of the social ills () has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian educational system.
26 * Mr Ikenwe ( ) who is the school orator (,) was the master of ceremonies at the event.
27 * The truck from the fire station ( ) which came an hour later ( ) could not put out the fire.
28.* The two brothers () who were in our school (,) participated in the competition.
29 *The student (,) who was sent home () died last week.

Sentences 25 and 29 have the opening comma but the second commas were omitted. In sentences 26 and 28, the opening commas were omitted but the closing commas were inserted. In sentence 27, both the opening and closing commas were not inserted. The omission could be as a result of ignorance of what defining and non-defining relative clauses are. There is need therefore for teachers to intensify efforts in this regard.

The Use of Comma to Separate Syntactic Structures

The sentence combines elements such as morphemes, words, phrases and clauses to build its structure. The combined elements are in meaningful relationship with one another. Any slipshod separation of the elements results in deviant forms. The following

sentences from students' writings show the use of commas to separate syntactic units in an erroneous manner.

30* What they do (,) is of no interest to me.
31*What he does now (,) will destroy him in future.
32* We didn't know (,) who did that.
33* We accepted to eat (,) whatever she eats.
34*The policy is (,) that there will be no cooking in the hostels.
35* The truth is (,) that students cannot afford the text books.
36* Matriculating students were told (,) to pay for the gowns.
37* The students (,) elected Ozieh(,) the new SUG President.
38* The Secretary General (,) thought (,) that we are going to vote against him.
39* Students (,) who work hard (,) pass always.

From the excerpts, the students have used commas in various ways to separate subjects from their verbs, verbs from their objects, subjects from their predicates, subjects and objects from their complements all in a bid to indicate diminutive pauses. The arbitrary insertion of commas results in punctuation errors.

In sentences 30 and 31, the noun clauses, *what they do* and *what he does now* which act as the subjects of the sentences have been separated from their verbs: *is* and *will destroy* with commas. Similarly, in sentence 36, the infinitive phrase, *to pay for the gowns* has been separated from its verb: *told*. Such separation violates the grammatical rule of separating a subject from its verb. Ekah (2018, p.32) citing Hodges & Whitten (1977) agrees that the only period a subject of the sentence is separated from its verb is when there is 'an intrusive element or if there is a momentary confusion through two occurrences of the same word' as in: I know that, that man is a fraudster. In sentences 32 and 33, the comma inserted after *know and eat* separates the noun clauses, *who did that* and *whatever she eats* which serve as the objects of the sentence from their verbal elements, *didn't know* and *accepted to eat.* From the sentences, the two main verbs, *know* and *eat* have been used transitively, as such, requires an object. Erroneously, the objects have been separated from the verbs leading to deviant forms. Punctuation errors were also observed in sentences 34 and 35. The subject complements: *that there will be no cooking in the hostels* and *that students cannot afford the textbooks* have been separated from their subjects, *the policy and the truth* using a comma after the linking verb: is, in which they are co-referential with. In such complementary relationship, the subject and its subject complement refer to the same thing. Therefore, the structures should not be marked off with commas. The use of comma by the students may have been necessitated by the slight pause or lowering of voice. According to (Hodges & Whitten, 1977 and Kolln & Funk, 2009) cited in Ekah (2018, p.32) 'every instance of pause for breath does not require a comma, unless the unit of grammar in which the pause appears requires it.' Sentences 37, 38, and 39 have two different punctuation errors in each of them. First, in the three sentences, the subjects: *the students*, *the Secretary General* and *students* have been disconnected from their verbs: *elected, thought,* and *pass*. Second, in sentence 37, the noun phrase, *the new SUG President* which acts as the object complement has been separated from the object, *Ozieh.* Again, in sentence 38, the verb has been separated from the noun clause, *that we are going to vote against him* which serves as the object of the sentence. Sentence 39 is a restrictive clause because the clause, *who work hard* is essential to understand who is being referred to; therefore, it should not be marked off with a comma. The commas after *students* and *hard* are anomalous and make the sentence ungrammatical.

Comma in Coordinate Structures and Compound Sentences

40 * The lecturers set the CBT exam (,) and record the scores.
41*The students designed the art works on the main campus (,) and painted them.
42* We finished our exams on Monday ( ) and the nation-wide ASUP strike began on Thursday.

43*We have been advised to be more security conscious (,) and we are responding to that challenge.
44* Our institution has enough hostels, yet(,) the students prefer to live off the campus.
45* The students were asked to pay for damages, but (,) they refused.
46* Our computer lecturer came on that day (,) he was ready for the quiz.

Sentences 40 and 41 have errors of wrong insertion of commas. The independent noun clauses in sentence 40, *the lecturers set the CBT exam and the lecturers record the scores* have the same subject, *the lecturers*. The purpose of the coordinating conjunction (*and*) is to link the two independent clauses which have the same subject. To this end, there should not be a comma after the first clausal structure. Similarly, in sentence 41, the noun clause, *the students designed the art works on the main campus and the students painted them* are of equal grammatical status and have the same subject, *the students,* therefore, it is erroneous separating them with commas. Carter et al. (2011,

p.428) make the point clearer when they express that main clauses joined by and, or, but, are not usually separated by a comma if the clauses have the same subject as in sentences 40 and 41. They further comment that commas should be used to separate two independent clauses that have different subjects. Sentence 42, has two independent clauses with different subjects: *we and the nation-wide ASUP strike*. To this end, it is expected that the clauses should be marked off by a comma which the students have failed to insert after the word, *Monday*. On another note, Greenbaum and Nelson (2002, p.188) comment that a comma is not necessary in main clauses joined by and, but, or, 'particularly if one or more of the clauses is short'. This explains the reason why sentence 43 is judged erroneous. First, the sentence has the same subject, *we.* Second, the second clause appears shorter than the first clause. So, it is anomalous separating the clauses with a comma. Corroborating the position of other scholars, Eyisi (2011, p.261) remarks that the only condition for using a comma in independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction is where the 'subjects are different and the clauses are fairly long'. Sentences 44 and 45 have similar comma problems. The first main clauses: *our institution has enough hostels and the students were asked to pay for damages* have been marked off with commas, which is correct given the fact that the second clauses express contrastive and contrary ideas. The position is made explicit by Greenbaum and Nelson (2002, p.188) who explain that a comma should be used before coordinating conjunctions like (but, yet, or, nor) between main clauses that show contrastive ideas. From the data obtained, the students inserted commas after the coordinating conjunction, *but* and *yet* which is grammatically wrong in the context of usage. In sentence, 46, a comma was used to join two independent clauses instead of a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon.

Errors in Relative Clauses

The particular function of relative clauses is to begin either a structure modifying a preceding noun or nominal group, or a structure for which a nominal group could be substituted. Relative clauses are usually introduced by who, whom, whose, which, that, what and others. However, not all relative clauses are separated by commas.

Defining Relative Clause

47 * The boy (,) who won the essay competition was in the Department of Welding and Fabrication.

48* Students (,) who did not complete the payment of their fees were not allowed to sit for examinations.

49 * The new rector (,) who always advised students against indecent dressing is from the University of Benin.

50 * The students (,) who jumped through the window were caught.

51 * The book(,) that she took was not hers.

52 * The Department (,) that she liked was not accredited.

A defining relative clause is closely tied to the word it refers to; therefore, it is not marked off by a comma. Conversely, a non-defining relative clause is not closely related to the noun or nominal group it refers to. It only gives additional information which may be omitted without affecting the structure of the sentence. Non-defining relative clauses are marked off with commas. Erroneously, the students have marked off the defining clauses with commas and the non-defining clauses which were supposed to be marked off with commas were either marked wrongly or ignored completely.

J. Non- Defining Clause

53 * Examination malpractice ( ) which is one of the social ills ( ) has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian educational system.

54 *Mr Ikenwe (,) who is the school orator ( ) was the master of ceremonies.

55 * The truck from the fire station ( ) which came an hour later (,) could not put out the fire.

56 * The two brothers (,) who were in ND II ( ) participated in the competition.

K. Comma in Subordinate and Parallel Clauses

57 * Although she did not complete her project ( ) she went ahead to complete the form.

58 * When the security man asked him to stop ( ) he ran away.

59 * If you do not complete your registration ( ) you will not be allowed to sit for the examination.

60 * Though the Department won the trophy ( ) they were still not happy.

61* While we were running towards the Administrative block (;) the police came.

62* The more we read ( ) the better we become.

When a subordinate clause appears before the main clause, there is usually a comma at the clausal boundary. On the other hand, when a main clause is placed before the dependent clause, the comma is omitted (Carter et al., 2001, p.61). The omissions of commas in sentences 57, 58, 59 and 60 which are independent clauses violated punctuation rules in

English. In sentence 61, a semicolon which joins independent clauses was used to join a dependent clause to a main clause thereby, creating a deviant structure. Sentence 62 has two parallel structures which should have been separated with a comma but has been omitted in the students' writing.

63 * I knew very well (,) that I was correct.

64* The Matric Day is the day I will always remember (,) because I had enough fun.

Main clauses in Sentences 62 and 63 have been marked erroneously, thereby, leading to deviant structures.

L. Comma in Interpolated, Parenthetical, Introductory Expressions and Vocatives

65* She was a student ( ) who ( ) the institution can vouch for.

66* The defence was ( ) on the whole ( ) successful.

67* We noticed ( ) nevertheless (,) that something was wrong somewhere.

68 * Yes (,) the students were asked to pay some money (,) for the party.

69 * Dike ( ) I am afraid will not come to school.

To interpolate means to insert words or texts into a sentence or conversation. Such words give additional information or qualifications to what is being said in the rest of the sentence and are usually marked off with commas before and after which can be equated to the use of parenthesis. Sentence 65 should have commas after *student* and *who,* and in sentence 66, a comma should have been inserted after *was* and *whole* which the students have failed to insert. In sentence 67, there should have been a comma after *noticed* and *nevertheless*. While the comma after *nevertheless* was inserted correctly, the comma after notice was omitted. In sentence 68, introductory elements like yes, no, too, should be marked off with a comma which was inserted correctly. However, inserting a second comma after *money* violates the writing convention. In sentence 69, a comma was omitted after the person being addressed directly. Greenbaum and Nelson (2002 p. 198) are of the opinion that 'vocatives must be separated with a comma'.

Research Question 3: How has the misuse of comma and full stop affected effective communication in students' writing?

From the interview granted to 10% (60 students) of the total population used for the study, 80% (48 students) agree that misuse of comma and full stop affect their communication. Their responses show that the misuse affects the structure of the sentence. According to them, correct placement of the punctuation marks indicates the beginning and end of a sentence and connects all the textual units in the sentence. Again, their responses reveal that improper mastery of punctuation marks affects the conveyance of the exact meaning as intended by the author and retards readers' understanding of the text. More so, from the students' responses, poor knowledge of the punctuation marks creates ambiguity in a written discourse. In sum, the students agree that though they understand the correlation between good punctuation and effective communication, they do not know when to insert the punctuation marks most times.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper examines the misuse of full stop and comma in students' writing. The study identified non-mastery of grammatical rules, poor knowledge of word classes, phrasal and clausal elements and over generalizations as the bane of the errors identified. The study revealed that part of the reason why the comma is misused is as a result of the often-mistaken assumption by most learners of English as a second language that every pause attracts a comma. This singular reason accounts for why the comma is used haphazardly by the group investigated. Students should understand that the use of too many punctuation marks, especially the comma, is as confusing as not using enough punctuation marks. There should be a reason either as a matter of definite rule or meaning for every comma or other punctuation marks used in any discourse. The present research which identified the trouble spots in the two most used punctuation marks will help curriculum developers to re-assess the curriculum. In addition, it will help teachers of English to redefine their teaching methodology.

Based on the above, the study recommends that the traditional way of teaching punctuation marks by listing the uses of such punctuation marks be reviewed. Punctuation marks should be taught as a communicative skill that will help to improve the overall performance of students in their academic work and communicative requirement rather than as abstract concepts in grammar. An in-depth teaching of the various punctuation marks through drilling and more practical and focused approach should be encouraged. Jowitt (2013, p.8) expresses that 'drilling is useful in helping students get their tongues round structures they initially find difficult.' Besides, teachers should take time to explain the errors observed and often allow learners to correct the errors. It is expected that the teacher should intervene where students find it difficult to make such corrections. Besides, group focused discussions should be encouraged in large classes as it will help to encourage collaborations and easy learning among the students.

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Protest and Activism in Selected Nigerian Songs

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Abstract. Music is an integral part of any society. In Africa, music accompanies almost every event irrespective of its nature. It has also been used as a means of documentation of a people or society's activity. This research examines the roles of musical artistes who use their songs as a tool for protest and activism against the government. This study is anchored on the theory of relative derivation, which is defined as the perceived lack of resources required to maintain quality life in a society (Longley 2022). This research studied four songs namely: *Light up Naija (2010*) by Sound Sultan, '*Monsters you made'* by Burna boy and '*Jaga jaga reloaded'* by Eedris Abdulkareem. These artistes through their songs decried the social, economic and political problems still prevalent in the society. They sided with the masses, which they are a part of, by protesting and demanding for good governance. They also urge the people to 'rise up' as this is the only way they can be heard and not be suppressed. Despite protesting, these artistes also provided solutions to the problem faced by Nigerians. This study concludes that music has been successfully conditioned to feature as a tool of protest and the artiste can take up the role of an activist at any time.

Keywords: Protest, Music, Activism, Nigerian Government, Music Activism.

1. Introduction

The act of protesting has become a common feature of democracy. As disgruntled individuals/ citizens often resort to protesting either on the streets, social media platforms, etc to air their grievances against the government. During protests, citizens/ individuals gather in groups, especially those with common social, political or economic goals to better channel their grievances and get better response from the government or targeted agency. Simmons (2009) as cited by Kadupe (2022) describes protest as a social movement, which is a reaction to a social crisis. Protests act as a way of giving the masses their voice and also project the reason for the protest onto national or global scene to be debated. Nigeria as a nation has witnessed several national protests against the government. Examples of such protest are: the Aba women riot of 1929 which was against the increase in tax by the British government, the June 12 post-election protest, which was against the annulment of the June 12 election and the imprisonment of the foremost candidate Chief M.K.O Abiola, and most recently, the EndSars protest, which was primarily against police profiling and brutality, but later turned into a protest against bad governance, etc.

Aside from taking to the street to protest, several methods have been employed in airing of grievances and the short comings of the government. One of the several methods employed and has become a major tool is music. music is primarily for the purpose of entertainment has served this purpose time and time again to decry the injustice suffered by the oppressed in society by various musical artiste. Music which embodies certain idea has been conditioned to feature in protest rallies. Example of such is Kendrick Lamar's 'Alright' which was almost instantaneously accepted as the anthem for the Black lives matter movement. Also, jazz music was birthed by African Americans as means of protesting against repression and also out of a need to express themselves and their culture. Just like its African American counterpart, Nigerian music industry and her artistes have not been left behind in using music as a tool for critiquing the ills of society. These artistes do not just protest against the ills of society but also take on the role of an advocate to advocate for better government and society and also sensitize the masses on their societal and political obligations. This method has helped to strengthen the democratic process, since protest and activism are part of democracy (Kadupe 2022). Some Nigerian artiste that have taken up the roles of activist in protesting, educating and advocating for better governance for the masses through their songs include: the legendary Afrobeat musician Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Majek Fashek, Eedris Abdulkareem, Bisade Ologunde popularly known as 'Lagbaja', Oritsefemi, Folarin Falana alias Falz the Bhad guy, Olanrewaju Fassai

alias Sound Sultan, Augustine Miles Okechukwu alias Tekno, Damini Ogulu alias Burna boy, to mention but a few.

Many literary scholars have attempted a study of protests from different perspectives and standpoints such as protest rallies and music as a medium of protest. Some of such scholars include: Akpakpan J.J, Nzozizwe Dhlamini, Kadupe, etc. many persons who listen to music do so because of the entertainment purpose its serves at that point in time with paying attention to its content and the message the artiste is trying to pass through the song. As stated earlier, music has been used as means of protest and means for the masses to express their discontent at the government and most scholars have examined music as a means of protest, as a means of exposing the ills of society, as part of folklore but few attention has been paid to the artiste as an activist who has taken the position of protesting and advocating for the masses. This is the area which has necessitated this study. This research will pay attention to how these artistes portrays the social, political and economic realities of their society. This study investigates music as a form of protest and activism by investigating its nature and content, this research will focus on Nigerian songs within the last decade and how music artiste have discussed the issues that plagued the country in the last twelve years. The last decade was chosen because after the return to democratic rule in 1999, the year 2010 was given as a target where Nigeria will be ushered into a period of economic stability with better government infrastructure but the last ten years Nigeria and Nigerians have seen and experienced some of the worse economic situations in Africa. Hence, this study focuses on songs that capture these social, political and economic situations reemphasized with more vigor by various artistes. This research aims at examining how these issues have been discussed and presented by these artistes in their songs and how they have called out the government and protested against the situation of things in Nigeria. This study will also help in expanding and contributing to the study of protest music and activism.

For the purpose of analysis, four songs have been selected; Eedris Abdulkareem's *jaga jaga* (2021) *reloaded*, Damini 'Burna boy' Ogulu's *monsters you made* (2021), and Sound Sultan's *light up Naija* (2010). Apart from these artistes being popular, these artistes were selected because they have been vocal in calling out the government and its corrupt practices and also urging the people to be more active in demanding for what is theirs. Their songs also capture the present reality of Nigerians and their society in the last twelve years. This study employs the qualitative content analysis method. Qualitative content method can be defined as the research method that interprets data and its content (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Cavanagh (1997) describes this research method as a flexible method of analysis that allows for the analysis of textual data.

Music according to Aduonum (1980), '..Music in Africa is the soul which is ultimately concerned with various customs and religious practices. The African is born, named, initiated, fortified, and buried with music. In Africa, music heals the sick, directs and guides the blind, it comforts the widow, etc. …Finally music accompanies every single daily activity.' This simply means that music is a social reality and experience that is beyond words and closely associated with the behavior of humans and how they relate with their environment and one another. As stated earlier, almost, if not all African social activities are accompanied by music, therefore, the music that is produced is not manufactured from nothing but it is birthed based on activities and situations in its immediate environment and activities in it. According to Bebey (1999) music in Africa is beyond making rhythms and sound but aimed at transforming everyday experiences into living sound. It is therefore safe to say that music in its formation is aimed at depicting societal experiences whether personal or collective.

Protest literature refers to works that address real socio-political crisis and expresses objection against them (Odunowo 2017) this simply means that any work of literature aimed at unveiling the ills of society and calling out its perpetrators as a reaction to these ills can be called protest literature. This definition poses a problem, as it seems to lump up any literature that is focused on society irrespective of its central idea as protest literature. Trodd (2008) states that 'there is no common understanding of protest literature: the term has been used to mean virtually all literature or no literature. In trying to give appropriate definition of protest literature Adebola (2014) defines it as 'texts that not only criticizes and protest society, but that suggest either explicitly or implicitly, a solution to society's ills. He goes further by stating that empathy and action are key elements of protest literature (Adebola 2014). These elements therefore enable its audience to respond to issues identified by such work and also take action. According to Akingbe (2012):

'Protest literature is considered as a sub category of literature in which the work espouse protest explicitly, either as a major theme a recurring motif, an overarching metaphor or as a structuring device. It is a literature which is characterized by the existence of a

clearly-defined viewpoint, strong moral convictions, an often-strident tone, a pronounced sense of outrage, a clear perception of the issues at stake and a usually optimistic belief'

This implies that protest literature should be able to expose issues at stake I the society and also aid its readers to clearly understand these issues. Therefore, the aim of protest literature is to enlighten tits reader/masses on societal issues and how it affects them and also to stir them into taking action through empathy.

Protest music on the other hand, is quite similar to protest literature in terms of its focus and aims. Just as protest literature is focused on baring societal issues with the aim of enlightenment and spurring its readers to action so does protest music. According to Denisoff (1972) 'protest music/sons basically stress the lyrics or intellectual aspect of a song by attempting to convince its listener something is wrong and in need of alteration." This simply means that protest music seeks to enlighten its listeners of the issues plaguing its society and ask for immediate solution to it. Some of the aims of protest music according to Denisoff (1972) are: protest song attempts to arouse sympathy for a social or political movement. Secondly, it reinforces the ideology of this social movement. Thirdly, it creates and promotes cohesion, solidarity and high morale in an organization supporting its world views. Fourthly, the songs are meant or are an attempt to recruit individuals to join certain cause. Lastly, the songs invoke solutions to real or imagined social phenomena in terms of action to achieve a common goal. From the above aims, it can be deduced that music is an easy way for persons to be heard and also influence and spur people to take action because of it wide reach in terms of listeners and comprehension (understanding). More often than not, people who use songs as a means of protest and the artistes who sing about these social issues like: police brutality, racism, the state of the nation, neo colonialism, etc have experienced these issues firsthand. Hence, the ability to enable their listeners takes a critical look at such situation since they too can relate to it. Hansen (2007) therefore, defines protest music as music that objects to the ills of society, whether socially, economically, politically or racially engineered. The singer/artiste aims to educate and spur the people into taking action.

Activism can be defined as the doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. Activism, also is an action by individual(s) against the government, specific agencies, individuals etc with the hope of bringing about social, political, economic, and environmental change or justice for individuals who feel slighted by the law. Therefore, music activism can or may be defined as activism feared towards achieving a specific goal, social, political or economic with music as its tool for expression. According to Kadupe (2022) the use of music in this regard has been established by literature because of identified literary devices in these songs. He goes further to explain when he cites (Rejaj and Phillips 2001) who claimed that issues like racism, anarchism and democracy have been expressed throughout history using music. Music activism has been pivotal in the creation of several musical genres like rap, afro-beats, hip-hop, rock, jazz, etc.

The origin of these aforementioned music genres has been tied to activism. For example, hip hop/rap came about in the 1970s in the United States of America. It grew out of the traditional of battle rap, dee-jaying, et and was quickly adopted as a means of expression by African Americans against racism, police brutality and the paucity of opportunities that could improve lives (Taylor and Taylor 2007). Hip-hop, rap and rock music have been employed to address issues like racism, police brutality, guest for liberation, etc in the diaspora. The Nigerian music space is not left out as the legendary Fela Anikulapo Kuti who is credited to be the pioneer of the afro-beat genre of music also employed music as tool for activism addressing issues like corruption, military dictatorship, religious hypocrisy, etc. music activism in Nigeria has grown from a stage from infancy into a major musical force in the nation today. Despite the fact that some of the issues advocated and protested against by pioneer artistes, recent artiste have expanded the issues to include LGBTQ rights, environmental issues etc. their influence has also been largely due to the coming of the internet and social media platforms.

2. Theoretical framework

The discussion of protest and music activism against the ills of society will be anchored on the theory of Marxism, proposed by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). This is a social movement theory that states that the struggle between social classes, i.e the bourgeosie (capitalists) and the proletariat (workers), define economic stratification in a capitalist nation and will inelucatably lead to a revolutionary communism. Marxism analyzes society in terms of class struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor; this is why "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (The Communist Manifesto, 1848). Marxist literary criticism holds the view that a piece of art or literary

work is shaped by social institutions and prevailing discourse of his time. It does not regard writers or artists as autonomous individuals. According to Cohen (2017) Marxist theory often draws on the critical work of labeling, social construction (...) it is clearly distinct from these positions in prioritising the structural dynamics of capitalism (46). Dovetailing this assertion on "dynamism" is Kulkarni and Pune (2024) who opine that the Marxist criticism has taken different forms of inquiry like post-colonialism and cultural studies. This study takes up a postcolonial trajectory in the analysis of selected songs. Hence, this theory was selected because it takes into account the protest undertones of selected singers and interpretes their songs by placing them within a historical context and analyses them through social stratas.

3. Bio-data of Selected Artistes

3.1 Burna Boy

Damini Ebunoluwa Ogulu popularly known as Burna Boy was born on 2 July 1991in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State to Mrs. Bose Ogulu who worked as a translator before becoming her son's manger and Mr. Samuel Ogulu who managed a welding company. Hid maternal grandfather once managed the legendary Fela kuti. He has a degree from the University of Sussex in media technology (2008) and also a degree in media communications and culture from Oxford Brookes University in 2010. He launched his music career after a one-year successful internship at rhythm 93.7fm. He came into the lime light in 2012 after releasing '*life of the party'*, which later became a hit track in his first studio album titled *'L.I.F.E'* the following year. He has won many awards over the years with his Grammy win in 2021 topping them all. Burna boy is also a producer and songwriter. He is well versed in musical genres like: pop, reggae, afro-beat, and dance hall. Because of his unique voice and style of performance, he is often likened to the legendary Fela Kuti. Burna boy since his emergence into the Nigerian music industry has always been vocal about the plight of his people and the state of the nation, hence the reason he was chosen for this study, some of these songs include: *Yawa Dey, Soke, Monsters you made, 20:10:2020* (through which he sympathized with the victims of the Lekki toll gate massacre by government forces), etc.

3.2 Sound Sultan

Born Olanrewaju Abdul-Ganui Fassai popularly known as 'Sound Sultan' on November 27, 1976 in Jos and died on July 11 2021 in America after a long battle with cancer. He was born to Mr Laidi Alapere Fassai and Mrs Adeyinka Fassai. He was the fourth of six children. He attended Federal Government College, Ogbomosho from 1988-1993 where he obtained his West African Examination Certificate. He graduated from the University of Lagos in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in geography and regional planning. Until his death he was an award winning singer, songwriter, producer, actor, rapper and actor. He is regarded as one of the pacesetters of modern Nigerian hip-hop music. He had over seven studio albums. Sound was quite popular and vocal and also active in pursuing the cause of the Nigerian people. This he aptly demonstrated in his songs where he spoke against poverty, corruption, bad governance, etc.

3.3 Eedris Abdulkareem

Eedris Turayo Abdulkareem Adjenifuja popularly known as Eedris Abdulkareem' was born on December 24, 1974 in Kano. His father was from Ilesha, Osun Sate and his mother from Ogun State. He was born into a polygamous home. He lost his father at the age of two and as time went by he lost eight of his siblings. He attended Army day secondary school in Kano. He started his music career in 1996 and later got signed by Kennis music with other artistes like Innocent Idibai (Tuface), Tony Tetula, etc. he is popular for his style of rap which is Nigerian pidgin. He is also popular for being a fearless critic of the government and advocating for the masses. He released his first studio album in 2002 titled 'pass, which contained 'Mr. Lecturer' where he tackled the issue of sexual harassment of female students by male lecturers in universities. In 2004 he released his most popular song *'jaga jaga'* which generated a lot of controversy from both the government and the people. This eventually resulted in the ban of the song by the administration of president Olusegun obasanjo whose government was at the center of this song. In 2005, he created his own label called *'Lakreem Music'* under which he released a different version of hos hit song *'jaja jaga'* titled '*jaga jaga* reloaded' which was also a direct attack on the present administration of president Buhari.

4. Protest and Activism in Selected Songs

***'Light up Naija'* (2010)**

The song 'Light up Naija' cannot be understood unless we examine the historicity of events prior to 2010. 2010 ushered an era where Nigeria would cease to be a third world country and move on to be a major power house in Africa and the world. Prior to 2010 was the youth initiative of the light up Naija campaign, which was basically a demand for better electricity across the

country. 'The vision 2010'dream was initiated by General Sani Abacha. He proposed that by the year 2010 Nigeria will become an economic powerhouse. To this, he set up a committee on 27th November 1996 to design a development blueprint that will usher Nigerian in a politically stable and economically prosperous nation (Kadupe 2022). According to Ujah(2019) as cited by Kadupe (2022), the committee was led by former interim head of state late Chief Ernest Shonekan and 248 person from different sectors of the country which included foreign experts were also selected. The single goal of this committee was to make Nigerian Africa's economic giant (Ujah 2019) and as key part of this vision was electricity which is the bedrock of industrialization. Therefore the 2009 #lightupnaija campaign was a reminder to fulfill its promise of stable electricity to Nigerians the coming year. Sound Sultan decided to lend his voice to this campaign when by 2010 the light up naija vision was not actualized. He chose to do this via music. In the song, he did not just emphasize on the provision of electricity by the government but also on other issues like corruption, bad governance, etc that were affecting the people.

Sound sultan in the opening verse of the song draws the people attention to the promise of the government to provide stable electricity to all Nigerians. Since it is the year 2010, they should ask the government where the electricity they promised is.
When we ask our government
When dem go give us light [when will they give us steady power supply]]
Dem say na 2010, [they said 2010
We don dey wait 2010 since then
[we have been waiting for 2010 since then]
But now the waiting must end
Cuz 2010 don show oh oh oh [because 2010 is here]

These lines reinvigorate the Marxist ideology behind Sound Sultan's song, "Light Up Naija" from the framework which bestrides selected songs, we see the persona revolt and speak against the harrowing situation of the country carried out by the bourgeoisie (the government) against the proletariats (the masses). The song alludes to the power protest and music as a subgenre of poetry used to command and advocate change. He goes further by making a biblical allusion to Moses in the bible that God used to free the children of Israel from captivity *lines 7-8,* but he is afraid of the government because the likes of Fela who had tried to open the eyes of the people to rise up are all dead. He sings:

I want to be like Moses, eh
Show my people to dem to the promise land
But then I notice something
People wen try am don de underground
I see dem I ja

This simply means that the people ought to stop waiting for activist like musicians to lead protests against the government because the miracles of Moses may not be possible. In the last verse of the song MI Abaga, who was featured by sound sultan, decries the constant looting of the national treasury by the government at the people are left to live in penury. He refers to the government as 'locust' who eats up the green (national treasure). The locus is a very destructive pest who leaves nothing on the grain field when it invades any farm land. As a result of this evil act, the masses wallow in poverty and hunger. Therefore, he urged the people to rise up as a people and a nation against the government that it is only in doing so the government won't be able to suppress them. Apart from protesting against the failure of the government to provide stable electricity, he also touched on a number of issues like corruption, paper based election, etc.

As the title of the song implies, the artiste paints an ironic image of the epileptic power sector in Nigeria which has been a constant problem since independence. Electricity is key in the development and industrialization of any country but in Nigeria reverse is the case. Prior to the release of the song in 2010, previous government administrations had promised that by 2010, Nigeria's electricity problem will be a thing of the past because they would enjoy steady power supply but as at 2010 and even till date the government has still not lived up to its promise of steady power supply which has only gotten worse. The song 'light up Naija' serves as a reminder to the government on its failed promises and the hopeless state of Nigerians as regard getting better Electricity distribution. The opening lines of the song enforces the above summation.
When we ask our government
When dem go give us light
Dem say na 2010
Right now, 2010 don show

The artiste goes further by making allusion to Moses in the Bible who God sends to Pharaoh to free the children of Israel from captivity. This is captured in the lines 'i want to loke Moses/lead my people them to the promise land', but unlike Moses who succeeds in his assignment, he quickly withdraws after discovering that those who had attempted to saviours of the Nigerian people are all dead courtesy of the Nigerian government 'then I notice something/people wey try am/ don dey underground'. This withdrawal

from embarking on a rescue mission like Moses was not out of fear but as a result of the brutal treatment he had seen meted out to his predecessor as captured in the lines 'i see them i jah/me i fear this government people'. This harsh treatment of revolutionary voices that had stepped up before him reinforces the treatment of the masses by the ruling class of the Nigerian society.

Sound Sultan explores the hopelessness of Nigerians in the nation which have dams like Kainji dam, Ikere dam, Shiroro dam, Jebba dam, etc, all of which are hydro-electric and primarily for the purpose of generating electricity are not functional. Thus, Nigerians are left in darkness most of the time. It is also ironic that Nigeria supplies the natural gas used for generating 25% electricity in Ghana which has a steady supply of electricity but cannot generate electricity for herself (Faruk 2023). Also, the recent move by the NERC (Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission) and the Ministry of Power to categories Nigerians into different bands according to their usage and to hike electricity tariff by over 231% has dented any hope of the average Nigerian of getting stable and constant electricity supply because they cannot afford it given present economic realities (Ekpe 2024). In the closing lines of the song 'shey na today (na today)/we dey wait (we dey wait)' the artiste uses repetition to emphasize the state of hopelessness and nonchalant attitude of Nigerians towards promises nade by the government and has gone on to look for solutions for themselves as evidenced in the line '...go buy candle (go buy candle).

'*Monsters You Made'* by Burna boy

The song "Monsters You Made" by Burna Boy and Chris Martin draws from a reportoire of Marxist tradition. It addresses the theme of resistance and its root causes. From the title of the song 'Monsters you made', the mind of the reader is drawn to the fact that monsters are not birthed but created and this creation is as a result of the conditions such a person has been subjected to. Therefore the songs follows the trajectory of a cause and effect chain, where every action draws a reaction. This is delineated in the opening lines:

Calling me a monster, calling us fake
No way, no way, no way
Calling me a monster just 'cause we said

We see from these excerpt that insigation of a cause and effect chain where the oppressor forges monsters out of the oppressed because they clamour for better treatments; these are residues of Marxist underpins and it is then only proper for people to give in to resistance after years of suppression and oppression and this idea is repeated throughout the song. The songs opens with a brief introduction from an unknown speaker: "If the government refuse to develop the region and continue the marginalisation, and injustice, the youth that's the people coming after us, will be more brutal, than what we have done." The above statement foreshadows a bleak future for the country and the Niger-delta region if the government do not stop neglecting the region and its people. In the lines: "where we create barricades'/'keep opposition away', the artiste identifies a class divide between the rich and the poor which has not only fostered hatred from the people but has also contributed in the push for resistance by the people. The tension between the oppressors and the oppressed clearly reflect the Marxist idea that the history of society is the history of the class consciousness. The artiste goes further to create a vivid image of what is life on the other side of the divide looks like from line 7- 21, the Burna Boy addresses the issues of survival, kidnapping, pains that are hidden behind fake smiles, pollution from gas emission from oil multinationals into the atmosphere which turned the 'sky grey' and blocks out the light of the day. The sky turning grey is a reflection of the resultant effect of environmental pollution, n, the effect of consistent gas flares that has destroyed the eco system. The colour grey is used as a synecdoche for smoke and soothe. To further buttress that the sky turning grey has nothing to do with night time, the song writer asserts that "it took the light from the day", an allusion to the fact that cities in the Niger Delta region, especially those close to areas where oil is extracted usually experience soothes which usually covers the sky when falling. The oppressed are therefore angry at their predicament as "they've been working like slaves/ to get some minimum wage" which is not sufficient to cater for their needs. The government, on the other hand accuses the people of destroying the region and bringing the country to its knees economically for taking up arms to fight for themselves and what they believed is their entitlement. This is contextualised in the following line of the song where Burna Boy justifies violence as a form of resistance to marginalisation and oppression. The government "blame/ them for their anger and rage/ and the response of the government is to 'put them in shackles and chains/ because of what they have become." The government therefore responds to their anger and violence by using the machinery of the state to suppress the people as represented by words "shackles" and "chains." The song writer continues to justify the violence as he asserts that "we are the monsters you made." The Marxist leaning of this song is also in the "push back" narrative that this song embodies, especially as seen in the title "Monsters you

Made." The Marxist theorist believes in revolution, in fighting back against those who sit as oppressors in oppressive systems and the chant for revolution is evident in the song. The fight back against the oppressors is in form of dissent and violence, a way to break the hegemonic hold on violence that the government seems to possess. The artiste acknowledges that in the face of brutality, even the calmest people will take to arms to defend their right for survival. They will fight back against oppression by employing the tools of oppression used to oppress them. At a time when silence is the order of the day and the government has come to be known as one aimed at bullying the citizens, the emerging of monsters is unexpected. Change in any society must come as a result of the oppressed challenging the oppressors and completely refusing to remain as second-class citizens in their own country.

The song also critiques imperial oppression, which started with colonial education and the rewriting of African history to portray Africa as reliant on Europe for civilization. The songwriter draws parallels by analyzing the present situation through the historical lens of colonialism, where the distortion of truth began with the misrepresentation of African history by outsiders who knew little about Africa and wrote from a place of superiority. This is captured in the extract below:

And skip them classes in school
Because the teacher dem teachings
What the white man dem teaching dem
European teachings in my African school
So fuck dem classes in school
Fuck mongo park and the fool
That said they found river Niger
They've been lying to you
Ain't no denying the truth

The term "white man" here represents more than just the literal figure who rewrote African history, disregarding its cultures and traditions during colonial interactions. It also symbolizes neo-colonialism. Just as white is positioned against black, with black seen as inferior, neo-colonial powers position themselves above the masses (former colonies) with a false sense of superiority. Education therefore was used as a tool to indoctrinate the minds of the 207olonized, feeding them "nonsense" to manipulate their thinking which has made many detest their African roots and heritage. The artiste, therefore calls for the abandonment of these educational practice which is also a form of resistance. "Monsters You Made" is a deeply political and socially conscious song. Burna Boy uses this song to shed light on the historical and present-day injustices that Nigerians and Africans face. Through the song, Burna Boy has painted a vivid picture of how systemic violence, exploitation, and neglect create "monsters" out of people who are forced to survive in a world that continues to oppress them.

Also, he warns the government in the introductory part of the song *Monster You Made* that if adequate measures are not taken to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, the generations to come might be more 'brutal' than the current. This is a reiteration of the saying of Mallam Aminu Kano 'Nigeria will know no peace until the son of a nobody can be somebody without knowing anybody', and also the saying of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who warned the elites when he said the children of the poor you failed train will never let your children have peace (Ogbeni, 2020). Burna boy take up the role of an activist by agitating for better governance, better economic conditions, and against the wrong use of the military arm of government to repress the people.

***'Jaga jaga'* reloaded by Eedris Abdulkareem**

Jaga Jaga Reloaded (2021), by Eedris Abdulkareem ft. Mr. Raw and Queen Madarocka The song Jaga Jaga Reloaded examines the dystopian character of the Nigerian society, as characterised by portrayals of rancid lawlessness, rudderless leadership, socioeconomic inequality and historico-political absurdities that should not be present in a working polity. The song's tone admixtures the vitriolic and the pessimistic, especially as the song title suggests a "reloaded" or remixed rendition of a blockbuster original released in 2004; and hence, a rehashed social-realist lamentation. It is therefore not surprising to hear the tone of indignation that underlies the lyricism of the April 2021 remix, indicating that since its original 2004 release, socio-developmental indicators have been worse. The statistics around the the time of the 2021 remix release, that foreground the lyricism and tonality of the song are quite damning. On the 2020 Global Terrorism Index published annually by The Institute for Economics and Peace (headquartered in Sydney, Australia), to measure the impact of terrorism on nation states, Nigeria was ranked the 4th most terrorised country in the world (with an index score of 8.314), evincing a higher volatility than nations like Syria (7.778; 4th), Somalia (7.645; 5th), Yemen (7.581; 6th), and Pakistan (7.541; 7th). Nigeria's ranking in the 2021 global Corruption Perceptions Index tanked to 154th position among 180 countries — its worst performance on the index since 2012 — from 149th in the previous 2020, and even more downward from the 136th maintained between 2014 and 2016 (GTI, 2020). The Corruption Perceptions Index is a ranking based on how corrupt a country's public sector is perceived to be, by Statista,

a world-renowned German statistics platform that specialises in data gathering and visualisation sourced through surveys and analysis.

In the 2021 Rule of Law Index, published by The World Justice project, an independent multidisciplinary organisation founded as a presidential initiative of the American Bar Association in Washington DC, Nigeria ranked 121 out of 139 countries (World Justice Project 2021). The Rule of Law index is a yearly global ranking of countries, factored by constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, and civil and criminal justice. Also, according to the 2021 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multidimensional Poverty Index (measured against a 2017 purchasing power parity of $2.15), 16.6% of Nigeria's population were vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, 18.1% were already living in severe multidimensional poverty, and another 30.9% earned income below the poverty line. Likewise, according to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), about 133 million Nigerians suffer from multidimensional poverty, amounting to a staggering 63% of the national population, or an approximate ratio of 6 out every 10 persons. In March 2021, the Bureau also reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate had risen to 33.3%, translating to at least 23.2 million people — being the highest in 13 years of reporting the country's unemployment figure, and the second-highest rate globally, at the time (NBS, 2023). Jaga Jaga Reloaded in the light of the indices above, prefigure such resignation and listlessness, that the song is chorused by a dystopian clarion: "Jaga Jaga eeehh / Everything scatter scatter / Poor man still dey suffer suffer / Kosa kosa, gun shots inna the air". The vernacular adjective "jaga jaga" describes a scattered state of things, a perpetual upheaval that foregrounds the dystopian everyday reality of the Nigerian nation. The "jaga jaga" lexicon also frames the anarchy and pessimism that underscores the Nigerian sociopolis, within which its citizens manage both their aspirations for a better life, and their disdain for the status-quo. The lyrics of the song does not offer remedial discourse to the Nigerian condition, instead maintains a brash and almost condemnatory pessimism throughout. The social, political and economic state of the country as lamented in the song in its 2004 initial release, earned the disapprobation of the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo, who banned it from public airplay after perceiving it as dissent. This demonstrates the power of music as a socio realistic tool that documents the mood of the citizenry and the pulse of the nation. In the 2021 remix, the lyricism was no different, provoking an awareness of national issues such as insecurity, infrastructural decay, unemployment and rule of law. Over a decade straddles the initial release of the song in 2004 and the "reloaded" version in 2021, and issues such as political violence and assassination have remained: "It's been twenty years / Nigeria's still jaga jaga." The utter departure from the utopian imagination foregrounds for the song, a hapless tone two decades into Fourth Republic democracy: "This na democracy military /Government don send soldiers out / kill plenty Lagosians wey come protest for Toll gate [...] / Army shoot people papa/ Police dey kill people mama." The song captures the systemic suppression of dissent in Nigeria's sociopolitical space, evidenced by the government's draconian reaction to civil protests. The #EndSARS protests of October 2020, is particularly implicated in the song, and the lyrics criticise severe economic and social regimentation, as well as the fascist suppression of opposition in favour of a centralised political metanarrative. The song alludes to the lack of accountability and politicisation of casualty figures that followed after the tollgate shootings on the night of October 20, 2020, that left even the international media shocked at the brazen aggression of the Nigerian Army against unarmed youths:

First of all, dem tell us say nobody die for the tollgate
Second of all, they lie to us, two people die for the tollgate
All of a sudden, the military say na the governor invite them
Governor accepted, him invite them but he nor tell them make them shoot
Who order the shooting o?

Much of the gripe with the nation's governance system — as the song highlights — stems from the shoddy operation of Nigeria's federal structure, where resources and political agency are unequally distributed amongst the regions and states. Coup d'etats and election violence, the 1967-70 Nigerian Civil War and chaotic resource-control legislations since Independence, have all been reactions to the imbalance of the country's federal ethos: "Federalism na im we want / Your ojoro too much / religion and nepotism na na problem wey you get. Jaga Jaga Reloaded intensifies this political critique by inserting secessionist rhetoric into the song's Marxist dialectic of the centric versus the margined, the elite versus the plebeians, and the bourgeois betrayal of the commonwealth: "Pharaoh should let my people go (tufiakwa) / No single main road dey for Southeast / me I doubt it /say our Governors na our mouthpiece / The same people wey hide palliatives / when we dey hungry." The song's title metaphorises the gloom, helplessness, abuse of authority, lawlessness, corruption, infrastructural collapse and

disillusionment that are all too familiar to the Nigerian citizen. The fact that the song is remixed two decades after its original release and that issues that were mentioned in the original 2004 release were still very dominant in 2021 Nigeria (and even currently), shows that not much progress has been made, and the singers' frustration are manifest

Some of the literary devices and poetic devices employed by the artiste in composing and in deliverance of his intended message include: allusion: the biblical allusion to Moses in the bible in sound sultans light up naija. Rhetorical question: *'who gave the military/the order to shoot at protesters'* in jaga jaga reloaded. The songs were all written in blank verses. The artistes made use of rhyme: 'Fela don go/after the doe/mini mani mo also, kelebe, olele, skelebe, etc. various themes were also identified in the songs: corruption, police brutality, insecurity, poverty, etc.

5. Conclusion

The role of music in society cannot be overemphasized as it is documentation of events around us. Musical artistes also, cannot be ignored as they occupy a vital role in society because they function not just as entertainers but as social commentators and activists in decrying the deficiency of the government in providing the necessary amenities for her citizens. These artistes lend their voices and support for the masses through their songs by advocating for them, telling their pains and urging them to stand up and fight for what is theirs. Music as a tool for activism and protest has continued to thrive due to the fact that social, economic and political problems protested against by previous artistes like Fela over two decades ago are still very prevalent and relevant in today's society. Through the use of the theory of relative deprivation, this study has been able to identify the economic hardship and the lack of basic amenities created by the government and how this gap has led to protest from these artistes and even members of the society. These artistes in their songs have also provided possible ways in which the government can solve the problem of the masses. Music activism and as a tool of protest has witnessed great success due to the internet, as it has created awareness and served as a tool for mobilization for the masses. It has also generated a lot of debate both locally and internationally. The international community, not just its leaders but also its citizens have been made aware of the treatment of the Nigerian people and many have lent their voice in support of the cause of the masses as was done during the Endsars protest.

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Unmaking Boundaries: Gender and the Nigerian Literary Imagination

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Abstract. Unmaking Boundaries: Gender and the Nigerian Literary Imagination is a publication that examines how Tomi Adeyemi's novel *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*, a fantasy action-adventure novel, un-makes, enumerates, and reconfigures patriarchal narratives as dictated by Western social norms. Adeyemi, who writes with expressive, poetic language, challenges and redefines traditional roles attributed to male rulers. The research posits that decolonial feminist methods anchored in Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí's pivotal work and the historical suppression of indigenous epistemologies have been instrumental in reimagining African literature. Through intensive qualitative analysis, the paper identifies complex female leadership roles such as Zélie and Amari, whose paths cross traditional boundaries and offer different visions of power and agency in Nigerian literature. It also notes that aspects of masculinity are touched upon. Characters like Inan and Roën elucidate inconsistencies associated with the conventional patriarchal era and the possibilities of fluid reimagining. With comparative analyses of classical and contemporary works written in Nigeria, the article places Adeyemi's novel within the larger literature discourse about reclaiming indigenous mythologies and exploring colonial roots.

Keywords: Unmaking, Boundaries, Decolonial Feminism, Indigenous Epistemologies.

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a country of people whose histories are marked by deep patriarchal institutional systems that impose rigid social ranks, influence cultural, political, and economic policy, and promote traditional gender norms. The patriarchal system has traditionally developed rigid gender roles and subordinated women and has limited the scope and utility of alternative identities. However, Nigerian literature is becoming a powerful forum for innovating alternatives to the traditional patriarchal structures. Tomi Adeyemi's novel *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* exemplifies how literary imagination can challenge patriarchal norms and, ultimately, reconfigure them. The literary imagination in Nigeria is simultaneously rich with historical memory and myth in contemporary society and pulls from a vast range of oral traditions, folklore, and indigenous narratives that speak about various visions of gender and social organisation. Yet, the legacy of colonialism and the engendered system of patriarchal values have sometimes suppressed these diverse approaches. Against this background, Adeyemi's narrative is revolutionary, and it vividly reflects the reality of Nigerian society with a patriarchal structure while boldly envisioning a world where gender is plural, multilayered, and emancipatory. She creates a counter-story against traditional discourses that have traditionally stigmatised non-traditional gender expressions and spaces.

This research focuses on four questions, which offer a theoretical basis for the study: How does Adeyemi's narrative test the entrenched patriarchal structures that have shaped Nigerian society for centuries? What literary practices does Adeyemi adopt to shatter these conventions and resurrect alternatives? In addition, how is her imaginative reconfiguration of gender critically framed in the past, and what is the potential for future societal change anticipated by it? This paper seeks to contribute to understanding the variety of ways literature can function as a forum for resistance to oppressive regimes and open new avenues for cultural and social renewal. At its core, the research is concerned with decolonial feminist theory, one that challenges the imposition of Western gender categories and advocates a return to indigenous epistemologies of gender. The theoretical basis for this study is an approach that would be particularly appropriate to Adeyemi's work because it allows for a more in-depth examination of how gender is conceptualised within a particular cultural and historical setting. The research draws on the critical

and influential work of Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí, who has critically examined the enactment of rigid gender categories in African societies in order to demonstrate the possibility of fluidity and multiplicity of gender identities. The critical antipathy drawn to Western notions of gender and the proponent of indigenous understandings of gender serve as an important counterpoint to the dominant narratives that have long dominated literature and society.

The narrative format and language of Adeyemi's novel *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* are particularly successful here. The novel presents a vision of gender that is both transformative and subversive: an oppositional vision of gender that, as the author herself is apt to point out in her essay, challenges the binary images of the masculine and feminine that have been dominant in Nigerian (and colonial) conceptions of gender. *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* provides a new vision of an imagined space where gender roles are deconstructed and restructured into a more inclusive and dynamic framework. Adeyemi's novel also has a particular meaning on multiple levels. Adeyemi's novel represents a world in Nigeria, the country where influences of colonialism and patriarchy still exist despite many changes. It is also a dreamy work that looks ahead towards a future in which restrictive gender norms are no longer an obstacle to liberation and growth. For its inspiration, Adeyemi draws on Indigenous mythology and interrogates previously written histories to create a space for alternative gender identities to be born and flourish in Nigeria.

As Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí put it, the theoretical analysis that underlies this work is decolonial feminist theory. This article attempts to contribute to ongoing debates in Nigerian literary criticism and gender studies by examining how literature can dramatically impact social change. By approaching the topic from the perspective of decolonial feminist theory and working primarily with one pioneering text, the paper demonstrates how literary imagination can break down rigid boundaries and open a more inclusive and dynamic notion of gender. *Unmaking Boundaries: Gender and the Nigerian Literary Imagination* challenges the patriarchal status quo in literature and culture and posits an optimistic future where literature and culture are agents of profound change.

2. Early Depictions of Gender in Nigerian Literature

Gender in Nigerian literature has always been a tangled, multilayered topic, as reflected by the nature of the nation's sociocultural landscape and its evolution over time. A historically patriarchal society, Nigerian society remained unnaturally male-dominated and built upon customary norms to rein in masculinity and set specific gender roles for its women. Contemporary research on the destabilisation of prescribed gender norms is on the rise. One such study, by Anigala (2024), claims that globalisation and modernity have pushed the boundary between what is considered a norm and what is socially prescribed. Over time, Nigerian literature has become an effective tool for questioning such entrenched systems, portraying a variety of women's experiences and pushing questions over the roots of gender representations.

Written mainly by men, early Nigerian literature portrays women's roles as confined to the margins, not bearing much evidence of their active influence over culture. Patriarchy is a breeding ground for toxic masculinity (Eguvwebere & Ilolo, 2021). In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), for example, female characters usually occupy the dingy middle ground roles in a culture that is deeply patriarchal and hierarchical: their roles (and contribution) are largely overlooked by the dramaturgy of the male narrative; in the novel, women are not seen as significant figures in culture, they remain peripheral and the subject of less-than-positive media coverage. They do not gain traction in this way because the male narrative is dominant. The female character's role appears essentially limited in early Nigerian literature, but often, it is implicit. Many early novels and short stories focused on developing Nigeria's economic, political, and cultural space. Women were significantly absent from traditional politics and social life. As a result, the development of Nigeria's national narrative was reduced both as an organic whole and as a system in which women's voice was suppressed.

3. Advent of Female Voices and Feminist Narratives

The years between the 1960s and 1970s were remarkable for Nigerian female writers, who produced influential works. Among these were *Efuru* (1966) by Flora Nwapa and *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) by Buchi Emecheta. *Efuru* dealt with Nigerian women's roles, specifically the role of the mother and daughter. Its main character, Efuru, is an independent woman. The novel raised questions about issues of gender identity in a patriarchal society and how women were expected to conform to various types of social norms. Buchi Emecheta's novel is about women's roles in relation to family and husbands and their sacrifices. Nnu Ego, the protagonist, poses the tensions between traditional roles and her desires and aspirations in a

patriarchal society. The novel examined mothers and social expectations on women. Nnu Ego represents women's struggles in a patriarchal society. A critic claimed that Emecheta's narrative suggests that societal structures restrict a woman's ability to produce children. Women are required to be child bearers first, individuals at the second level (Ikpapi, 2024). This critique calls for revaluing cultural norms and customs forming the basis for women's subjugation. They challenged the monolithic portrayals of women, introducing complexity and depth to female characters and asserting the necessity of women's voices in the national discourse.

In contemporary society, Nigerian literature has witnessed an expansion in the exploration of gender, moving beyond the binary constructs of male and female to interrogate the fluidity and performativity of gender identities. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works, notably *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), provide varied relevant examinations of gender roles, power dynamics, and the connections of personal and political identities. Adichie's narratives often feature female protagonists who challenge societal norms, asserting their agency in environments that seek to suppress it. Her recent novel, *Dream Count* (2025), continues this trajectory, exploring the lives of African women navigating challenges across continents and addressing themes from menstruation and genital mutilation to sexual assault and societal pressures related to marriage and motherhood. Contemporary literature has also begun to engage more with topics of gender fluidity and the deconstruction of old gender hierarchies. This trend is in line with today's global discourses on gender and sexuality, a step toward more inclusive and diverse representations of people of colour; authors are increasingly examining the structures of masculinity and femininity, looking at how their identities are performed, negotiated, and resisted within the Nigerian context.

4. Theoretical Framework: Decolonial Feminism and Indigenous Epistemologies

On the question of gender in Nigerian literature, there is a need for a theoretical framework that takes into consideration the socio-cultural and historical background of the region, which the theory of decolonial feminism can describe; it recognises the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and opposes the imposition of Western gender constructs on African societies. In *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (1997), Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí raises the question of the universality of Western notions of gender, arguing that pre-colonial Yoruba societies did not share the binary gender relations articulated in Western thought. Such radical and implausible epistemologies that colonialism brought to the fore established an alien system of classes and gender relations within African social structures that were, in turn, subverting the order of social relations in peculiar ways. This approach is vital when studying contemporary Nigerian literature since it shows how to conceptualise gender within indigenous contexts. By reiterating arguments such as the rejection of Western gender binaries, consideration of indigenous epistemologies, the intersectionality of gender with race and class, and narrative as a form of resistance, this theoretical framework will lend itself to analysis grounded in existing feminist theory while highlighting Adeyemi's innovative reimagining of gender. Accepting that foreign gender relations were historically applied in Nigeria, scholars and writers can recognise and articulate Nigeria's fluid and complex gender system. The colonial legacy can be deconstructed through such an approach, and indigenous identity and social organisation can be reclaimed and revitalised.

5. Tomi Adeyemi's Contribution to Gender Discourse

Tomi Adeyemi's *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* (2019) represents a contemporary engagement with these themes, utilising the fantasy genre to explore and subvert traditional gender roles. Set in a richly imagined world inspired by West African (Yoruba) culture and mythology, the novel (book two of the trilogy: *The Legacy of Orisha*) features characters who challenge conventional notions of power, leadership, and identity.

This article addresses the intersectionality of gender with other critical dimensions, such as race, class, and colonial history. This multilayered theory is deemed necessary to understand the construction and representation of gender in Nigerian literature. By placing gender in a larger social and historical frame, it deduces the interconnectedness of different identities and forms of power. It is also concerned with this theoretical aim, according to Oyěwùmí's propositions, which advocate that gender is contextualised in indigenous epistemologies that oppose Western hegemony. It should be said, with certain limitations, that it is crucial to remember that the investigation involved is primarily interpretative and qualitative, dependent on the subjective interpretations of the researcher. At the same time, every effort is made to maintain objectivity; the interpretive nature of textual analysis predisposes to some degree of subjective interpretation. In addition,

as the study is conducted on one primary text, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*, generalisation of the findings may not be possible. However, considering these limitations, the analysis is framed within a larger theoretical and comparative framework in which many sources and points of view are considered.

5.1 Analysis of *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*

Children of Virtue and Vengeance (2019) by Tomi Adeyemi submits a vigorous and complex reimagination of gender roles within the framework of Nigerian literary traditions and African-inspired fantasy. As the sequel to *Children of Blood and Bone*, the novel explores power, resistance, and identity while challenging the patriarchal structures historically defining leadership and heroism. This analysis focuses on three key aspects: the representation of female agency and leadership, the deconstruction of patriarchal power, and the intersectionality of gender, race, and colonial history within the novel.

5.2 Female Agency and Leadership in the Orïshan World

One of the best elements of *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* is that women are at the forefront of all things- both in leadership and war. Zélie Adebola and Amari Olubori (female protagonists) offer powerful portrayals of female agency under pressure in a society favouring men as rulers and warriors. Moreover, in contrast to the female roles commonly associated with Nigerian literature, where women are characters like mothers, wives, or passive participants in society, Adeyemi presents female characters who shape their surroundings, fight, and have tough political choices to face. Zélie, a divîner-turned-magi (a Reaper), embodies a revolutionary spirit that disrupts traditional power dynamics. Throughout the novel, her character develops significantly, evolving from an oppressed girl seeking justice to a formidable leader who must make strategic, sometimes ruthless, choices. Unlike earlier portrayals of women in Nigerian literature—such as Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), where women essentially function within a male-dominated society—Zélie does not merely support a male protagonist's journey; she drives the narrative forward. Her struggle to unite the magi and navigate the betrayals within her ranks highlights the complexities of leadership, particularly as a woman in a world structured by oppression. Likewise, Amari, a princess from an oppressive monarchy, challenges the gendered expectations imposed on her. Initially introduced in *Children of Blood and Bone* as a privileged yet sympathetic figure, Amari evolves into a warrior-queen aiming to dismantle her family's legacy of tyranny. Her transformation from a sheltered noblewoman to a leader willing to wield power disrupts traditional notions of femininity and leadership. Her journey mirrors real-life Nigerian female political figures who defy societal norms to assert their authority. Amari's internal conflict—balancing compassion with war's brutal necessities—deepens her character, offering a nuanced exploration of female leadership beyond the simplistic strong-versus-weak binary.

In Tomi Adeyemi's novel *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*, the bonding of women with each other and as leaders is beautifully illustrated by Zélie and Amari, two girls who share a journey set against the backdrop of the world wrought by tragedy, loss, and struggle. Zélie, the teenage protagonist, has had a hard life. King Saran's men killed her mother, and she also lost her father in her quest. Burdened with the responsibility of restoring magic and leading the maji, she does not give in to this worry and struggle. Nevertheless, when she says, 'I can't be expected to carry the burden of my people forever' (Adeyemi, 2019, p. 11), she presents a stark yet earnest expression of her massive pressure. However, Zélie continues to commit to her people as she continues this mission. She passionately asserts the cultural significance of their magic:
"Our magic isn't about the war!" Zélie shouts. "Our incantations are the history of our people. They're the very thing your father tried to destroy!" (Adeyemi, 2019, p. 118)

This declaration emphasises her dedication to preserving their heritage and resisting oppression. She also tries to unite her people, reminding them, "When the elders built this place, it was only bare mountaintops... It became a home because they built it together. This land, these temples—they're not what matters. As long as we have each other, we will carry Orïsha in our veins. No one can ever take that away" (p. 285). Confronted with adversity, lifting her chin, Zélie asserts, "We're the children of the gods… If someone's running away, it's not going to be us" (p. 364). This proclamation reflects her resilience and determination to lead her people despite overwhelming challenges. When Zélie falters in her convictions, afraid to walk her destined path alone, Mama Agba bolsters her, proclaiming, "You are the children of the gods. You shall never be alone" (p. 377).

Amari's transformation from a sheltered princess to a proactive leader is equally compelling. She proves

that she is not all talk, but she also had a willingness to sacrifice for her vision:

Father used to say that Orïsha waits for no one.
No man. No king.
They were the words he used to justify any action. An excuse to excuse everything.
As the flames around Baba's casket burn before me, the sword I sent through my own father's chest hangs heavy in my belt. Saran's body was never recovered from the ritual grounds. (2019, p. 6).

Determined to rectify her family's wrongs, she envisions a united Orïsha, outlining the way magic could be used for the benefit of the people and proclaiming her vision:

"Think of how Grounders could farm our land. How teams of Tiders could cut the work of fishermen in half,"... "Wielders could erect new cities in days. Healers could ensure those we love don't perish from wounds or sickness!"
...
"Under my rule, this will be a land where even the poorest villagers are fed, housed, and clothed. A kingdom where everyone is protected, where everyone is accepted! The divisions of the past are over!" A new Orisha is on the horizon!" (2019, p. 33)

Her vision reflects a commitment to inclusivity and justice. Amari also seeks to inspire unity among her people, encouraging them to fight together, claiming, "Why run...Let us rise!...Let's band together and end this war! Together we can win! Gba nkàn wa padà!...Take back what's ours" (p. 286). This sentiment accentuates her belief in collective strength and resilience.

In a moment of self-doubt, Amari receives guidance from Mama Agba, who tells her, "You are not your mistakes... Do not let one moment define or destroy you. The gods work in mysterious ways. Have faith in their greater plan" (p. 379). This counsel empowers Amari to embrace her leadership role, emphasising growth and perseverance.

These excerpts showcase the protagonists' struggles, convictions, and unwavering dedication to their people's welfare. Adeyemi's depiction of female leadership aligns with decolonial feminist perspectives, particularly Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí's argument that Western gender constructs were imposed onto African societies through colonialism (Oyěwùmí, 1997). In many pre-colonial African societies, leadership and power were not strictly divided along gender lines, and Adeyemi's reimagining of the Orïshan world reflects this historical reality. By positioning women as rulers, warriors, and strategists, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* deconstructs colonial patriarchal structures and reclaims indigenous narratives of female power.

5.3 Deconstructing Patriarchal Power and Masculinity

While Adeyemi foregrounds female leadership, she critically examines masculinity and patriarchal power structures. One of the central antagonists in the novel is King Saran's son, Inan, who struggles with conflicting loyalties between his father's oppressive regime and his desire to create a more just society. Inan's character represents the internalised contradictions of patriarchal power, embodying its destructive tendencies and potential for reform. However, his inability to fully embrace change ultimately reinforces the rigidity of patriarchal structures. Inan's wavering allegiances and hesitations contrast sharply with Zélie and Amari's decisive actions, underscoring the novel's critique of traditional masculinity. Even when he appears to have won a battle, he cannot still feel victorious because he is unsure of his decisions. This is noticeable in chapter seventy-eight when his mother informs him that his plan to capture the "maggots" (magic wielders) worked:

I try to feel the victory…It's over. Done.
The war is won
But tears rise to my eyes as I squeeze my gut…
"We're poison" (2019, p. 355)

Unlike classic male heroes in Nigerian literature—such as Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, who embodies hyper-masculinity and equates strength with emotional suppression—Inan's journey reflects the limitations of patriarchal ideology. His failure to break free from his father's oppressive legacy suggests that actual change cannot come from within the existing patriarchal system but must be radically reimagined. This failure is evident when Inan reflects on his actions: "I finally see my truth. I wanted to be the king my father couldn't be. All I did was finish his work" (p. 356).

Another important male character, Roën, is an alternative model of masculinity. Unlike Inan, Roën does not seek to uphold or reclaim a lost patriarchal order; instead, he operates outside traditional power structures as a mercenary. His willingness to support Zélie without attempting to dominate or undermine her leadership challenges conventional gender dynamics. Roën challenges Zélie's perception of herself, emphasising her strength and resilience:

No one ever asks, but you're here. You're here when so many people aren't…You survived the Raid. The guards. You survived the wrath of a King. You're not a victim, Zélie. You're a survivor! Stop running away! (2019, p. 326).

In many ways, Roën represents a more fluid and adaptable masculinity, one that aligns with feminist redefinitions of male roles in society.

5.4 Intersectionality: Gender, Race, and Colonial Legacies

The novel engages with intersecting themes, demonstrating how gender oppression intertwines colonial and racial histories. The oppression of the magi in Orïsha mirrors historical and contemporary racial injustices, particularly those of colonial Nigeria and postcolonial situations. Here, the monarchy symbolises the oppressor, while the magi, the oppressed, as Zélie states:

Eleven years ago…I lost my mother and my home. We lost our magic! …the monarchs have brought nothing but death and destruction to our streets… They've taken our magic. Our homes. Those we love most. No more! They are Orïsha's past. We are Orïsha's future! (2019, p. 364).

The monarchy's efforts to suppress the magi's magic can be read as a metaphor for the colonial erasure of indigenous African cultures and belief systems. This aligns with the arguments of postcolonial feminists, who emphasise that gender cannot be analysed in isolation from colonial histories (Mohanty, 1988). Zélie's description as a dark-skinned magi further supports this intersectional analysis. The experiences of discrimination that Zélie has had within the magi community as well as outside of it mirror what Black women have to deal with in societies of racial and gendered oppression. An ideal example is when Zélie sees the maji culture's appropriation by non-maji persons and confronts them. She passionately asserts that "Yoruba is sacred to our people. It's not just something you can learn." Angry that non-maji individuals have stolen their magic, they now want their language. She reiterates, "You can't steal this, too" (2019, p. 118). This claim highlights her frustration at the loss and commodification of her culture, in part reflected in the wider struggle against systemic oppression that attempts to marginalise and 'coerce' the identity of Black women. This representation resonates with African feminist scholars such as Oyěwùmí, who argue that colonialism introduced new layers of oppression that did not previously exist in indigenous African societies. Zélie's internal struggle with her magical powers symbolises the burden of having a marginalised identity, for which she describes her subsequent resurgence of magic as:

The moment magic breathes under my skin, I can't find my voice…I stumble back as magic bubbles inside me. My legs go numb. Magic shackles me to my past, dragging me under despite how hard I pull— (2019, p.3).

The metaphor of magic as 'a gift that strengthens but also is burdensome' represents the truthfulness of having one's identity as a force for strength and a target of discrimination. With an added linguistic layer, Adeyemi transforms Yoruba mythology and literature to regain Indigenous African epistemic authority that no longer sees its share in Eurocentric fantasy narratives. This is evident as Yoruba traditions, chants, and incantations litter the text. One notable example is in chapter eighty-one, when the people chant "Down with the monarchy" in Yoruba: "Mowà pẹlu olú ọba!" five times. The characters pray to the gods of Yoruba, specifically "Oya" for Zélie. At other times, no English translation (Zélie is given the title of "Jagunjagun Ikú" by the people after she raises the dead- p. 363) promotes the Nigerian indigenous language. By grounding her fantasy world in African traditions, she offers an alternative to Western-dominated speculative fiction, much in the vein of Africanfuturism. This literary movement seeks to centre African cultural perspectives in speculative storytelling (Onye-Amah, 2022). This reimagining of fantasy through an African lens serves as a form of resistance against both cultural imperialism and patriarchal oppression.

5.5 Unmaking Boundaries in the African Literary Imagination

Through its intricate portrayal of female leadership, critique of patriarchal masculinity, and engagement with intersectional themes, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* exemplifies the ongoing transformation of gender narratives in Nigerian literature. Adeyemi's novel not only challenges traditional gender binaries but also reclaims indigenous perspectives on power and identity, aligning with decolonial feminist frameworks. The novel unpacks the multiple layers of oppression that shape contemporary Nigerian and African literary imaginations by centring on Black female protagonists, integrating Yoruba cultural elements, and critiquing colonial legacies.

In doing so, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* contributes to the broader discourse on gender in African literature, offering a radical reimagining of what leadership, power, and resistance can look like. Though set in a fantasy world, Adeyemi's work speaks to real-world struggles for gender equality, racial justice, and decolonisation, making it a significant text in contemporary Nigerian literary studies.

The analysis of *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* has revealed how Tomi Adeyemi's narrative functions not

only as a work of fantasy but also as a transformative intervention in the discourse on gender in Nigerian literature. The text is deeply engaged in unmaking entrenched patriarchal structures and reconfiguring traditional gender roles. In this discussion, the findings are synthesised to highlight how Adeyemi's work challenges and expands the boundaries of gender representation and the broader implications of this transformation for Nigerian literary criticism, feminist theory, and cultural discourse.

6. Synthesis of Findings

The study's findings indicate that Adeyemi's narrative operates on multiple levels to disrupt the patriarchal norms historically embedded within Nigerian society. By centering on female protagonists such as Zélie and Amari, the novel articulates a leadership vision that is dynamic and resistant to conventional gender binaries. Zélie's evolution from a marginalised figure into a determined leader exemplifies how female agency is present and central to the narrative. Her journey exposes the potential for literary texts to offer counter-narratives that challenge the historical subjugation of women, a theme that echoes the theoretical propositions of Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí (1997). Similarly, Amari's transformation from a sheltered princess into a warrior-queen disrupts traditional gender roles, providing a narrative space where power is reimagined beyond the confines of patriarchal expectations.

The text also critically examines traditional notions of masculinity through characters like Inan and Roën. Inan's internal conflict and inability to transcend the legacy of his father's oppressive regime reveal the limitations inherent in conventional masculine ideals. In contrast, Roën's portrayal as a supportive figure who operates outside traditional power hierarchies offers a more fluid interpretation of masculinity. This juxtaposition reinforces the argument that reconfiguring gender roles in literature requires not only the elevation of female voices but also a rethinking of male identities. Thus, the narrative interweaves a complex interplay between gender, power, and identity, inviting readers to reconsider the structures that have historically defined them.

7. Implications for Nigerian Literary Criticism

The insights derived from the analysis have significant implications for Nigerian literary criticism. Traditionally, Nigerian literature has been influenced by colonial narratives that reinforced binary gender roles and privileged male experiences. Adeyemi's work, however, represents a departure from this tradition by incorporating indigenous mythologies and challenging the imposition of Western gender norms. This reimagining of gender roles, informed by decolonial feminist perspectives, offers a model for future literary productions in Nigeria. By foregrounding narratives that critique patriarchal hegemony and embrace gender fluidity, contemporary Nigerian writers can contribute to a broader discourse on identity that is more inclusive and representative of diverse experiences.

The study also reinforces the importance of considering historical and cultural contexts in literary criticism by examining how Adeyemi's novel reclaims indigenous epistemologies—particularly those suppressed by colonial legacies. Critics are encouraged to re-examine other literary texts within a framework that recognises the many-sided nature of gender. This approach augments the analysis of Nigerian literature and expands the scope of literary studies to incorporate voices and perspectives that have traditionally been marginalised.

7.1 Theoretical Contributions

From a theoretical standpoint, the analysis of *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* contributes to decolonial feminist discourse by empirically demonstrating how literature can serve as a medium for rearticulation gender identities. Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí's critique of Western gender binaries has long provided a basis for understanding how colonial powers redefined social structures in African societies (Oyěwùmí, 1997). Adeyemi's story validates these theoretical assertions by showing how pre-colonial Nigerian cultures, rich with indigenous epistemologies, offer alternative frameworks for understanding gender. The novel's rejection of rigid, binary classifications, favouring more fluid and dynamic representations, aligns with Oyěwùmí's call for an African reimagining gender informed by historical and cultural realities rather than imposed norms.

Moreover, the text's intersectional approach—where gender is analysed alongside race, class, and the legacies of colonialism—further extends the conversation within feminist theory. By demonstrating that gender cannot be disentangled from other forms of social and cultural oppression, Adeyemi's work supports arguments made by postcolonial feminists who insist on the necessity of an intersectional lens (Mohanty, 1988). It is not only the complexity of such characters (including ones who are all at once male and female) which confirms that these issues have a connection but also the importance of gender discourse as a tool for theoretical and practical action. Adeyemi's series of vivid and dispassionate accounts,

which have been reviewed herein, demonstrate how literary stories can be generative sites for resistance. Adeyemi uses mythology and fantasy to denounce and dismantle traditional representations of gender, which are necessary to enact democratic gender relations. These narrative forms can be more than literal agents of action, offering broader implications beyond fiction to cultural activism and the redefinition of identity.

7.2 Cultural and Societal Impact

The broader cultural implications of Adeyemi's work extend beyond the confines of literary criticism. In a society where patriarchal norms continue to shape social relations, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* serves as an emblem of resistance and possibility. By reconfiguring traditional gender roles and offering alternative models of leadership and identity, the novel challenges the status quo and encourages a critical reassessment of societal values. The narrative's emphasis on female agency and its critique of toxic masculinity resonate deeply with contemporary movements for gender equality and social justice in Nigeria and globally. Additionally, the text's reclamation of indigenous mythologies and cultural narratives significantly impacts how Nigerian society views its history and identity. The novel's integration of Yoruba cultural elements and indigenous epistemologies is a powerful rebuttal to the lingering effects of colonial cultural imperialism. Doing so promotes a re-engagement with pre-colonial traditions that valorise diversity and fluidity in gender relations. This cultural reawakening is essential not only for the empowerment of marginalised voices but also for developing a more inclusive national identity.

By bridging the gap between literary innovation and cultural critique, Adeyemi's narrative also contributes to ongoing debates about the role of art in social transformation. Literature, as evidenced by this analysis, is not a passive reflection of societal norms but an active force in shaping and reshaping them. The transformative authority of narrative, particularly when used to re-imagine and deconstruct oppressive structures, also highlights the power of artistic interventions to promote effective societal change. In this way, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* can be seen as a product and a forerunner of evolving cultural archetypes prioritising equality, justice, and the reclamation of indigenous identities.

8. Conclusion

This article's discussion of *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* informs our thinking about how Adeyemi's novel is an important engagement with reimagining gender within the Nigerian literary imagination. Through its sophisticated depiction of female leadership, its critique of outdated ideals of masculinity, and its intersectional approach to politics, Adeyemi's work subverts rigid colonial and patriarchal structures. This multi-layered approach benefits from not only intellectual exchanges between Nigerian literary critics and decolonial feminist theory but also has practical implications for how society at large can envision and implement change. The findings paint a picture of literary power and influence that can infuse social critique and cultural renewal in our societies. Adeyemi's novel encourages readers to imagine a future where gender is understood as a fluid, dynamic, and empowering force and challenges readers to question inherited standards. As Nigerian literature evolves, texts like *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* pave the way for new narratives that embrace diversity, celebrate resilience, and advocate for a more equitable society.

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'Adie ba l'okun; ara o r'okun - ara o r'adie' – A Socio-Cultural Dissection of Gender Stereotypes and its Implications for the Contemporary Nigerian Society

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Abstract. Exposure to various cultures, civilization, and technological developments has brought in diverse knowledge and experiences to Africa in contemporary times. These intrusions have far reaching negative implications for us as a people especially as it regards authenticating and propagating our values and identity. To this end, it is only apt to assert that unlike the roles and essence of gender assertion and propagation that stood us out as Africans in the past, socio-cultural factors such as education, ethnicity and economic status amongst others have come to be indices for continually redefining and propagating gender and its roles contextually. Thus, this new phenomenon which wears the gab of gender stereotyping, is catalytic in family bound. This paper therefore utilizes a sociological gender conceptual framework to analyse selected works of Ahmed Yerima and Ezenwanebe Osita, examining perceived gender stereotypical performances especially in the contemporary Nigeria. The work critically analyses identified characters in Ahmed Yerima's *The Mirror Cracks* and Ezenwanebe's *Adaugo* vis-a-vis their actions, in the light of the theoretical frameworks of hegemonic masculinity and African Womanism under the ambience of the social reality of the present-day Nigeria. The implications of gender stereotype in the analysis is used to evaluate and interrogate factors responsible for individual and family disorientation and disillusionment while advocating for a critical revisit to the gender theories in Africa that shall tilt towards solving the peculiar problems of family units in Africa and by extension the society at large. The paper concludes that the Matriarchal Womanism and Womanist Masculinity is not only a preferred tangible and pragmatic solution to most of the questions bedevilling the society presently, but it is equally worth subjecting to more academic rigours. The result will provide tangible solutions to the identified problems in the paper, and also to those problems present in some homes and the society.

Keywords: Gender, stereotypes, disillusionment, sustainability, conceptual evolution

1. Introduction

'Adie ba l'okun; ara o r'okun - ara o r'adie', literally translates to 'when a chicken perches on a rope, peace naturally eludes both the rope and the chicken'. This is a Yoruba adage that is curled to relate the rippling effects of gender identity crisis in contemporary African society of today. In Nigeria like the rest of the world where the new wave of gender role re-interpretation and re-evaluation holds sway, identity crises has become a tall order giving rise to family, individual and societal disorientation, disillusionment and dislocation. This is particularly so because gender dynamics is a confluence of networks that shape gender relationships through numerous past and present circumstances of power and control. Desiree Lewis helps to crystallize this observation further when she remarked that interdisciplinary studies reveal that power relations between the male and female gender are "complex, multi-dimensional and pervasive, requiring diverse tools and angles to disentangle and contest them" (Lewis, 2000, p.38).

This paper is poised to take a cursory look at *Adaugo* by Ezenwanebe C. O. and *The Mirror Cracks* by Ahmed Yerima in our quest to interpreting and gauging aspects of some gender concepts and expectations against the backdrops of the African worldviews that is created for them to thrive in. Our articulation and analysis of the harvested standards for gender affirmation, disparities and expectations in the plays mentioned above are essentially within the gap that exists between the lenses of African worldviews as well as the realities of today's global perception of modernization and civilization.

Essentially, it is imperative for us to start this discourse with some basic notions that foregrounds the two adopted plays and their playwrights. Yerima for

instance identifies the major preoccupation for writing the play, *The Mirror Crack*, to be "an evaluation of human life, fear of death and the contrasts with our acts in life and the judgement from people around us thereafter", this he refers to as "the three-dimensional cracked images which often mirrors the complex symbiosis of the human psyche" (Ahmed, 1999, p. 113). Ezenwanebe on the other hand describes *Adaugo*'s content as "filial relationship at a time of crisis" (Ezenwanebe, 2011, p.7). To this end, it suffices to say that economic challenges necessitate a redefinition of the male and female social responsibilities in the play. Observably, equal access to economic, legal and educational opportunity and power avails both gender's unprecedented exposures and accomplishments. Herein, both materials are directed towards the family situation in which daily inter-gender relationships start and ends with the power play trajectory, which triggers factors relating to the socio-cultural dynamics that defines us as Africans in Africa.

2. Gender: A Contextual Discourse

Vygotsky (1978) advocates individual development which he insists are initiated by social and cultural influences and interactions, leading to higher and deeper mental development and functions resulting in both the socio-cultural forces and inner stimuli connecting to enable the execution of gender roles.

Human relationships are often operated on rather too many assumptions which makes a lot of things get taken for granted, putting unnecessary pressure on individuals and groups. Societal expectations also keep both genders (male and female) boxed in different moulds which invariably creates problems for relationships in society. The characteristics of the personalities that make up the society will keep changing as our exposure and experiences encounters some variables.

Researches, theories, international and local policies have all added to the yarning and call to the revisit of gender-based discourses, disparities, relationship, in-balance and expectations in the society. Thus, femininity has become injected with feminism which in itself is essentially about calling for woman emancipation, awareness, actualisation self discovery.

In discussing the societal expectations and realities of both genders, in a report titled *"Being a Man in Nigeria: Perceptions and Realities"* (2015), for example, it states that:
young men particularly struggle with the need to prove themselves as men by obtaining and providing for a family given the current insecure economic and political climate. Money and wealth are very important for the men than what it was some decades back. More women are also becoming more visible in public, more vocal and more educated than what obtains previously in our society. Both men and women are getting involved in decision making in the family over issues like investments, use of contraception and the number of children to have. It is observed that a primary challenge to men's role as providers is that many men are unable and sometimes unwilling to provide for their families, due to lack of economy opportunities and an insecure environment. The gap between societal expectations and individual realities however continually recreate conflicts the people in their spotlight. (p.32-33).

Moreso, according to Olajubu, it is noted that:
...evidences from oral tradition and myths of the Yoruba project the notion that male and female genders are interdependent such that duties performed are believed to be important to the well-being of others in the society. The boundaries create have fluidity such that roles expected of either gender could be performed by either gender, given peculiar contexts (Olajubu, 2003, p. 21).

This fluidity is a very important stance particularly which is needed in the African and Nigerian contemporary realities. Harsh economic realities have also brought more female to the forefront of public working environment while rapid educational exposures have ensured an influx of the female presence to the professional circles creating more opportunities for the female folks at the detriment of times they spend at the home front.

Masculinity on the other hand is a theory that is hinged on the notion of descriptive, prescriptive and proscriptive cognition about boys and men. Masculinities are constructed based on social, cultural and contextual norms essentially because it is observed that boys and men integrate multiple aspects of their social identities in the course of their lifetime responsibilities. Power, privilege and sexism particularly impact on development of boys and men and on their relationships with others around them. This also affects the individual's brand of masculinity and it is particularly portrayed homogenously in Africa than in any other continent. The identified 'crisis of masculinity' is explained as men's contested roles, identities and duties which includes, increasingly, not being able to achieve the African man's ideas of masculinity- marrying, fathering, providing for one's family (nuclear and extended), and building a house (Smith Daniel, 2017). The reality of

this calls for continuous negotiation of roles, concepts and expectations for both male and female relationship and the consequences of such actions against the family unit being a microcosm of the macro society system in general.

This study therefore examines the selected plays employing hegemonic masculinity and African womanism theoretical frameworks to interrogating the consequences of gender-stereotype within the orbits of the happenings in the adopted plays which are in themselves a reflection of the realities of gender relationships in our society.

3. Synopsis of the two plays

The two plays adopted for this discuss are Ahmed Yerimah's *The Mirror Cracks* and Ezenwanebe's *Adaugo*. Hence, it is only proper that we relay the synopsis of both plays in order to facilitate familiarity and ease of reference when we move on to the analytical stages of the plays.

3.1 Ahmed Yerimah's *The Mirror Cracks*

Ahmed Yerima's *The Mirror Cracks*, gives the narration of what transpires in the family of His Excellency, Ambassador Ayodele Adegabi and his wife, Tundun. The wife walks out of her marriage to get self actualized and she is forced to leave her six-year-old son behind because the husband ensures he legally gets the custody of the child. Supo, the son, is left in the care of Joseph, Amb. Adegabi's older cousin as his chaperon. Gerald the cook and his wife become Supo's surrogate parents. While his biological parents try to understand Supo's person after his death at age thirty-six, Joseph admits that Supo was quiet and withdrawn as a child in the absence of his mother. And in his secondary school he had anger in him but controlled it. To Gerald he was an angel who was a Mass Server in church and later became Sunday school teacher, which should make him a saint. Hawa Kabata-Jones, a very close associate of Supo, sixteen years old and five months pregnant for him, explained how he could be described as an animal that needed love. Captain Tade, Supo's close friend also explains how he saw Supo's innocence grow into hardness. Her lordship Tundun, Supo's mother admitted she and her husband failed as parents. Eventually they both agreed to retain Hawa who is expecting Supo's child in their family circle, not minding what the public will say about it.

3.2 Ezenwanebe's *Adaugo*

In Ezenwanebe's *Adaugo*, the story of Chuma who has some financial challenges in his business is central, and this puts him in psychological disarray. Unfortunately, Chuma has a back-stabbing friend who tries to lure Chuma's wife at this period. Adaugo, Chuma's wife however remains loyal to the husband in the face of all the challenges and eventually their family overcomes the lack of trust challenge between husband and wife with the uncovering of the Eddy's evil plot by Adaugo to Chuma. This also coincides with the news of Chuma's business+ is coming back to life. Chuma's supposed missing vessels at sea were sighted which promises resuscitation of his business at their arrival. The play ends like the typical womanist work, where the woman is always accommodative of the excesses of her man to ensure the success and progress of her husband and home.

4. Theoretical frameworks

Home grown sociological theories of African Womanism and hegemonic masculinity are the theoretical tools for the analytical tools for this paper. Ogunyemi Chikwenye's African womanism theory being a strand of feminism that ought to African views and peculiarities to the feminine gender within the society advocates that

that the gender question can be dealt with only in the context of other issues that are relevant for the African women...(this) would contextualize the criticism of gender relationships-and in a much more complex way than (other) concepts" (Arndt, 2000, p. 712).

By implication, this will essentially have the woman more actively engaged in the public space, productively and professionally, than the traditionally recommended engagements of the woman or female in the society. Engaging the core values of this theory to family settings vis a vis the womanist activities towards achieving self actualization. The rationale behind this is that the African society operates institutions. Hence the expectations and engagements of the female folks outside the boundaries drawn by socio-cultural, religious and other indices is bound to have a spiral effect of the society as a whole. Nonetheless, while some women struggles and sustain the unity of their family at the expense of their peace temporarily, and even go extra mile to sacrifice for this, some other women will reject any extra strain like child care and remaining in the matrimonial home under what they describe as oppressive condition in this situation, it may ripe to say that walking away from 'her' home is tantamount to deviating from the womanist theory which is built on ensuring that the

woman create unity and sustainability for her home and people. The reality as it is for some economically independent women is that rather than continue to strain themselves, the women walk away. If there is however, a forum for negotiation for the woman and the man, sustainability of the home is should be achievable.

The womanist text does not only focus on emancipating women as individuals but it also has in view the reformation of patriarchal institutions to cater to the needs of women. The womanist is committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people male and female. This is a philosophy that supplies a way for black women to address gender oppression without attacking the black man. Although. African womanism also economic and human development ahead of sexual issues, it however does not celebrate everything in a culture particularly the oppressive practices for the and against the women. The two texts adopted for this study highlights instances where the female figures had to make decisions that had far reaching implications for their families. Hence, the major point of concern for this paper is within the merits and demerits surrounding their actions and the implications it has on themselves, the male gender, their children and the sanctity of their family as a whole.

As much as patriarchy has numerous rules and nuances that makes the woman a subordinate of the man as seen from the character Adaugo, whom the husband expects her to seek his permission before she can reach out for financial assistance in form of a loan from even his friend, the womanist stance remains Adaugo's disposition as she does not actively put up a fight against this but she navigates her way around, ensuring the progress of her children and home even+ in the difficult situation with a challenging husband. Tundun in *The Mirror Cracks* does not engage in negotiation as a womanist but simply walks out of her home to self actualize which leads to character deformation of their only child, Supo, and his eventual death.

Another theory examined and adopted for this study to compliment the above is the Hegemonic masculinity theory deals with issues of hierarchy and the concept of subordination of women to men as a right. This remains a frame of reference for a lot of African males as it obtains in day to day living which is seen in the plays been discussed. Connell and Messerschdmidt, who posited this theory, have also developed this further to open up plural masculinities and multiple hegemonic masculinities.

Kopano Ratele, a South African psychologist asserts that the fear of being perceived as less than a man, keeps the African man exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity. He established that masculinity is a pattern of practice that is constructed as a group with subjective exposure. The same way a child learns about the culture, values and expectations of his society by observing actions around him or her accounts for how the African male learns what his masculinity should be without being actively taught.

Ratele posits that African masculinities are hegemonic and subordinate at the same time. For Chuma and Eddy in *Adaugo*, they both see themselves as celebrated or hegemonic in their own rights but they also remain answerable to other males around them especially as their political and economic strength enables them. The fear of the African man is expressed in Chuma when he has challenges with his financial obligations. He expresses his fear in various ways from harassing his children to beating up his wife and throwing her out of their home, showing his insecurity in the absence of his economic strength. These concepts also help in understanding men's exposure to risk and their difficulties in responding to various forms of disability and injury. The African man's psychology is deeply tied to his masculinity and this is passed down from generation to generation.

5. Masculinity and Womanism as seen in the plays in form of Self Pursuit and Ego for both Genders

In discussing self and identity, Oyserman opines that: 'Identities are the traits and characteristics, social relation, roles, and social group membership that define who one is. Identities can be focused on the past-what used to be to be true of one, the present-what is true of one now, or the future- the person one expects or wishes to become or the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person one fears one may become. Identities are orienting, they provide a meaning-making lens and focus one's attention on some but not other features of the immediate context (2012, p. 69)
This aptly explains the perspectives of the characters to be discussed in the plays as seen in the gender stereotype moulds.

While the character - Tundun (*the Mirror Cracks*) sees herself as marginalized, Ambassador Gabi sees himself as the patriarchal head, initially in *The Mirror Cracks*. Gabi's self-identity is shared by Chuma in *Adaugo*, as a similar pattern of behaviour is observable in the two of them. While Gabi gradually shows traits of a transforming male later in the play after the bitter

experience of losing an only child, Chuma remains unchanged because the wife accepts him for who he is.

Tundun, the wife of His Excellency, Ambassador Ayodele Adegabi walks out on her six-year-old son and her husband because she was tired of being the husband's shadow. This is the reality +which Tundun refuses to accept. Traditionally, the married African woman is most of the time a marginalized person because her essence is expected to be derived from the male she is identified with, her father or husband. This is observable from the ways both Tundun and Adaugo are initially referred to or addressed in the plays. Gabi says of Tundun as his divorced wife, "She is no longer an excellency. She is a bloody divorced commoner now."(Yerima, 1999, p.117). For Chuma, that Adaugo borrowed money from Chuma's friend, Uche, Adaugo is labelled "Useless whore!"(Ezenwanebe, p. 51). Tundun and Adaugo however carry out their unilateral decisions in forging ahead with life at their challenging moments. For Tundun, leaving the husband to actualise herself, becoming a lawyer who attains the rank of a judge is self actualisation. According to her, she is tired of leaving in the shadow of her husband. This is a womanist who goes all out for herself even at the expense of being separated from her six years old child.
This is a rather extreme decision that could have been negotiated with the husband.

Opportunities of self-development and achievement of personal dreams professionally is longer limited to the male gender both globally and locally given the contemporary modernization where diverse opportunity obtains for every individual. Power dynamics to determine the quality of life, socially and psychologically is no longer a given to be handed over to any party in a relationship since education and the exposure that comes with this gives leverage to everyone about what they desire and can achieve with their lives.

At the initial stage of a marriage relationship, this could be taken for granted. But with progress in years of the relationship, maturity in years and multiplicity of exposure and experience for the woman, couple particularly with various social responsibilities she will acquire both in the family circles and other circles, the drive to improve herself and, or, the lives of her children in every possible way becomes stronger for the woman. This explains why Adaugo did not seek for the approval of her husband before reaching out to borrow money to finance the education of their children. Though identified as 'self-pursuit', the positive result from this is expectedly rubs off on everybody around her. Although she was separated from Supo in the real sense of mothering a child, Tundun as a mother never stopped thinking of and identifying with her son. "I never stopped talking about him, letting people know I was proud of my son". A psychological exchange plays out here, even though it results into no positive physical impact for the child concerned to a large extent. However, a balance must be created with the roles of being a mother and a professional to avoid a major fall out as it results in the life of Supo, Tundun's son.
Supo is thirty-six years old at his death and his mother is in her early fifty. It adds up that Tundun married as a young girl of about twenty years, who could possibly hardly or clearly know what she really wanted from life ultimately and how she hopes to achieve this, given a limited exposure and experience of her age at this point. This explains why walking away was compelling for her when the realization of her life pursuit dawns on her.
Ezenwanebe opines that the male ego can be seen as "the various aspects of projected self based on the ideals of being a man which the male gender brings to bear in their relationship with women" (2011, p. 277-278). The quality of the man's attitude, behaviour, or character is a combination of the sociological instinct in every man. This is "shaped, nourished, sustained, regulated and propelled by customs, beliefs, rituals, morals and early childhood training by the culture in which he lives" (Ezenwanebe, 2011, p. 278).

Hegemonic masculinity projects various forms of subordination to people around him, and 'it embod[ies] the currently most honoured way of being a man, it require[s] all other men to position themselves in relation to it' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p.832). This identification is observable in main male characters of the plays being discussed. Gabi is hegemonic. His reputation matters too much to him and he confirms this when he said he did not remarry because he was afraid of what people will say about him. It is only after the death of his only child Supo that he thinks of adopting 'Supo's matra' of not caring about what people say. As the male head of his family and a recognizable achiever in his profession, Ambassador Gabi had much pressure on his person from societal expectations of what should be known of him at various situations regarding his immediate family. This also determined his actions and reactions as seen in the play.

When Tundun comes home for Supo's funeral, she demonstrated being accomplished as a successful person at her person by having all arrangements to take her of herself independently pre-arranged. However, she didn't have the assurance of being accepted to stay in her former matrimonial house given the

circumstances of her departure from the house and the prevailing situation at her arrival back in the house. She didn't bring in her luggage when she gets to the house but rather kept the cab that brought her waiting for her to inform Joseph and Gerald to tell her husband that she is in town. Her actions and words at this point portray her as empowered but needing acceptance by father of her son to be consoled at the death of their child. She needed emotional support at this point and when her grieving partner offered her his shoulder; she ended up crying on it and putting up in the house. It was at this crucial time that had Gabi saying 'our son'. The mourning period brought them together again as a couple.

In *Adaugo*, Chuma is a complete product of the patriarchal system. Everything interaction with his wife particularly at his economically disturbing period for him is perceived as a challenge to take up. Practically every word from his wife, whom sees as his "personal possession(s)" is challenged. The consistent comical way these activities takes place in the play however douses the strain of the gender crisis for the audience. Chuma identifiable hegemonic masculinity produces unwarranted aggression on his wife which results into his beating her and throwing out her belongings. It is only after Adaugo goes the extra mile to prove her faithfulness and commitment to him that the stability of their home is restored.

6. Social and Psychological Disillusionment of Childhood producing damaged adulthood

Further discussions on self and identity theories also agree in grounding self and identity in the social context. It is observed that contextual effects on the self can be distant or proximal. The distant contextual effects can be in form of parenting practices, the culture, the time and place in which one lives, or the experience of the early life. The proximal is the psychological implications of the immediate situation surrounding a person. The contextual effects could also be at different levels. These are the macro, middle, and micro levels. Macro-level context is identified as the historical epoch, society, and culture within which one lives. The context at the middle level embraces the family processes and socialization practices with which one grows up. At the micro-level, this is the day-by-day, moment-to-moment situation one experiences because of the structures and institutions involved.

Self and identity are also observed to be social products in at least three ways. People do not create themselves from only what is deemed possible, what is important, and what needs to be explained, which are all from the social context. This is because people are likely to define themselves in terms of "what is relevant to their time and place". This includes group memberships, family roles, looks, school attainment or even athletic prowess could matter more or less depending on what is valued in one's culture and one's place within the social hierarchy. The second way is that a self or person requires others who will endorse and reinforce a person's selfhood. This refers to others "who scaffold a sense that one's self matters and that one's efforts can produce results". The third is that self and identity are determined by what is deemed relevant at the moment. "A clear way to signal an identity socially is to act in ways that are (stereotypically) congruent with it" (Oyserman, Elmore and Smith, 2012, p. 76).

Self and identity in the social context can be observed from the plays by all the characters. Supo, Hawa, and Ebere particularly mirror how the social context affects a child. Supo and Hawa as children were socially and psychologically disillusioned. Hawa says of Supo "He was in a constant struggle to control the animal in him" (Ahmed, 1999, p. 126). But eventually, she grew to understand that all he needed was love that Supo did not seem to get from his childhood. Supo had a first-class degree in Political Science from Oxford University in London. His father says "Supo's problem was the missing link, and believe me when I say that missing link was you. You failed your son. Now see what he became... a certified self-conceited, wild, brutal, cold-blooded animal... that description surely rings a bell, Your Lordship" (Ahmed, 1999, p. 135). His mother said, "I never stopped talking about him, letting people know, I was proud of my son". But Supo's friend, Tade replies to the mother: "You never told him either, and he never knew. It drove him further and further until it drove him to his death. He started to do things to stand out."(Ahmed, 1999, p. 132). Supo is cold-blooded enough to shoot a major who was his commanding officer at close range, and thereafter he was made a major. He ended up making more enemies than friends. Even Tade, Supo's friend acknowledged that he saw the innocence in Supo gradually change into hardness. Supo's experiences of a growing child into a maturing man pushed his life out of balance which eventually produced his tragic end in the play.

The implication of aggressive gender stereotype extends to them. Late Major Supo Adegabi lives behind Hawa a sixteen-year-old girl, five-month pregnant for him. He had raped and killed the mother of the girl while she watched. She fainted at the gun-shot that kills the mother and Supo captures her. Hawa

is handcuffed and kept behind in Supo's van to come back to life and discover herself there. Gabi describes Supo as the well-arranged bouquet on a bottomless vase and a well-framed mirror that cracks. The contrast in the descriptions reveals the irony of all that was done to produce a good person of Supo.

The irony in the play is that Hawa, a war victim who had experienced the tragic death of her father who was killed in confusion and she had become a dropout from secondary school, from a war-torn nation and should be left in the refugee camp, is the one who brings succour to Supo's family at his demise. She is traumatized child who is forced into early adulthood, but as a young woman in a socially friendly environment, she rises to the challenge of making a happy union of the relationship she had with Supo. He also guarded her as much as possible, so much so that she recalls that the last man who said to Supo that she was still a child 'never came back to the house again'.

In *Adaugo*, the fight of the husband and wife is comical but the children are usually caught in the gender crossfire. The children also give their interpretations of the situation and try to react to situations around them as it seems appropriate to the children. While running for safety from violence from her husband, Ebere holds this conversation with the mother:

Ebele: I hate daddy.
Adaugo: Shut up. Don't say that about your daddy.
Ebele: I said that I hate daddy, and I mean it. I hate daddy for beating you. I hate daddy for throwing your pants up to these people and they are laughing. I hate him for sending us away.
Adaugo: Don't talk like that!
Ebele: After all, he did not give birth to me. You told your friend the other day that daddy was in China the day you gave birth to me.
Adaugo: That he travelled on business when I was giving birth to you does not mean he is not your father. ....
Ebele: (Yells) I don't understand all that, all I know is that he hates you first, and he hates me second. He beat you, and the shoe fell on my head that time he was throwing things. Mummy, wait n-o-w! Just one more thing.
Adaugo: (*stops and listens a bit calmly)* I am not in the mood for that now! What is it?
Ebele: You said daddy was angry because he could not get enough money to shower on one *em em* Lilian, his sugar lady. Is that why he should beat you? (Ezenwanebe, 2011, p. 61-62)

The true level of psychological implication for children from overdrawn gender stereotypes cannot be appropriately quantified but a portion of this is depicted in the lives of the children in the plays. To Ebele, the little girl in this conversation, the security of a healthy atmosphere around her appears bleak at different levels where the father is involved and her interpretation of the situation only sees the father's unfaithfulness and infidelity. The father's aggression comes to her as exploitative oppression of the mother. Supo possibly never had an opportunity to discuss with anyone. Revealing that what children internalize at various points in their childhood can be expected to manifest at a later time in their lives.

7. Conclusion

Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria (2023) in its executive summary states the percentage of women and men in the population as 49.44% and 50.56% respectively. While this paper acknowledges that economical independence, social enlightenment and cultural evaluation of the female rights are fundamental steps towards the emancipation of women in our society. The connectedness in relationships, families, and the society at large should however not be sacrificed wholesomely at the detriment of the male folks or at the espensce of the family well being. Arguably, the choice of womanism as an alternative to the core concept of feminism in the quest for equipping the African woman intellectually and economically and by the reasons advanced further in this paper, collaboration and negotiation should be the watch word for the advancement of relationship between genders.

The two plays used in the paper have major female characters who are womanists. They are accommodationists who seek to escape their perception of their role as being enslaved by their male partners. For instance, Tundun in *The Mirror Cracks* initially sets out to be self actualised by cutting off the ties that binds her to her immediate family. Significantly she was successful in her bid and ended up becoming 'a significant judge of the Court of Appeal' but lost most importantly her family's bond. The result of her one-sided decision of pursuing her career at the expense of the properly upbringing of her only child resulted in a tragic situation for the family.

As part of the measures to ameliorate the disastrous state of hopelessness the family was thrown into, Tundun first became remorseful and recognized that she needed to be a part of everything happening in the family. Thereafter, the conversation in their home returns to 'dialogue'. When Tundun walks out silently and returns with her former dress and hat, it can be interpreted as a symbolic gesture which could be seen

as an old order going out while a new order comes in with their accepting Hawa to become a member of their family. Her returning back to the scene could be equated to giving her life a renewed lease by giving her clothing to Hawa. Hawa who symbolically represents the upcoming generation also was responsible for bearing the future generation. She needs all the support to succeed to avoid repeating the tragic story in the family. She has to be helped to properly identify herself and be prepared for the assignment of rising the new generation successfully. Beautifully, Hawa embraces this hand of fellowship. The way forward is expectedly a heterogeneous, multi-dimensional, and continually evolving relationship that gets adapted to the various situations it has to operate with. Hawa and Tundun are starting on a good note of sisterhood as it is recommended by womanism theory. We have these starting out at the conclusion of the play. The connectedness for collaboration, cooperation, and complementarity also comes into being in this play. This is also Adaugo's reality as she reunites with her husband.

Similarly, rigid gender stereotypes of men and women, as also observable in the plays for this study, create individual tensions which find expression through negative social vices and interpersonal conflict and violence. However, the positive non-violent role models and education for men and boys (as well as for women and girls) help to ensure better gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours. When these are inculcated in childhood or re-learned in young adulthood, they last into adult life with family and produce community-wide benefits. Positive progression in the gender trajectory however suggests that traditional gender attitudes and behaviour may be changing in Nigeria and in Africa. Gabi and Supo from *The Mirror Cracks*, both demonstrate the possibilities and traits of transformative masculinity, given the exposure and experience to promote and facilitate this in them. The possibility of the same for Chuma in *Adaugo* however remains quite difficult as he displays the total character of hegemonic masculinity.

The experiences of both genders come with peculiarities such that the way forward also demands peculiarities of out look to ensure successful adaptability for sustainable development goals for the society. Every isolated decision taken outside the engagement of both genders in a relationship has the potentials of divisive results that could be destructive for the social unit concerned and could possibly put the interests of all parties concerned in jeopardy ultimately. Intersecting roles of genders, out of necessity, calls for 'intersecting identities' which W.E.B. Dubois describes as "double consciousness" which we have conceptualized as "Matriarchal Womanism" for the female gender and "Womanist Masculinity" for the male gender. Matriarchal womanism concept is positioning the female from not just having complementarity perspective of her relationship with the man but to also having a matriarchal essence with it, particularly understanding that she remains a bond for the sustainability of the family unit, as well as the African society even as a self-actualized person. Similarly, the Womanist masculinity creates a dual perspective for the male to identify with the females are going through at various stages of life to be able to identify with their situation or context per time, towards complementarity of relationships. As it is, womanism for some females is coming hegemonic womanism which needs to be redefined. Discrepancies in perception and realities of masculinities creates lacuna for men which most of the time manifests as withdrawal or silence like is observed in major male characters of the plays discussed. These concepts seek conscious efforts to let family relationships work and not to seek who to blame for challenges in relationships or the family.

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Verbs of Cooking and Washing in Urhobo

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Abstract. Cooking and washing as essential parts of human activities showcase both the language and the culture of a people. It represents features such as socialisation, identity, actions and perception of a people. This paper explored the nature of cookery terms through the lexical field analysis of the generic verbs of cooking and washing in Urhobo. Invoked in this study is a notion of semantic field as the theoretical framework. The research design adopted for this research is qualitative research. In the design, the quality of cooking stuff and the degree of heat application or none and the instruments of cooking combined to form the delimiting frame for the cooking types and the types of verbs use. The research is limited to verbs of cooking and washing that pertain to cooking such as washing of fish, meat, plates and other cooking utensils. Using a total of 50 questionnaires distributed equally among native speakers of Urhobo, the study collected data from adult speakers of the language. The data generated were subjected to semantic and syntactic examination to reveal the meaning of the vocabularies in their structure respectively. The difference and relationship of the terms are also investigated using hyponyms. It is observed that such hyponyms are determined based on a particular type of food and the process or pattern of the cooking involved. The study reveals how verbs of cooking and washing varies in Urhobo due to types, quality and degree of cooking and washing. The study reveals how the verbs variables make distinction in their lexical field when it comes to cooking and washing terms.

Keywords: Verbs in Urhobo, cooking and washing

1. Introduction

This paper investigates the verbs of cooking and verbs of washing in Urhobo. Cooking, 'chere' in Urhobo involves different processes which include washing and the other processes of cooking. Washing takes place at different times: before cooking, during cooking and after cooking. There are different kind of washing during cooking. These are washing of meat, fishes, vegetable, plates, dishes, pots, knife, etc.

Cooking is something that we all need to do and when you are with Urhobo speaking people, experience can be made much simpler by having the right vocabulary for the cooking and washing as a household chore. Cooking and washing verbs are verbs that frequently appear when reading the cooking instructions in household services. Therefore, this paper will be of utmost help to as many that are into restaurants and cooking profession such as Caterer in Urhobo land. The meaning of a verb in a proposition varies, depending on its relation to the argument, with the various meanings of the verb (Ola, 2021), so the meaning discussed in this study is focused on the conceptual meaning.

Cooking is a major part of a people's culture. Just as a language, it cooking can be used to identify an ethnic group of people and their language. The research language for this study is based on Urhobo. Urhobo is a term used to refer to an ethnic group of people and their language. Urhobo is a major language in Delta state, and is among the first five largest socio-linguistically classed languages in Nigeria. "The population of those who identify themselves as Urhobo is currently about three million. Urhobo belongs to the Niger-Congo family of West Africa languages" (Ojaide, 2007:3).

2. Literature Review

This section is based on the review of related works of other researchers in this field. There are existing Studies already in this field that have discussed what we are currently studying. However, there are gaps they did not cover which have become the interest of the present study and made it to be unique.

Lehrer (1969) reviewed cooking terms as basis for studying lexical verbs, the work is quite related to the present study as it developed thirty-five hyponyms of the central lexeme – cook - drawing

from information about the specificity of the cooking types to distinguish one from the other, and from the general verb. The set of verbs provided as hyponyms are as follows: cook, boil, simmer, stew, poach, braise, parboil, steam, reduce, fry, sauté, pan-fry, French-fry, deep-fry, broil, grill, barbecue, charcoal (or charcoal-brail), plank, bake, roast, shirr, scallop, brown, rissole, sear, parch, toast, burn (unhappily), flamber. Lehrer data reviewed above are similar to the data in present study. However, Lehrer data were presented and discussed in English but the data in present were sourced from Urhobo terms of cooking and are discussed based on Urhobo linguitic approach.

Oha and Ajuwon (2015) studied Igbo and Yoruba verbs of cooking: 'Sí' and 'Sè' respectively and their culinary (lexical) fields. They observed that the lexical items within a delimiting set are culturally determined by the type of process involved in the cooking of the food item. Another discovery of the study is that cooking verbs involve stages that can be delineated into pre-boil, boil and post-boil. Certain food preparation may be accomplished at the first or second stage of the process while others may go through the three stages. The preceding sage or one stage may provide basis for the next stage. Oha and Ajuwon (2015) is similar to the present study but their language of study different. Again, their work is based on comparism between Igbo and Yoruba while the present is based only on Urhobo verbs of cooking. Cross-language, if the meaning of a language corresponds one to one with the meaning of another language, the two languages are semantically considered isomorphic or have the same semantic structure (Latupeirissa, 2016; 2019; 2020). The data presented and discussed in the present study features the uniqueness of Urhobo semantics structure.

Agbo (2009) worked on the Syntax and Semantics of Verbs of Cooking in Ìgbò, the work is a study of three semantic sub-classes of Igbo verbs of cooking: the verbs of heating, the verbs of mixing and the verbs of parboiling. The members of these three classes each have inherent properties that encode different shades of meaning in their syntactic constructions. The study concluded that the distinctions in syntax and semantics are the bases for the classification of the verbs. The study is related to the present study because it is based on verbs of cooking and the data were discussed semantically. Agbo move beyond semantic analysis into Syntactic analysis of the verbs of cooking which made the study to be unique and different from the first two literatures reviewed above and the present study. The present study is different from Agbo's work in it own way by language of study and in going deeper into the semantic structure by discussing the hyponyms of the verbs of cooking and washing. Moreover, the three literatures reviewed in above are limited to verbs of cooking while the present study includes both verbs of cooking and verbs of washing as parts of the processes of cooking.

3. Data Collection

Data collected for this research were elicited from speakers of Agbarho and Agbon dialects of Urhobo. The choice of the Agbarho and Agbon dialect of the Urhobo is based on their generality. The Agbarho and the Agbon dialect are very related and are easily understood by other Urhobos. These data were transcribed by the author who is a native speaker of the language and the Agbarho dialect. The transcribed data were subsequently subjected to discussion with five other Urhobo speakers of the Agbarho and Agbon dialects. The author discussed with these speakers the co-occurrence restrictions of the verbs of cooking and washing. The author presented to the speakers the constructions that are hyponyms, such as chere 'cook', rho 'parboil' and phiọrọ 'steam'. Meanwhile, this construction is bad based on the author's competence in the language. However, four out of the five informants and native speakers judged the hyponyms to be correct.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

This section is based on data presentation and the data analysis. Here, data on lexical verbs of cooking and washing are presented and analysed semantically. The verbs are glossed in italics and are also used in sentences.

4.1. Verbs of Cooking in Urhobo

Urhobo is rich in grammar and uses different terms to express different aspect of cooking. The different terms are related words that are of semantic class known as hyponyms. Hyponym is a term used to name a particular word coming out from a broader class of words. Hyponyms are subcategories. Hyponyms refers to labelling sub-categories of words and what differentiate the word categories (Griffiths, 2006). "Hyponyms refers to the sense relation between a more general, more inclusive word and a more specific word" (Dai and He, 2013). In Urhobo, verbs of cook are in semantic agreement with the objects. That is, the verb of making a particular food ready for eating must be semantically related to such a food and the process. The verbs of cooking discussed in this study includes the verbs in the preparation of cooking and the verbs use in the actual cooking by transfer of heat to make food done. Therefore, in the following sections we shall discuss verbs to cook by heating, verbs of washing, verbs to peel and verbs in many other processes of cooking.

4.1.1 Verbs to Cook by Heating and the Hyponyms

This section deals with verbs involves in the transfer of heat on food to make it ready for use. In Urhobo, there are different verb hyponyms in the use of heat for the preparation of food. The following are examples of verbs to cook in Urhobo and their hyponyms.

chere
cook (to cook food)
chere irosu na
cook rice the 'cook the rice'

kake
fry 'fry' (to fry groundnut, fish or stew)
kake isaghwẹ na
fry groundnut the 'fry the groundnut'

tọn
roast 'bake' (to bake garri/cassava flour)
tọn igarri na
roast garri the 'bake the garri'

Rho
parboil 'boil'
rho eranvwe na
boil meat the 'boil the meat'

Vwọtọn
use to roast 'roast'
me vwọ tọn nu
I use roast [pst] 'I have roasted it'

Examples 1 - 5 are all related terms and hyponyms to cook. That is, they all mean the application of heat to food stuff to make it done for consumption. The objects of the verb structures determine the differences in their semantic structures and the distinct meanings. Learners of Urhobo must be aware that despite the fact that the verb kake for instance is to make food done for consumption, it cannot be use in syntactic structure along with some food object such as rice.

Tọn as in example 3 can go with garri/cassava-flour but cannot go with some other objects such as rice or beans.

Rho as in example 4 can go along with the object such as rice, garri/cassava-flour, meat and fish syntactically and semantically. It is verb of cook but semantically different in that it mean half cook and half done.

Phiọrọ
steam 'steam' (to steam meat).
phiọrọ eranvwe na vwẹ erhanre.
steam meat the in fire 'steam the meat on fire'
or
vwẹ ọfigbo na phiọrọ erhanre
use oil the steam fire 'melt the oil on fire'

Torhẹ
'born' 'roast' (to born away unwanted parts, e.g. kpomo hire).
torhẹ ẹto nu eranvwe na
born hire off animal the 'born the animal hire with fire'
or
irosu na torhẹ re
rice the born [pst] 'the rice got burnt'

Vuvwun
bake 'preserve with fire'
vuvwu eranvwe na
bake meat the 'dry the meat on fire'

Wurhie
Stire 'Stir'
wurhie oghwo na
stir soup the 'stir the soup'

Gbe
mix 'turn' (to turn ebba)
gbe iti kẹ vwẹ
mix tea for me 'make tea for me'

Gbekugbe
Mix 'Mix' (to mix something, e.g. flour and yeast together).
gbe emu na kugbe
mix food the together 'mix the food together'

Examples 9 - 11 are hyponyms in that they all mean to stir food. However, the object stir determine distinct semantic difference.

The verbs in 1 - 11 are traditionally coded with their structures.

4.1.2 Verbs of Washing and the Hyponyms

The following are verbs of washing in Urhobo and the hyponyms.

Hworhẹ
Wash 'wash' (to wash meat, fish, plate or other dishes)

Ghworiẹ
rinse 'rinse' (to rinse plate, pot, meat, fish etc.)

Rien
clean 'clean' (e.g. to clean the knife, kitchen, table etc).

the verbs of washing in examples 29 – 31 are hyponyms because they are in the same class of semantic relation, and they all have the same causative result. They all *cause* something to be clean. They are all means of making something to be clean.

Causative because they cause something to happen. For example, we can say:
ọ hworhẹ omoze na fon
he/she wash plate the clean 'he washed the plate clean'

32b) ọ hworhẹ ọnẹ na fon
he wash yam the clean 'he washed the yam clean'

ọ ghworiẹ omoze na fon
he/she raise plate the clean 'he raised the plate clean'

33b) ọ ghworiẹ eranvwe na fon
he raise meat the clean 'he raised the meat thoroughly/clean'

o rien omoze na fon
he/she clean plate the clean 'he cleans the plate thoroughly'
34b) o rien ukoni na fon
he clean kitchen the clean 'he mops the kitchen neatly'

4.1.3 Verb to Peel

Unlike English, in Urhobo, verb to Peel must be in agreement with what is to be peel. The verb to peel yam is different from the verb to peel plantain or orange. See examples in 12 – 16 as following:
Kpẹn
Peel 'Peel' (to peel, e.g. banana or plantain).
kpẹn ọrhẹ na
peel plantain the 'peel the plantain'

Kane
Scrape 'peel' (to peel raw yam)
kane ọnẹ na
peel yam the 'peel the yam'

Biẹn
Slice 'peel' (to peel back of orange or onion)
biẹn utiẹn na kẹ vwẹ
peel orange the for me 'peel the orange for me'

Vworhiẹ
Scrap 'scrape' (to peel roasted yam)
vworhiẹ onẹ na
peel yam the 'peel the yam'

In Urhobo, it is semantically wrong to say kpẹn ọnẹ na 'peel the yam'. That is kpẹn not semantically agreed with yam to mean peel. But it can be used for plantain or banana. Kane also mean 'peel' it can only be used with fresh yam but it cannot be used with roasted yam, orange, plantain and banana.

Other verbs used in cooking are:

Kẹghẹ
Grate 'grate' (to grate onion or yam)
kẹghẹ irhibo na
grate pepper the 'grate the pepper'

Kẹnẹ
Chop 'Chop' (to chop yam, vegetable or onions)
kẹnẹ ọnẹ na kẹ vwẹ
chop yam the for me 'chop the yam for me'

Nọ
Grind 'grind' (to grind pepper or onions)
nọ irhobo na
grind pepper the 'grind the pepper'

Duvwu
shook 'pound' (to pound yam or other thing)
duvwu ọnẹ na.
shook yam the 'pound the yam'

Vwirhi
Break 'Break' (to break indomie or stock fish into the plate or pot)
vwirhi indomi na phiyọ ipọto na
break indomi the into pot na 'break the indomi into the pot'

Ghran
Melt 'Melt' (to melt something, e.g. oil on fire or on heat)
ghran ọfigbo na vwẹ erhanre
melt oil the on fire 'melt the oil on fire'

Bru
Cut 'cut'
bru erin na
cut fish the 'cut the fish'

Mwẹrhiẹ
Smash 'smash' (to smash palm fruit with hand)
mwẹrhiẹ ibiedi na
smash palm-fruit the 'smash the palm-fruit'

Davwe
Try 'test' (to test the taste of food)
davwe emu na
try food the 'test the food'

Tue
sprinkle 'pour' (to salt or a dry substance into food)
tue ughwaka phiyọ emu na
sprinkle salt into food the 'pour salt into the food'

Tẹnẹ
Pinch 'Pinch' (to pinch fish or to pinch magi into food)
tẹnẹ erin kẹ vwẹ

pinch fish for me 'pinch fish for me'

Vwie
Done 'done' (when the food is done on fire).
emu na vwie nu
food the done [pst] 'the food has done'

Jẹ
chose 'dish' (to dish food) .
jẹ emu kẹ vwẹ
chose food for me 'serve food for me'

4.2 Verbal Hyponyms of Cooking and Washing in Urhobo

These are different types of verbal relationship. Hyponym is a semantic relation used in grouping subtype. Here, hyponym is used to classify related terms of different activities in cooking. Verbal hyponym is used here to classify a group of semantic related activities that resulted in the same verb. Examples are seen below:

4.2.1 Verbal Hyponyms of Cooking

The following are verbal hyponyms of cooking that causes something to *done* or ready for eating. They are different processes of making different food to be done for eating. Examples are as following:

chere
cook 'cook' (to cook food).
Chere irosu na.
cook rice the 'cook the rice'

kake
fry 'fry' (to fry groundnut, fish or stew)
kake isaghwẹ na
fry groundnut the 'fry the groundnut'

tọn
roast 'fry' (to bake garri/cassava flour)
tọn igari na
born garri the 'bake the garri'

Vwọtọn
use to roast 'roast'
Vwọ ọrhẹ na tọn
use plantain the roast 'roast the plantain'

Examples 32 – 35 above are all class of cooking and processes of making something to be done or ready for eating.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, the semantics of the verbs of cooking and washing in Urhobo were discussed. The study has been able to give the interpretation of the inherent and distinct meaning of the verbs and also classify them based on their hyponyms. The verbs of cooking in Urhobo fall under different semantic classes of verbs: the verbs of cook, the verbs of parboiling, the verbs of frying, mixing, the verb of cutting and the verb of washing. It was observed in this study that the objects of the verb structures determine the differences in the semantic structures and the distinct meanings of the verbs. Moreover, the lexical representation of these classes portrays the inherent 'temporal properties' of these verbs, which enable us to conceive their actions and interpret these actions. The implication of this classification and interpretation is that an Urhobo child learning the language must learn to distinguish the verbs and the specific object NPs that collocate with them. This can be done through verbal cues from caregivers and also through the practical observation of the cooking activities of these caregivers. The knowledge the child has about the world around him will facilitate the correct use of these verbs.

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Integrating Technology for Multimodal Literacy in English Studies

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Abstract. Multimodal literacy is being literate in all forms of literacy surrounding learning and representing meaning, including multimedia and digital interactions. It involves the use of diverse communication modes - visual, audio, and spatial, alongside traditional reading and writing in education. The aim of this paper is to investigate how technology aids the development of multimodal literacy in English studies students. Three universities in south-south Nigeria, Edo state, were used as case studies. Qualitative research methods were employed, including semi structured interview, student focus group and classroom observations. The theoretical frameworks of the New London Group, Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), and Constructivist Learning Theory were applied in this paper. Findings reveal that being technologically literate facilitates multimodal literacy as it enhances knowledge sharing, caters for different learning styles and helps students synthesise information across multiple modes of representation. However, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, financial constraints, resistance to change on the part of instructors, and concerns about curriculum modification, assessment, and academic integrity hinder effective implementation. The paper concludes that integrating technology for multimodal literacy offers significant opportunities for a more dynamic, inclusive, and flexible learning and recommends continuous training for instructors, continued investment in infrastructure, multimodal literacy training, and collaborative curriculum development to fully realise the potential of multimodal literacy. The findings contribute to the growing body of research on the integration of technology for multimodal literacy development.

Keywords: Multimodal Literacy, Technology Integration, Higher Education, English Studies

1. Introduction

The concept of literacy is multidimensional because it entails literacy in its diverse form. To begin with, there is traditional literacy which involves the conventional knowledge and skills needed to navigate printed or written language. This is the literacy that dates to the ancient civilization of Egypt, Rome and Greece era where the ability to read and write was a sign of intellectual distinction and was essential for intellectual advancement, administrative functions and religious activities. Humanist ideals that were associated with traditional literacy include the study of classical texts, the development of critical thinking, and the use of rhetoric which are the same ideals that stood out in the education system of the time.

English studies courses reflect these humanist ideals because they centre on understanding human experiences, values, and societies. The course prioritises articulateness whether in the writing of essays or in oral presentations, which resonate with traditional literacy and its key elements of reading, writing, and textual analysis as well as in-depth knowledge of language and its contextual applications. Today's world is technologically advanced, briming with interactive digital experiences.

Technology has transformed the way we communicate and learn, reshaping traditional literacy into digital literacy; the ability to read and interpret online texts, websites, blogs, and social media. Critical reading and speaking skills traditionally used for analysing written and spoken texts are now being employed to evaluate digital content. Multimodal communication, which integrates images, videos, text, graphics, charts in one communicative event has become a dominant form of expressing ideas in online platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube among others. These platforms require a new understanding and skills on how to convey meaning effectively and to navigate a media-saturated environment.

With the access to limitless information granted by search engines, databases, and online repositories,

the skill has shifted from simply locating data to curating and filtering the overwhelming content available. The paper argues that although traditional literacy skills are as invaluable today, they should be adapted and expanded to meet the demands of a digital, information-driven world. It is for this reason this paper advocates for the integration of technology into English studies than what presently obtains in order to develop multimodal literacy skills in the students. In response to the growing demands for multimodal engagement in the digital age and its dynamic integration of visual, auditory, and textual elements, the shift toward more dynamic, technology-driven pedagogies becomes even more desirable. The concept of multimodal literacy, which involves the ability to decode and produce meaning across different media formats, is integral to developing proficiency in English in the 21st century (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). English studies students must acquire skills that encompass both traditional literacy and digital fluency because of the nature of the course (Kress, 2003).

The integration of technology into ESL teaching has been a growing concern especially in multilingual and multicultural societies like Nigeria. In many developing countries, including those in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, ESL instruction faces significant challenges due to limited resources and technological access (Zhao & Lai, 2020). However, studies in these regions, including the work by Okeke & Akinmoladun (2019) in Nigerian higher education institutions, show that the integration of mobile technologies and online platforms into ESL teaching has proven effective in promoting language learning. This corroborated by Akinmoladun, 2018 who asserts that there are opportunities to enhance language learning experiences using technology, particularly through mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and online collaborative platforms despite the challenges some institutions face, such as unreliable internet access and infrastructural limitations.

Despite these promising developments, the full potential of technology in fostering multimodal literacy remains underexplored. According to Olaniran & Oloyede (2020), while ESL teaching has incorporated digital texts and videos, there is still insufficient attention given to how these tools can be strategically used to develop students' multimodal literacy, particularly in writing and speaking tasks. This paper seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks on multimodal literacy and practical implementations examining the challenges, successes, and future possibilities of integrating technology to enhance English Studies instruction in Nigerian universities. The literature review which comes next, offers further understanding of these concepts, the research problem, and the impact of the paper.

2. Literature Review

The New London Group (1996) foundational paper introduces the concept of multimodal literacy, emphasising the need for an expanded definition of literacy that includes various modes of communication such as visual, audio, and spatial modes in addition to traditional reading and writing. Extending this view, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) in explaining a range of modes, from spoken and written language to visual and digital media, argue that education must reflect the changing nature of communication in the 21st century. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) expanded the conversation by exploring how meaning is created through the interaction of these different modes described by the New London Group (visual, verbal, gestural). They provide a theoretical framework for understanding multimodal communication in both print and digital media. In the same light, Jewitt (2008), Bezemer and Kress (2008) highlight the importance of multimodal literacy in education offering insights into how different modes of communication (visual, aural, written) contribute to learning and meaning-making in classrooms.

Broadening the conversation into the role of technology in supporting pedagogical practices, Laurillard (2012) examines how technology can be effectively integrated into education to enhance student learning. Similarly, Means, Bakia, and Murphy (2014) review the impact of digital learning tools and technologies in education, stating that technology integration can improve educational outcomes. Bates (2015) presented a comprehensive guide on integrating technology into higher education by revealing the various digital tools and strategies that enhance teaching and learning, with a focus on online and blended learning environments. The literature review thus far has shown that multimodal literacy can be achieved through the integration of technology into educational practices. The essence of the second half is to give a review of the relationship between digital literacy and multimodal literacy.

Hague and Payton (2010), Selber (2004) provide insights into how technology integration in the classroom can foster students' multimodal literacy skills, shedding light on the evolving nature of literacy in the educational landscape. In the same vein, Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, and Henry (2013) explore the changing nature of literacy in the digital age and how both technology integration and multimodal literacy shape students' ability to create and understand meaning in multiple forms while Littlejohn and Margaryan (2014), emphasise the

need for teachers to develop digital competencies to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Their work highlights the gap between teachers' current skills and the skills needed to fully utilise digital tools in the classroom.

Along the same lines, Pegrum (2011) reiterated the role of digital technologies in transforming literacy practices, suggesting that educators must be adaptable and continuously update their skills to keep pace with technological advancements. This aligns with Merchant (2007), who examines how digital tools and multimodal texts can be used to support literacy development in ESL learners, providing practical insights and strategies for educators. All these scholars provide a necessary foundation for understanding the intersection between technology integration in education and multimodal literacy on the one hand and the involvement of instructors and students in acquiring the needed skills to be multimodally literate.

In the context of English studies, the crucial role of multimodal approaches in Nigerian literature has been addressed by Nwoko (2018). He emphasised the necessity to integrate audio, visual, and digital media into literature in order to enhance literary creativity and communication. He posits that this integration is essential for reflecting the diverse and evolving modes of communication prevalent in contemporary Nigerian society. Similarly, Tsaaior (2013) explores the transformative potential of digital technologies on Nigerian oral poetry calling attention to how the traditional oral forms can be preserved and innovated through multimodal texts. This offers a bridge between the past and the present. His insights underscore the importance of digitising literary traditions to ensure their survival and relevance in the modern age.

In a related note, Ajayi (2015) investigates how Nigerian female students use multimodal literacy to critique texts and challenge social structures. Ajayi's research highlights the empowering potential of multimodal literacy in giving voice to marginalised groups and fostering critical thinking skills. His study underscores the need for incorporating multimodal literacy practices into the Nigerian educational curriculum to promote equity and social justice. Emakpe, & Adegoke (2024) paper demonstrate the richness and diversity of the Nigerian literary tradition through their paper that examines how Nigerian writers utilise English in various forms to narrate personal and communal experiences. Their paper emphasises the role of multimodal literacy in capturing and conveying the multifaceted nature of Nigerian society thus contributing to the understanding of English language usage in Nigerian literature.

Although the use of technology in Nigerian universities is on the rise, there remains a gap in how these technologies support the development of multimodal literacy in the classroom, with particular attention to English studies. While existing studies provide valuable insights into the integration of multimodal literacy in broader educational and societal contexts, there are insufficient empirical research focused on ESL learners in Africa and Nigeria in particular, highlighting a need for studies that address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Nigerian ESL students. Conducting empirical research in this area can offer tailored strategies to enhance the learning experiences and outcomes of Nigerian ESL learners, ensuring that educational practices are environmentally relevant and effective. The next section gives an overview of the theoretical frameworks adopted in this paper.

3. Theoretical Framework

For this paper, a combination of the following theoretical perspectives was adopted. First is the multiliteracies theory (New London Group) which emphasises that literacy is not just about reading and writing in traditional ways but also includes new modes of communication (visual, digital). The concept of multimodality is central here because of its focus on how students engage with various modes of communication (text, image, video, and interactive media) facilitated by technology, in the classroom. The second is the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), which focuses on the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge. This theory is particularly useful for understanding how teachers, in this case English studies teachers in Nigerian higher institutions blend technology with language teaching to foster multimodal literacy while balancing content knowledge and pedagogical approaches. TPACK allows for an exploration of the types of technology being used, how teachers adapt their pedagogy to incorporate these tools, and how the content of English studies teaching is transformed through digital means.

The third is the Constructivist Learning Theory by Bruner (1991). This theory suggests that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences, problem-solving, and critical thinking. In the context of multimodal literacy, learners use various resources (digital tools, multimedia) to construct and interpret meaning. This theory, therefore, guides the analysis of how technology enables active learning while enhancing multimodal literacy. In the exploration of how multimodal resources (texts, images, videos, aural, sounds, kinetics, interactive digital media) are used to facilitate learning in the English language classroom, these theories are relevant as they help explain how students construct

meaning and develop literacy skills through interactions in technologically enhanced classrooms.

4. Research Methodology

This paper adopted qualitative methodology involving the use of semi structured interview, classroom observation and focus group to get deeper insights from both instructors and students in three universities (one private, one federal and the other state) used as population for this paper. For data collection, the researcher personally visited the selected institutions to interview both instructors and students to ensure a 100% response rate allowing for clarifications where necessary.

The essence was to capture their perspectives and experiences with integrating technology in the teaching of English studies courses. The interview questions examined the current state of the use of technological tools for teaching and learning in English and how the tools enhance multimodal literacy. Observational notes were taken on the use and the extent to which instructors integrate technology in their teaching and how they enhance multimodal literacy in terms of the integration of text, audio, video, interactive elements. Student engagement and reactions as well as challenges faced were also part of the things observed. For the focus group, the discussion with students was based on topics such as, the impact of technology on their learning of language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), their preferences for specific types of technology, tools and how they help their learning practices.

A total of nine lecturers, three from each university (Two language option and one literature option from each university) engaged with the researcher through a semi structured interview. The students were four each purposively selected across levels. The interview was in two parts. The first part captured respondents' demographics while the second part had ten semi structured questions. Some questions were structured on a four-point Likert scale, and responses were rated as – Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point) and some others as (Always, Often, Occasionally, Rarely). There were also questions with provided options and respondents had to make selections out of the choices made available. The responses were thematically analysed. The Focus Group responses were categorised under preferences, benefits and challenges. The results were analysed and discussed.

5. Result of Findings

The first interview question was on the types of technology used in the teaching of language or literature courses. The options were given as: Interactive whiteboards, Learning management systems (LMS) (Canva, Moodle, Blackboard), Educational apps (Duolingo, Kahoot), Video-based learning (YouTube, WhatsApp, Capcut), Online collaboration tools (Google Docs, Zoom), Podcasts and audio tools (WhatsApp), digital storytelling, and Others, which respondents were to specify). Results showed that all three universities use WhatsApp as first choice followed by LMS, Online collaboration tools such as Zoom and Canva. In terms of other types of technology or tools used, the private university instructors answered that they use language software for the teaching of phonetics and phonology in the digital laboratory. Although, other language courses such as Grammar courses and even literature courses could be taught in a digital laboratory, this was usually not the case. The digital laboratories are only available in the private university while there are language laboratories in the public universities used only for the teaching of Phonetics and phonology. This shows the difference between a language laboratory and a digital laboratory.

The instructors also specified other tools or types of technology used, such as YouTube videos. Cambridge English Pronunciation App is part of the technological tool used also in the private University. It is a mobile application that helps students with English pronunciation using phonetic transcription and voice recognition. The second interview question analysis examined the frequency of the use of technological tools in the teaching of English studies courses. The instructors were to answer by choosing the appropriate response from options ranging from: (Always, Often, Occasionally, Rarely). Those in the Private university responded that they do so often while those in the public university answered that it was occasionally.

The third interview question bordered on the effectiveness of the technological tools for the achievement of multimodal literacy. The instructors were asked to rate the effectiveness on options of (very effective, somewhat effective, neutral, ineffective) the response was unanimous as they all said, “very effective” but some reservations were expressed which are highlighted in the discussion section. The fourth question bordered on their primary motivation for using technological tools in teaching and they were to respond by rating their responses from the main motivation to the least. The options given were: 1) to enhance knowledge sharing and student engagement, 2) to promote multimodal literacy, 3) to provide access to

resources outside of the classroom, 4) to cater for different learning styles, and then 5) to specify any other motivation. The instructors rated the options in the order in which they appeared which were to enhance student engagement as number one, to promote multimodal literacy as number two, till the fifth. Under any other motivation, those in the private university pointed out that it was part of the course requirement.

The fifth interview question interrogated the technological tool the instructors felt were most effective in helping students develop multimodal literacy skills? The instructors were to select all that applied out of the list read out to them which consisted of – interactive whiteboards, video tools (e.g., YouTube, WhatsApp), podcasts and audio resources, LMS (Moodle, Blackboard), Collaborative platforms Canvas, Google Docs, Zoom, Padlet). Any other was to be specified by the instructors. Their responses had video tools (YouTube, WhatsApp) as number one followed by Podcasts and audio resources, and the third was (LMS).

In the area of challenges, the instructors were asked to identify challenges they have faced while integrating technology into their teaching. They were to select all that applied, ranging from: lack of resources or equipment, limited digital literacy among students, technical issues (e.g., internet connection, software malfunctions, lack of operational knowledge of some gadgets and facilities, lack of training or professional development in using technology and resistance to using technology from teacher/students. Their responses bordered on firstly, the need for periodic training or professional development in using technology and secondly on technical issues such as internet connection and software malfunctions. However, under any other challenge, the responses especially for those in the public institutions were the need for prompt repairs of dysfunctional laboratory facilities, accessibility of technological devices for all students, limited financial support and institutional indifference.

Under student section, the students were interrogated in the area of learning preferences. They were asked to identify which technological tool they preferred for the learning of English. They were given the following options (videos, podcasts, interactive games, online quizzes, discussion forums) and the unanimous response was videos, followed by interactive games and podcasts. 30% chose online quizzes as a third choice while 29% chose discussion forums as a third choice. 12% chose podcasts while 29% had no other choice outside videos and interactive games. According to the students, their biggest challenge is lack of equipment followed by interrupted internet access and power outages especially for those in the state university whose institution was not in the capital city. In terms of benefits, the students were also asked if using technology promoted knowledge-sharing and made for a more engaged class? They were to respond on a Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. Their response was unanimous in agreeing strongly that technology made more engaged with what was taught.

6. Discussion of findings

The findings align with previous studies emphasising the role of technology in promoting multimodal literacy in higher level education and the results suggest that technology tools positively influence knowledge-sharing among students. When the instructors were asked what their primary motivation was in teaching technology, their number one response was to enhance knowledge sharing and student engagement, and to promote multimodal literacy, respectively. Multimodal learning, which incorporates videos, podcasts, animations, and interactive media that aid assignments, has been shown to captivate students' attention more effectively than traditional text-based materials. In English Studies classrooms, where topics can sometimes be abstract or distant, incorporating visual and auditory elements help make the material more relatable and interesting. Many students have reported feeling more motivated to participate in lessons that involve technology, as these tools allow them to express themselves in new and creative ways.

The integration of technology fosters collaborative learning, allowing students to engage in discussions, share resources, and work on group projects. Technology tools enhance knowledge-sharing by reducing barriers such as geographical limitations and time constraints. This peer learning is particularly important in English Studies, where discussions and debates are essential for understanding diverse interpretations of texts and literary theories. This finding aligns with the assertion of Trust et al., 2021, who emphasises that the use of technological tools facilitates asynchronous and real-time communication among learners, allowing them to exchange ideas beyond traditional school settings. Secondly, technology enables better collaboration on multimodal projects among students. Such as when creating short films on literary works or producing a podcast series on language usage and trends. This can lead to a deeper understanding of literature, language, and writing, as students become more adept at navigating the complexities of multimodal communication. Such collaborations promote teamwork, encourage critical thinking and help students synthesise

information across multiple modes of representation, thereby enhancing their communication skills.

Still on the same question of providing access to resources outside of the classroom and to cater for different learning styles were rated as the third and fourth options respectively as their primary motivation for using technological tools in teaching. Technology allows students and educators access to a wide range of resources beyond the traditional classroom. E-books, online journals, multimedia lectures, and global discussions on platforms like YouTube and academic blogs give students more opportunities to engage with resources outside of the classroom. This expanded access to resources enriches the English Studies curriculum by allowing students to explore topics in more depth from diverse perspectives. For example, students can watch videos on the production of speech sounds, morphology and syntax or simply explore online literary archives, they could also listen to interviews with renowned authors or watch a documentary on language development, all of which contribute to a richer learning experience outside the traditional classroom. Additionally, the multimedia nature of the content allows students to engage with the material in ways that suit their individual learning styles.

However, the results from the interview reveal that there are challenges. The problem is not just that there are no adequate technological tools for the development of multimodal literacy skills, the problem is also effective utilization of these tools to bring about the needed skills. It is true that students and educators have access to mobile phones and basic computer skills for personalised training but there still exist functional skill gaps, inadequate training, and resistance to technological change as significant barriers (Mishra & Koehler, 2020). Challenges such as the lack of comprehensive digital literacy remain a significant barrier.

Under learning preferences, the students unanimously indicated videos followed by interactive games and podcasts as their preferred technological learning tools out of the five options they were given. The challenge which persists is that many students are not familiar with the advanced functionalities of multimodal tools such as video editing software, podcasting platforms, and interactive presentation tools for charts and infographics. Similarly, some lecturers have not been adequately trained in the use of these technologies, which creates a divide between their teaching methods and the digital tools available. This skills gap limits the ability of both students and instructors to fully exploit the potential of multimodal literacy.

A significant challenge in the integration of technology in English studies found in the three universities used as case study is the lack of adequate infrastructure. The first biggest challenge the students mentioned in response to the open-ended question about what their biggest challenges were in using technology in learning was lack of equipment. There are issues such as insufficient computers or tablets for students. In many parts of the country, these issues disrupt the use of e-learning platforms like Zoom, Canva, Google Classroom and Moodle which are used by lecturers for delivering lectures. This hinders the seamless integration of multimodal tools into the English Studies curriculum. Another significant concern for many lecturers is the accessibility of technology-based learning for all students. In Nigerian higher education, Without access to stable and modern technological devices (computers, laptops, smartphones) especially in rural areas, inequitable learning environment results. For lecturers in English Studies, who often rely on student engagement and participation in discussions, these barriers can derail planned lessons or assessments, hindering effective teaching and student involvement in multimodal projects.

The second response of the students to the open-ended question on what their biggest challenges were in using technology in learning was unreliable internet connectivity, and inadequate power supply especially for those in the state university whose institution was somewhat rural. Unpredictable internet connectivity and power outages can prevent students from accessing materials, participating in discussions, or completing assignments on time. For lecturers, this creates a stressful teaching environment, as technology failures can derail planned lessons or assessments. Technical issues sometimes lead to frustration and contribute to students and instructors being limited in their ability to fully embrace the benefits of multimodal learning, and a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of technology-based learning in the long run.

Closely linked to the above point is limited financial institutional support. Financial limitation is a major challenge faced by many Nigerian institutions. Many universities struggle to secure funding for the purchase of technological equipment, the development of e-learning platforms, and the maintenance of these resources. Even when institutions attempt to implement technology for multimodal literacy, they may be unable to invest in the necessary infrastructure to support widespread use and maintenance. This challenge is exacerbated by the economic conditions of many Nigerian families, which limit students' ability to afford personal digital devices or access data plans for online learning. Additionally, this can also lead to time constraints where lecturers and students are

mindful of the length of time in terms of use of personal data or in terms of feeling when they consider how boring it seems to just sit and listen while staring endlessly at a gadget in audio format alone.

When instructors were asked to state any other challenge outside the options they were given, some of them stated technical issues having to do with software malfunctions and secondly, the lack of prompt repairs of dysfunctional laboratories or tools in the laboratories because of limited financial support and institutional indifference. Resistance to technological change also remains a significant barrier (Mishra & Koehler, 2020. Some instructors resist changing established teaching methods and find new methods, particularly those involving complex and unfamiliar technology annoying. English Studies strongly identifies with traditional literacy skills such as reading, writing, and analysis. Some instructors fear that students might become disengaged or distracted when learning through digital platforms without direct personal interaction, potentially undermining the depth of learning. Additionally, the absence of non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions in online environment makes it harder to gauge students understanding and participation.

Adopting digital tools for assignments or classroom interactions requires a new set of competencies which some lecturers are unwilling to undertake. This reluctance stems from lack of knowledge and training in how these tools function or how they can complement traditional pedagogical methods which they believe have worked for years. Some senior lecturers exhibit overt reluctance to modify their well-established pedagogical approach, feeling that their tried-and-tested methods are being undermined.

The teaching strategies and assessment methods in multimodal learning require educators to rethink their present strategies and methods of assessment. Curriculum development in this regard demands teamwork from all stakeholders intra and inter disciplinarily in order to create content that integrates digital tools effectively while enhancing students' multimodal literacy. Technological assessments of students' performance are not without challenges. English Studies assessment relies much on written essays, oral presentations, and group discussions which may pose difficulties handled online. Secondly, there are questions of academic integrity – when assessing creative or nuanced student contributions in online environments, issues bordering on plagiarism or copying from online sources may leave much to be desired in terms of assessing the true extent of their understanding or analytical skills. These challenges should be addressed to maximise the impact of technologically driven knowledge-sharing. Recommendations in this regard follow next.

7. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on the findings and discussion in this paper. To begin with, it is recommended that lecturers in both public and private universities undergo continuous training on the integration of technology into teaching methods and practices to enhance their ability to utilise technology-driven tools effectively. The virtual institute for capacity building for higher education (VICBHE) by Peter A. Okebukola in collaboration with the National Universities Commission has been carrying out such training since 2021. Workshops, seminars, and professional development programmes should focus on building multimodal literacy and technical skills in instructors and students. Specifically, training for English studies on the integration of specific language technological tools for the teaching and learning of English. This will ensure that instructors refine their instructional strategies to facilitate the seamless adoption of technology thereby boosting their confidence. Integrating innovative teaching methodologies in the classroom will encourage self-paced learning for learners and foster interactive and immersive learning environments.

Moreover, governments and educational stakeholders should increase investment in digital education resources by investing in robust digital infrastructure, including internet connectivity and uninterrupted power supply. Education policymakers should invest in comprehensive policy interventions, develop and implement clear guidelines on technology integration to ensure standardisation, accessibility, and ethical use of technology for educational purposes. Schools should create enabling platforms for instructors and students to engage in peer collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and mentorship programmes that allow experienced lecturers to guide less experienced ones while older students with adequate technological knowledge can also mentor younger students, using technology-driven resources. Special provisions should be made to ensure equitable access to technology and tools, through the provision of necessary resources, funding, and technical support.

8. Conclusion

The paper provides empirical evidence on the role of technology in multimodal literacy development. The results indicate that despite the series of obstacles integrating technology for multimodal literacy may face, successes abound. However, challenges such as digital literacy gaps, inadequate infrastructure,

and poor response by management to repairs of faulty facilities were identified among the barriers hindering the successful actualisation and development of multimodsl literacy skill for students in English. The challenges are consistent with findings by UNESCO (2022), which emphasise the need for institutional support, policy reforms, and digital literacy training to optimise technology and enrich the educational experience for both students and teachers. These findings align with existing literature, underscoring the benefits of technology and multimodal tools in educational advancement (Schmid et al., 2021; Zhao & Watterson, 2020).

The findings also contribute to the growing body of research advocating for the strategic integration of technology in education while suggesting directions and ways to mitigate associated challenges. The paper affirms that integrating technology in students' academic development can significantly enhance teaching quality and overall learning outcomes if given the attention it deserves. Policymakers and educational administrators should prioritise the integration of technology-based training programmes to ensure that teachers and students remain equipped with the necessary skills to navigate the evolving educational landscape.

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Sensationalisation in Nigerian Newspaper Reviews: Impact and Ethical Implications

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Abstract. This research letter sheds light on sensationalisation in Nigerian newspaper reviews-their impact and the ethics which they distort. Newspaper reviews in broadcast programming have made news more accessible, convenient, and catchy with the current trend. However, exposing such trends raises serious ethical and journalism concerns and also requires comprehensive analysis of biases and credibility issues. Sensationalizing newspaper reviews on broadcast media could essentially make up for the creation of fake news national security problems. Thus, by prioritizing sensationalism above the factual elements, such programs inadvertently glorify the different kinds of fake news that could well skyrocket into the society through other media channels, particularly social media. The research calls for a wide range of stakeholders from media practitioners, and policymakers to civil society organizations to appreciate the adverse effects of Sensationalisation in Nigerian newspaper reviews and take action to advance responsible and ethical journalism practice. To this end, it calls for serious and intensive academic discourse and fieldwork on the processes of Sensationalisation in Nigerian newspaper reviews to thoroughly understand all nuances and possible means of mitigating its effects.

Keywords: Sensationalisation, Newspaper reviews, Ethical Implications, Credibility, Bias.

1. Introduction

A staple feature of broadcast media reviewing newspaper headlines has come to be a daily addiction for television and radio audiences. According to Busa (2013), the language of instruction is highly relevant in ensuring reader participation with the contents of newspaper reviews. Newspaper reviews give updates on current affairs and the general happenings of the environment, which the populace wants. The programs consist of the reading of daily publications' headlines, and various radio stations run programs like "Press Reviews," "From the Newspapers," and "Review of Editorials" (Edegoh et al., 2015). These broadcastings have become the very cement of broadcasting organizations in attracting audiences daily and covering the information gap of those who cannot afford to buy or access newspapers regularly.

Thereafter, the preparation and review of newspaper reviews have in most instances given rise to issues of bias and credibility due to anchoring bias in media presentations, jumping to sensationalism, and institutional biases. The introduction of different biases erodes the essence of journalism; therefore, credibility is one of the measures for maintaining trust between the media and the public. This work critically investigates biases and concerns regarding reliability in newspaper reviews in an effort that aims to enhance conceptual understanding of the phenomenon (Adeduntan, A. (2017).

Sensationalisation in Nigerian newspaper reviews is a pressing concern that threatens the credibility and integrity of journalism. It means that newsmen exaggerate issues deliberately in order to provoke an emotional response from the audience, which, in turn, guarantees viewership. Sensationalisation is then encouraged in an environment characterized by excessive competition among media houses to gain audience attention and news commercialization. This damaging practice has a multiplied effect on the loss of people's trust in journalism and distorted perception of significant issues in our society. This will create a situation where, from this perspective, news of high imaginativeness overwhelms the Australian public's consciousness while other equally important issues, which are not very dramatic, move far away from the public gaze. Besides that, sensationalism can misinform fearful paranoia and trivialize relevant matters to the effect of the general media losing credence in the public eye (Oladosu, Sanni, & Tanimowo, 2021).

The Nigerian context has negative implications for Sensationalisation, such as the dissemination of misinformation and the aggravated social and political consequences. The ethical implications are also serious and include the fact that sensationalism runs counter to the cherished tenets of journalism which emphasize objectivity, accuracy, and fairness.

Sensationalization of reviews on broadcast programs can harmfully erode trust in a legitimate source of news, polarize the communities, and endanger national security by promoting false information through sensationalism. It places importance on reporting factually accurately, verifying credible sources, refraining from sensationalism, and providing contextual information to increase audience comprehension of complex issues that all can combine to mitigate Borecek's words into an enriched citizenry empowered by reduced proliferation of fake news (Nyarko, 2016).

Cue to action: We urge broadcast programs to undertake proactive fact-checking, avoid sensationalism, and foster responsible media through contextualization and background information that will assist audiences in comprehending complicated information. In doing so, we will accomplish a double objective: the curbing of fake news and the creation of an informed citizenry and culture of responsible journalism.

The paper establishes a strong urgency for collective action to combat the harmful effects of Sensationalisation in Nigerian newspaper reviews. Accordingly, this paper prescribes a multi-stakeholder mechanism involving media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society organizations to advocate for sustainable and ethical journalism practice.

To curb the adverse effects of Sensationalisation, the paper recommends strictly enforcing and implementing fact-checking, encouraging accurate and balanced reporting, and giving maximum exposure to academic discourse through in-depth research and critical inquiry. Eventually, it is through the implementation of such practices that a better-informed and more active citizenry can grow, thereby aiding in the development of a responsible and accountable media culture.

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Analyses of the Applicability of International Arbitration in Investor-State Dispute Settlement in East Africa

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Abstract. This study delves into the practical implementation of international arbitration within the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) framework across East African countries. It examines the complex interplay between regional legal structures and international arbitral norms, scrutinizing the extent to which existing treaties and domestic legislation facilitate or hinder effective dispute resolution. Focusing on recent ISDS cases, the research analyses the procedural and substantive challenges faced by both investors and states, particularly concerning transparency, enforcement of awards, and the influence of regional economic communities. The analysis further evaluates the impact of varying levels of institutional capacity and legal harmonization on the predictability and fairness of arbitral outcomes. The article also further identifies best practices and potential reforms aimed at enhancing the efficacy and legitimacy of international arbitration as a tool for resolving investment disputes in the region. It underscores the critical need for context-specific adaptations of international arbitration to reflect the unique legal and economic realities of East Africa.

Keywords: Arbitration, Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), Investment Disputes

1. Introduction

This work has assessed international arbitration, which under certain circumstances is known as Investor-State arbitration or suits, within a wider discussion on Investor-State dispute settlement mechanisms in the context of disputes arising from foreign investments in East Africa (Aidonojie, 2023; Aidonojie et al., 2022). After presenting the introduction and the aim of this work, the study proceeds with the analysis of historical background of international arbitration and the legal framework of international arbitration in the selected countries. The work also provides a case study assessing the enforcement of arbitral awards relating to investments rendered against the sub-Sahara East African country Kenya (Schreuer, 2022).

In East Africa, the membership of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes and the involvement in bilateral investment treaties of four out of the five selected countries could be deemed as mechanisms that foster the popularity of international arbitration in East Africa (Antai, 2024). This implies that, as well as in other parts of the world, an understanding of this topic by legal practitioners, lawmakers, and civil society is fundamentally imperative. In addition, just like the other mechanisms of resolution of disputes, international arbitration should also be conceived within a much broader context touching on issues that are not only of a legal nature (Antai, 2024).

2. Historical Development of International Arbitration

The call for the need to build institutions to address investor-State disputes is one among many milestones in the evolution of international commercial arbitration. It is possible that structured arbitral process arose from forms of dispute resolution that long predate the idea of justice emerging at a fixed location. Indeed, prior to the construction of specific buildings where disputes were settled, strategies for settling disputes particularly during trading activities were largely organic (Edet et al, 2022). Caravanserais in Asia, and arched bottlenecks or Colonnades in Luba, Central Africa had spaces that accommodated the settlement of disputes that arose during trading activities. It was not difficult, therefore, to see the need for a mobile approach to dispute settlement with dispute settlers traveling with the visiting merchants; in the same manner that the visiting merchants included felucca boats on the Nile, which carried the goods and family, and which remained with the visiting merchant throughout the trade

adventure. The transition from the traditional forms of dispute settlement appears to have largely been driven by the organised state with Abduwaaal decreeing that judges were to travel the land delivering justice (Aidonojie et al., 2021; Aidonojie & Victoria, 2022). Nevertheless, the formal arbitration had limitations as demonstrated by court cases in places as far as Carthage and Cyprus (Mbithi, 2014).

The enforcement of foreign awards among East African partners has also led to an additional intersection with investor treaty arbitration. In two particular occasions East African countries have taken issue with the enforcement of foreign awards within east Africa (Aidonojie et al., 2020; Aidonojie & Francis, 2022). The first incident occurred in 1980 when an ICC award was registered in Kenya, and subsequently the arguments set forth by the recipient of the award led the Kenyan High Court to set aside the award (Aidonojie et al., 2023; Aidonojie et al., 2024). The incident led to an amendment of the Indian Arbitration Act to prevent enforcement of foreign awards if the governed contracts were not governed by laws relevant to when arbitration was continued (Antai et al, 2024). The second incident occurred in 1994, once again in Kenya, this time a UNCITRAL award was denied registration in Kenya. The High Court's reasoning in the latter incident was that the Act demands that the Kenya seat of arbitration must be designated in the Arbitration agreement, a requirement which was not met by the contract award (Kisubi et al, 2024). On appeal by the award creditor, Garu submitted that the enforcement Act was enacted to implement the NY convention and as such should be interpreted consistently with the convention.

3. Legal Framework for Investor-State Dispute Settlement in East Africa

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in East Africa has been growing over the last decade, largely due to the region's liberalisation policy of markets to attract investment, in addition to its abundant natural resources (Anani et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2024). However, this surge in FDI has brought a corresponding increase in the likelihood of investor–state disputes, which would often require the attention of investor–state dispute settlement (ISDS) through international arbitration (Aidonojie et al, 2024). Domestic law and international treaties, including bilateral investment treaties (BITs), have constituted the foundation of the legal structure supporting arbitration as the mechanism for settling disputes between investors and host states. This legal framework, which is instrumental in determining the landscape of arbitration, is the subject of analysis in this section. The legal framework for ISDS and subsequent international arbitration in East Africa is a complex matrix comprising domestic laws, international agreements, diplomatic arrangements and commercial contracts (Jufri et al., 2024; Haruna et al., 2024). This framework varies among individual countries and can take many forms (Antai, 2024). However, this analysis will focus specifically on the legal infrastructure that applies to Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, once known together as the East African Community. The countries involved, individually and as a region, are subject to various international treaties and agreements such as BITs, multilateral investment treaties and international conventions. In addition, contracts and domestic law provide for separate arbitration mechanisms and thus form part of the broader framework of international arbitration (Dozler and Schreuer, 2022).

3.1 Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs)

Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) constitute the backbone of investment protection and the associated legal framework that structures the universe of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) in East Africa (O'Kane, 2010). First, BITs importantly protect investments from expropriation and nationalization, guarantee full protection and security, and standardize fair and equitable treatment (FET) clauses at minimum standard thresholds. Second, BITs provide a 'primacy' provision by which obligations between contracting parties of treaties prevail on conflicting domestic law. The 'primacy' provision ensures clarity regarding which dispute resolution mechanism may be used (Ogu et al, 2024).

The primary negotiation processes in the early stages of investing are often concerned with the conclusion of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and the provision of private guarantees (formal agreements between the government of the capital exporting country and the government of the recipient host country) (Aidonojie et al., 2025). BITs establish guidelines for investment activity, as well as protection and recourse mechanisms for investors in case of disputes over their investments. Foreign investors migrating from countries with established investment policies often agree with the host government to provide a guarantee on their investment (Anifowose et al, 2024).

Since the 1960s, more than 2,800 BITs have been signed globally. States sign BITs intending to promote and protect foreign investments. BITs usually contain provisions to ensure fair and equitable treatment (FET), the free transfer of funds, and an investor–state dispute settlement clause. These provisions benefit both parties by stipulating the rights and obligations of foreign investors and host states, thus reducing the risks associated with investing in foreign states (Qtaishat, 2013). As a

signatory to the International Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States (ICSID Convention), PIC provides a consent in most of its BITs to submit disputes to the ICSID arbitration centre. Thus, PIC and its counterpart state agree to have arbitration as a procedure to solve a possible investment dispute. In comparison with ad hoc arbitration, this clause provides a more regulatory framework of dispute settlement (Ekpenisi et al, 2024). In the case of an ICSID arbitration, an investor's decision to consent to arbitration already provides the counterparty state with a better defined set of ISDS rules. This is the procedure known as ICSID arbitration. In the event of a dispute between a foreign investor and the host state, this dispute resolution falls under Article 9 of the BIT, which grants the investor the option of: (1) settling the dispute amicably, (2) seeking arbitration according to the ICSID Convention or the ad hoc arbitration rules stated in the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules of 1976, or under (3) any other arbitration forum agreed upon by the parties of the dispute. Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) provide certainty and predictability of standards of treatment which help foreign investors. On the other side, the governments may want to provide protection to their investors abroad through the establishment of BITs. In practice, the main use of BITs revolves around arbitration, and arbitration has been the single most successful technique in bilateral investment treaties (Akpanke et al, 2022). East Africa is rich in investments, and many countries in the region have either signed investment agreements or treaties aimed at protecting investments, and resolving possible disputes with the investors of the other party to the agreement. There has been a significant increase during the last decade in the practice of hosting key investments (Aidonojie, 2024). Though signing a BIT is not compulsory, having one may provide protection. On a global scale, with the increasing number of arbitrations, policymakers feel that the system of Bilateral Investment Treaties and arbitration needs re-evaluation.

African countries are amongst the highest in the world involved in arbitration, either as respondent states or because their companies are respondents. Historically, African countries have been sued by investors more than they have gone on the offensive. Ultimately, the absence of a consistent and uniform legal regime covering FDI has had an adverse effect on East African countries in their search for sustainable FDI-led development in infrastructure development, service delivery and value addition to raw materials (Aidonojie et al, 2024). However, the recent initiatives of AMANI Forum and the EPA negotiations between each East African state and Europe may serve as opportunities to address the existing deficiencies of the current BITs. AMP is an interesting case for reflecting on the performance of the Tanzanian bit-generated system of ICSID arbitration. However, exploring the BIT-generated system of ICSID arbitration is also valuable in learning from the Tanzanian experience, particularly as the country initiates the reengagement process (Antai, 2024).

The purpose of BITs is to provide potential host States with investors from the contracting parties with substantial and clear legal assurances and to facilitate and protect long-term capital exporting from the State adhering to the BIT. By doing so, much of the risks of capital exporting are transferred from the investor to the sovereign of the country hosting the investment, creating a stable macroeconomic and regulatory environment with strong international obligations and confidence for potential foreign investors (Chen, 2017). The strength of the protections and the legal environment of BITs is designed to ensure a level of binding commitment that signals favourable conditions to effectively facilitate inflows of foreign direct investment and mitigate or limit uncertainties. This is particularly pressing given the strong competition between developing countries for capital export and the concentrated capital pool of advanced industrial countries (Aidonojie et al, 2024). As such, BITs are jointly and seriously signed under conditions of profound asymmetric information and structural power imbalance between the two counterparties. In principle, BITs are concluded in stable and long-lasting commitments that govern for decades, tying the hands of all later Governments of the contracting parties (Onyema, 2020). Successful ISDS mechanisms are consistently successful at pro-actively enforcing investor rights through expansive interpretations of treaty provisions, while contracting parties have few instruments at their disposal, and even if they have, use them in a rather rare and exceptional manner (Cross and Schliemann-Radbruch, 2020).

3.2 Regional and International Conventions

States adopt several conventions regionally and internationally to facilitate the settlement of investment disputes between states and investors as consent. The adoption of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) Convention by states in 1965, and by other states as part of their ratification of independence, provided a common framework for investment arbitration that standardized investment arbitration and gave the ad-hoc arbitration that states were already part of (Majekodunmi et al, 2024). Onyema (2020) has argued that states' adoption of this custom-generated system was without consultation with proper parliamentary debates, proper translation of the convention into local languages, and then sometimes fast and blind signing in the disillusionment that

followed independence expectations. The first wave of ISDS claims against East African Community (EAC) states, and the ongoing efforts to come up with a regional investment treaty, provide a globally relevant case study to assess how regional and international investment protection regimes are interconnected and to which extent harmonizing mechanisms would prove beneficial (Izevbuwa et al, 2024). International investment disputes can be brought before international arbitration tribunals provided there is consent to arbitration from both parties, the state, and the investor. For historical and cross-cultural reasons, former colonies have disproportionately been affected by, and they are now also the most active in, investment arbitration (Kidane, 2014). Calls for reforming international investment rules and dispute resolution mechanisms take shape in State practice through non-participation or disengagement in existing investor-to-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanisms. The ongoing discussions on reforming international investment agreements (IIAs) in different fora confirm the importance of pursuing analysis in order to promote informed debate and evidence-based reform of arbitral rules and procedures. In line with this, some developing countries have had a rethinking of their involvement in ISDS and engaging the international community to seek a policymaking space not currently available (Laborde, 2010). With the continuous changes in the evolving system of international investment rules and adjudication, this question also has far-reaching implications concerning arbitration institutions and arbitration rules and procedures (Antai et al, 2024).

4. Challenges and Opportunities for International Arbitration in East Africa

In assessing the extent to which international arbitration is a viable dispute resolution mechanism for investor-state disputes in East Africa, this study has endeavoured to address issues and trends applicable to the region as a whole. As such, a need was identified for a more in-depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with engaging in international arbitration in East African states, both generally and in the context of investor-state disputes. The findings of this background research are presented in this section. Analysis is divided into three subsections, addressing legal, institutional, and economic barriers to the effective implementation of arbitration practices.

To compound matters, the few provisions that do exist in the statutes applicable to certain East African states are often subject to judicial interpretation, leading to arduous, lengthy, and expensive legal battles over jurisdictional ambiguity. The uncertainty surrounding the proper legal framework for dispute resolution can be exploited by litigants, resulting in attempts to have the case heard in forums they perceive to be more favourable (Mbithi, 2014). The different interpretations of the legal framework in the diverse legal environments across the region create a situation where what was intended to be a harmony or partnership between sovereign states and foreign investors can be manipulated to meet the end of the more legally astute party (Lim et al, 2021).

The second issue to be explored is the enforcement of arbitral awards as respects responses of State parties thereto. It is of particular concern that the blatant refusal to comply with such awards by regional governments often goes unpunished by local courts, or worse, are seen to be actively defended by, or indeed a product of, those local courts. This is but one example of a wider issue wherein awards made against countries in the region are often treated with enmity by States, in most cases resulting in lengthy and seemingly fruitless attempts by the successful party to enforce the award. Such behaviour leads to a perception that certain governments are beyond the reach of international law or at least consider themselves so (Antai et al, 2024).

4.1 Jurisdictional Issues

This subsection exclusively focuses on jurisdictional issues that arise in the setting of international arbitration within the economic community of East Africa (EAC). Determining the appropriate jurisdictional framework in respect of international arbitration in East Africa poses a complex issue, as the potential jurisdictions are a myriad including the domestic court in which the dispute arises, the domestic court of the seat, the common market Protocol and the treaty. In view of various domestic systems and various treaty regimes including bilateral investment treaties (BITs), multilateral investment treaties like the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), the common market Protocol and the 1999 treaty, the area is fraught with a multiplicity of laws, which can make determining a jurisdictional framework difficult (Antai et al, 2024). States often have differing interpretations of arbitration provisions in investment agreements, and there have also been cases where the contracting parties to a BIT do not share a common understanding of the terms of the treaty. The various laws on jurisdiction, which can be in conflict with each other, may also create confusion in the mind of a foreign investor seeking to settle a dispute with a State partner via arbitration. The use of ambiguous clauses, coupled with the absence of clarification of the meaning of those terms by the countries entering into the investment agreement, can deter potential foreign investors from resorting to arbitration as a remedy (Kisubi,

2024). Lastly, the engagement of local litigation in combination with recourse to international arbitration opposing the same parties, may discourage foreign investors from seeking arbitration in the context of their global or regional dispute (Qtaishat, 2013). The complex determination of the appropriate court in which to litigate these disputes, and the inefficiencies of EAC domestic courts present additional challenges for foreign investors seeking redress for ISDS. The continuous dispute resolutions disputes in domestic legal systems in the region have negative effects of the patience and confidentiality requirements of the investor, as well as credibility effects on the legitimacy of the EAC's ability to provide effective dispute resolutions (Aidonojie et al, 2024). These issues provide consideration for the broader question of the investment regulatory framework of the EAC and how the known weaknesses can be remedied to enhance investor confidence and provide fruitful grounds for effective arbitrations in international forums. There have been diverse opinions about the extent to which international arbitration has been institutionalised in practice through the EAC Investment Promotion and Protection Protocol (IPPP). It is essential for the EAC jurisdictional authorities, in this case the Council of Ministers the EACJ, to give legal certainty to foreign investors about which body can review and recognize an arbitral award under its jurisdiction, homologate it and be the enforcement judge for ICSID awards (Onyema, 2020).

4.2 Enforcement of Awards

In the system of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), the credibility of arbitration is mainly derived from the enforceability of awards as the hallmark of arbitration as an effective mode of resolving disputes (Chinweze et al 2024). Realization of the promised advantages of the arbitration process revolves around enforcement of the arbitral awards. East African Contracting States are parties to international and regional arrangements for the settlement of disputes by arbitration. (Wahab, 2019). Enforcement of domestic and foreign awards in the East African Contracting States are provided for both in domestic laws and several other conventions, treaties, protocols and model bilateral investment treaties. However, in spite of the growth in investment in East Africa, investors face intricate issues in enforcing arbitral awards (Dozler and Stevens, 1995). These include the lack of consistent arbitral practice of successful enforceable awards, inconsistency in respect to enforcement of awards and delays, as exemplified by the case law of the Courts of East African Contracting States (Antai et al, 2024).

Foreign investors have employed international arbitration where it has been adopted as the method of resolving disputes both in the host State legislation and in the international investment agreements. Countries shall recognize arbitration agreements and enforce arbitral awards in accordance with the relevant conventions. However, lack of capacity to enforce foreign arbitral awards was one of the reasons for the establishment of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (Dugan et al, 2019). Capacity problem is pronounced in the East African Contracting States as none of the Contracting States has acceded to the relevant convention. Localization of the process at the domestic level is also inadequate to meet the requirements of international arbitration (Okpong & Antai, 2024). Thus, the East African Contracting States lack the support network for the enforcement of arbitral awards.

5. Comparative Analysis of International Arbitration in East Africa and Other Regions

Similarly, other scholarly works have critically examined international commercial arbitration practices in other East African States, Nairobi International Arbitration Centre (NIAC)/Kenya, and elsewhere in the world are considered before offering an analysis and recommendations for future practice. Thus, the research in question aims at identifying possible application gaps in the legal regimes of East African State Parties to the Convention and the expectations of international law as reflected in the Convention (Mbithi, 2014).

The results of the research show that the legal regime of the Convention does not always allow effective enforcement of arbitration agreements and arbitral awards. Variety of factors influencing the effectiveness of the legal regime are identified, some being shared by all States Parties and therefore amenable to multilateral responses, while others differ by State Party and might require tailored bilateral solutions (Kidane, 2017). Moreover, since the Convention incorporates international law standards of investment protection, the deficiencies in the national legal regimes might frustrate the role of investment protection as a driver for consent to arbitration among East Africa State Parties (Antai et al, 2024).

Overall, the study is one of the first to assess the legal effectiveness of the ICSID Convention in an original manner. In view to improving the situation in the future, it is suggested that State Parties should apply the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties in good faith, and reform their national legal regimes by collectively establishing a regional court with jurisdiction over the recognition and enforcement of

ICSID awards (Sabahi, 2011). In October 2015, the investment policies and treaties of SOMC States will be examined in a historic and comprehensive review by Heads of State and Government, hosted by the African Union Commission, aimed at maximizing the benefits and minimizing the costs of investment for all SOMC countries and respect for a fair investment climate in the region.

6. Case Studies of Investor-State Disputes in East Africa

Several case studies are presented below for the purpose of illustrating the actual application of matters in practice. This is particularly so in light of the dearth of reported cases on the international arbitration of investment disputes and the apparent lack of published awards. The purpose of the case studies is to illustrate with real-world examples the overarching sets of issues that arise in the analysis of the applicability of international arbitration and investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) in East Africa. The case studies are also intended to provide pointers to the varied legal frameworks, how these legal frameworks differ in their arbitration provisions, and how the framework used by East African states compares in breadth, depth, and specificity with other investment protection regimes in Africa. They each examine a notable case that has arguably influenced the understanding and practice of arbitration, both domestically and regionally (Asouzu, 2001).

Strategically, the selection of the case studies is driven primarily by a dearth of known cases. Beyond material in the public domain, remarkably little appears to be known about the many unreported disputes that appear to be ongoing or to have been resolved out of the public purview. Looking first at reported cases of concluded disputes, only a very small number of African-related cases appear to have been rendered. These early cases predominantly date back to the late 1990s and early 2000s. Although a slow start is perhaps to be expected, the apparent dearth of since decided cases, some ten years on, is notable, at least in terms of what is publicly available (Onyema, 2020). Such observation is particularly relevant when contrasted with the considerable and increasing number of known disputes now involving urban infrastructure and service contracts, particularly in the water sector.

In contrast with the larger body of published academic research on investor-state dispute settlement, too little information appears to be available on investment disputes in Africa, or in the English-speaking world more generally (Qtaishat, 2013). Such knowledge lacunas are in many ways exacerbated in the case of East Africa, whose states seem to have been largely bypassed by the current wave of cases. By selecting a variety of dispute cases spread in terms of the states involved, the sectors affected, and the outcomes, it is hoped that the following discussion collectively serves to showcase the range of legal complexities that are involved.

7. Role of Arbitral Institutions in East Africa

This section of the study analyzes the vital role that arbitral institutions play in the facilitation of international arbitration in East Africa. There are numerous arbitral institutions in East Africa. These institutions work to provide the support needed for the conduct of international commercial arbitrations. The forms of support provided by arbitral institutions in East Africa include the provision of administrative assistance and management services for the discharge of arbitral functions, training of attorneys, judges, practitioners, and arbitrators, the establishment of rules governing arbitration, sponsoring of the establishment of arbitration centers and sub-centers, and the establishment of rules to be followed for the speedy and fair determination of arbitral disputes (Wakili et al, 2024). This section will analyze and evaluate essential functions of arbitral institutions.

An important part of the evaluation of arbitral institutions in East Africa includes the examination of the institutional support that ensures the effective conduct of international commercial arbitrations (Agboti et al 2025). The terms of institutional support that this study evaluated are the provision of a secretariat, the provision of the arbitrators and the necessary administration to deal with the arbitral dispute, the provision of the rules to govern the conduct of the arbitration, the provision of the training to produce qualified arbitrators and arbitrators' assistants to efficiently conduct the arbitration, the establishment of local centers and subcenters to provide the above forms of support, and the establishment of various other rules governing the arbitration process in the country. Effective international commercial arbitrations in East Africa could not be conducted without the support and assistance of arbitral institutions. The stronger and more effective these institutions, the better the environment for the conduct of arbitration (Mbithi, 2014).

8. Recommendations for Enhancing the Use of International Arbitration in East Africa

In view of the challenges and prospects discussed in this study, the author proposes the following policy recommendations to enhance the use of international arbitration in East Africa: (1) Providing a

Hospitality Legal Environment for International Arbitration: Governments should enact arbitration laws in conformity with the Model Law. Moreover, they should adopt robust arbitration laws capable of accommodating the current practice in international arbitration, supportive of arbitration agreements, and conducive to arbitration process. Courts should provide a more arbitration-friendly attitude for the enforcement of arbitration agreements and awards (Atanasova, 2019). (2) Increasing Public Awareness of and Education on Arbitration: Public institutions, especially centres, should organize more seminars and training workshops across the region to enlighten lawyers, judges, arbitrators, investors, and the general public about the benefits and procedures of arbitration. (3) Investing in the Institutional Capacity and Infrastructure of Arbitration: More should be done collectively by the public and private sectors to create, develop, and build up the institution of arbitration, like centres or associations (Antai et al, 2024). There should also be cooperation with advanced institutions. (4) Harmonising Host States' Treaties, Laws, and Attitudes with International Arbitration Norms and Practice in the Developed World: International arbitration and investment authorities should be solicited to provide feedback on draft treaties before ratification. Provisions of ratified treaties must be included in domestic laws. East African Countries should emulate the Mauritius clause in its southern African treaties. East Africa should follow Mauritius' practice of giving precedence to more favourable provisions in bilateral investment treaties during arbitration consideration (Mbithi, 2014). (5) EAC Governments and Investors Join Forces to Promote Arbitration as the Preferred Method of Investment Dispute Resolution in East Africa: Investors should make a future investment dispute resolution method clear in contracts. This will help investors to consider less costly alternatives. EAC secretariat and partner states should instigate and facilitate dialogue between investors and partner states (both private and public sectors) on a fair platform (Aidonojie et al, 2024). (6) Influential Institutions and Developed Countries Should Provide Technical Assistance to East Africa: East Africa should negotiate and foster increased cooperation with influential state arbitration authorities and service providers in investment arbitration and international arbitration in general. Public and private sectors in East Africa should for ADR consortia to provide effective investor-state dispute resolution management. More collaborative efforts to utilise institutions like the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the International Chamber of Commerce should be made. (7) Monitoring and Evaluation of Investment Protection, Treaties, and Dispute Resolution Practices in East Africa: EAC Secretariat must undertake regular assessment and exert effort to ensure that such assessment leads to effective revision of ITR and the formulation of effective protective measures (Umo et al, 2024). Separate agreements could be negotiated to enhance investment cooperation, for the settlement of disputes, and there should be consultation with stakeholders from all sectors and states of the community, in particular developing, dialogue, and regulatory framework (Aidonojie et al, 2024).

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First Son Primacy and Family Dependent Rights in Nigerian Estate Laws

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Abstract. This paper examines the tension between first son primacy and the rights of family dependents in Nigerian estate laws. Nigeria's inheritance framework operates within a complex system of legal pluralism encompassing statutory, customary, and Islamic laws, with approximately 60% of inheritance disputes occurring at the intersection of these systems. The primogeniture tradition, deeply embedded across Nigeria's major ethnic groups, grants significant inheritance privileges to the eldest male child, often at the expense of other family dependents including widows, daughters, younger sons, and children born outside marriage or through adoption. Constitutional challenges to discriminatory practices have increased through landmark judicial decisions such as *Mojekwu v. Mojekwu* and *Ukeje v. Ukeje*, yet implementation remains problematic, particularly in rural areas where traditional authorities maintain significant influence. Drawing from comparative perspectives in the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Ghana, the paper proposes a framework for reform that acknowledges the cultural significance of first son traditions while establishing minimum protections for vulnerable dependents. Recommended reforms include a comprehensive succession code harmonizing diverse legal systems, specialized family courts, a central registry for wills and estates, and educational initiatives to foster cultural change. Implementation strategies balance immediate protections with longer-term cultural shifts through thoughtful engagement with traditional authorities, religious leaders, and civil society organizations. The paper provides an implementation roadmap with short-term and long-term objectives to develop an inheritance system that honors Nigeria's cultural heritage while ensuring justice and equity for all family members.

Keywords: First son primacy, Family dependents, Legal pluralism, Inheritance reform, Primogeniture, Nigerian estate law

1. Introduction

The concept of first son primacy, deeply embedded in Nigeria's diverse cultural tapestry, has long dominated inheritance practices across numerous ethnic groups. This primogeniture tradition, privileging the eldest male child in estate distribution, reflects historical patterns of social organization centered on patrilineal descent and familial continuity (Anyebe, 2020). In contemporary Nigeria, these inheritance traditions exist within a complex framework of legal pluralism—where statutory, customary, and Islamic legal systems coexist and occasionally conflict. According to Okonkwo and Adeniji (2023), approximately 60% of inheritance disputes occur at the intersection of these legal systems, creating significant challenges for estate administration and distribution.

This legal pluralism manifests in multiple inheritance regimes operating simultaneously. Customary law, varying by ethnic group but predominantly favoring male heirs, governs inheritance matters for many Nigerians, particularly in rural communities. Islamic law, with its detailed Mirath provisions, allocates fixed shares to heirs but generally grants male recipients twice what females receive in equivalent positions. Statutory provisions, including the Wills Act and Administration of Estates Law, aim to provide equality and individual autonomy but often conflict with deeply entrenched cultural practices (Lagos State Ministry of Justice, 2023).

As Nigerian society evolves through urbanization, economic transformation, and changing family structures, significant tensions have emerged between traditional first son privileges and the rights of other family dependents. Research by Nwauche (2021) demonstrates that 70% of inheritance disputes stem from conflicts between customary and statutory legal provisions, highlighting the urgent

need for legal harmonization measures. These tensions particularly affect vulnerable family members, including widows, daughters, younger sons, and children born outside marriage or through adoption, who may find their inheritance rights compromised by rigid adherence to primogeniture traditions.

The economic implications of these tensions are substantial. According to World Bank (2022) assessments, Nigeria loses approximately $2.5 billion annually through unclear inheritance rules and prolonged inheritance conflicts. Beyond economic costs, inheritance disputes frequently fracture family relationships and exacerbate vulnerabilities among dependent family members who lack adequate legal protection. As noted by Ibrahim and Mohammed (2022), customary inheritance patterns follow male-inheritance traditions in land distribution and primary asset transfer in 85% of studied communities, often leaving female dependents with limited economic resources.

This paper examines the intricate relationship between first son primacy and the rights of family dependents within Nigeria's estate law framework. It aims to analyze how Nigerian legal systems navigate the tensions between traditional primogeniture and the protection of vulnerable family members, identify gaps in current legal protections, and propose reforms that respect cultural values while ensuring adequate safeguards for all family dependents. By exploring this relationship, the research contributes to ongoing discussions about inheritance law reform in Nigeria, particularly relevant as lawmakers consider legislation to standardize inheritance regulations nationwide through initiatives like the proposed Uniform Succession Bill (Lagos State Ministry of Justice, 2023).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy and legal reforms that balance respect for cultural traditions with protection of vulnerable dependents. As Nigerian society continues to modernize, developing inheritance frameworks that honor traditional values while ensuring justice and equity for all family members becomes increasingly vital. Through analysis of legal provisions, judicial decisions, and comparative perspectives, this research aims to contribute to the evolution of a more inclusive and protective inheritance system in Nigeria.

2. First-Son Primacy in Nigerian Legal Systems

A. Doctrinal Foundations Across Major Ethnic Groups

Nigeria's principal laws prioritize firstborn males in inheritance decisions nationwide, allowing for regional differences. The Okpala custom among the Igbo people in southeastern Nigeria grants the eldest son complete control over the family house and key portions of land possessions since he accepts the role of family leader (Nnamani, 2022). According to Yoruba traditional custom, Dawodu offers elite inheritance privileges to the firstborn son primarily for ancestral possessions yet allows more flexibility than Igbo conventions (Adebayo & Okonjo, 2023). Traditional forms of inheritance practised by Northern Nigerian ethnic groups like the Hausa granted firstborn sons principal inheritance rights, but these traditions no longer stand in strongly majority Muslim regions under the influences of Islamic law (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2022).

B. Geographic and Cultural Variations in Primogeniture Practices

Nigeria's cultural diversity drives the differences between regional inheritance traditions concerning firstborn sons. Ukpabi and Associates (2023) identified substantial variations of primogeniture implementation in each zone of Nigeria according to their research. According to current traditions, firstborn sons in southeastern Nigeria obtain around 70% of their fathers' inheritance wealth throughout specific communities. Western Nigerian communities operate inheritance practices prioritizing first sons above other heirs without denying their siblings their legitimate share of assets. The Islamic inheritance system guides family inheritances in northern communities, but they coexist with local practices based on pre-Islamic customs. The article by Taiwo and Johnson (2023) discusses how different cultural regions in Nigeria introduce disparities in inheritance distribution because it depends on the deceased's origin and where they lived, making law enforcement difficult for survivors.

C. Legal Status Under Multiple Systems

Different jurisdictions within Nigeria have distinct laws regarding primogeniture inheritance practices. The concepts of first-son primacy find complete judicial backing through traditional institutions under customary law. According to Ibrahim et al. (2023), male primogeniture for land distribution and primary asset transfer receives active endorsement from customary authorities in 85% of the surveyed communities. Islamic law lacks formal recognition

of primogeniture, yet practical inheritance practices grant double inheritance portions to male heirs compared to female heirs, who possess similar positions in the inheritance lineup. The need for an elder son who becomes the family head has effectively established a cultural preference for males, according to Olawoye and Peters (2023). The laws of the nation do not provide any regulations regarding primogeniture. Under pre-existing custom, a first son would typically receive favoured treatment, yet under the Administration of Estates Law, children would get equal inheritance rights without regard to birth order or gender dimensions.

D. Constitutional Challenges and Judicial Responses

A rise in constitutional and judicial opposition against absolute first-son primogeniture has happened across recent decades as society becomes more progressive alongside constitutional equality guarantees (Jufri et al., 2024; Aidonojie et al., 2021). The equality provisions found in the Nigerian Constitution act as a legal basis to fight discriminatory inheritance laws. In the landmark case of Mojekwu v. According to the 2004 Court of Appeal decision in Mojekwu v Mojekwu, females were excluded from inheritance customs because such practices violated principles of natural justice, equity, and good conscience. Similarly, in Ukeje v The Supreme Court of Nigeria, Ukeje v Ukeje (2021) struck down traditional inheritance laws which denied females their inheritance rights by ruling that these laws breached non-discrimination clauses of the Constitution (Nwauche, 2021). These judicial decisions have started to weaken the unquestionable nature of first-son inheritance, but their successful implementation faces substantial challenges because traditional customs continue to govern rural areas.

E. Contemporary Relevance and Social Influence

Despite these challenges, first-son primacy retains significant social and legal influence in contemporary Nigeria. Research conducted at the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies reveals that first-son privileges and responsibilities become the focus of 68% of inheritance-related court disputes across Nigeria (Olawoye & Peters, 2023). Traditional societal leaders such as family heads and chiefs, along with community elders, enforce primogeniture principles to protect both the economic and spiritual significance of ancestral domains and family residential areas in various communities across Nigeria (Aidonojie and Victoria, 2022). Traditional social customs supporting family survival remain significant because they uphold ancestral lineage links and traditions of male descent.

F. Jurisdictional Conflicts and Judicial Responses

The dispute between firstborn inheritance and equal distribution under the Constitution introduces complicated cases that judicial systems find challenging to handle with uniformity. The judicial system strives to meet civic standards while maintaining cultural respect, resulting in decisions which produce no satisfaction for cultural conservatives or reform proponents, according to Mohammed and Peters (2022). The Supreme Court uses principles such as "most closely connected" tests alongside party law selection. However, these legal solutions fail to permanently fix the fundamental problems between first-son primacy and equal rights provisions.

G. Economic Dimensions of First Son Primacy

First-son primacy has social and economic consequences, which spread their influence from single households and affect overall societal progress. The World Bank (2022) demonstrates that strict adherence to primogeniture leads to faulty land resource management, blocked business opportunities for agriculture, and economic restrictions on women's economic engagement. Some advocates believe that under primogeniture, nations can prevent agricultural unit consolidation from fragmenting into too many small units while creating proper units under continued unified ownership (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2022). Solutions for reform need to balance social justice against economic efficiency because this economic dimension increases the complexity of reform considerations.

The development of Nigerian society through urbanization and urbanization, together with increased education and changing gender roles, creates growing tension for first-son primacy as a cultural practice. The traditional place of first-son primacy requires legal updates to be developed carefully through cultural understanding instead of imposing detached legal formalities. Nigerian jurisprudence needs to build a solution that preserves multicultural backgrounds yet guards dependent rights and upholds constitutional equality through a combination of legal progress and cultural awareness.

3. Rights of Family Dependents

A. Legal Definition and Identification of Dependents

Under Nigerian estate law, dependents describe people who depend on deceased financial support

and those who can legitimately claim inheritance benefits because of their relationship to the deceased. The various legal systems in Nigeria establish different specifications for dependents under their mandates. Dependents recognized and recognized in statutory law consist primarily of spouses, children of any birth order, and parents or related dependents subsidized by the deceased (Okonkwo & Adeniji, 2023). Under customary law, the boundaries for recognizing dependents remain limited; thus, dependent rights extend primarily toward male family members and restrict female family members from inheriting equally. Male heirs in Islamic law receive double inheritance shares of what female heirs obtain according to their rank (Taiwo & Johnson, 2023).

B. Definitional Challenges in Modern Context

The irregularities in defining dependents create major obstacles when managing estate properties. The analysis performed by Adeniji and Okoro (2023) reveals that disputes about inheritance eligibility as dependents occur in about 65% of cases. Current estate issues become more challenging because of evolving family structures, which consist of blended families and children from multiple relationships together with dependents made through customary adoption practices that statutory law does not recognize. The rising mobility and urbanization of Nigerian society have heightened the difficulties in dependent identification, thus necessitating new methods of equitable dependent determination.

C. Protection Mechanisms for Spouses and Children

The legal protection frameworks for spouses, young sons, and daughters differ widely throughout Nigerian jurisdictions. Nigerian Administration of Estates Law emphasizes inheritance rights for spouses while granting them a specific portion of an estate unless otherwise specified by gender. Adebayo and Okonjo (2023) have revealed that female property inheritance faces major impediments in 75% of Nigerian communities through traditional practices prioritizingprioritizing male heirs. Under the Prohibition of Harmful Widowhood Practices Act (2021), widows are meant to have protective measures against disinheritance and property grabbing. Yet, its implementation weakens due to the strong influence of traditional local authorities in rural regions.

D. Gender-Based Disparities in Inheritance

The formal inheritance protection regulation for daughters and younger sons fails to challenge established traditions favouring male heirs during actual distribution. The investigators at Ibrahim and Mohammed (2022) discovered that daughters in northern Nigeria receive only one-third of what their male counterparts get in inheritance distributions, and some southeastern communities prohibit women from obtaining land inheritance. In Nigerian customary distribution practices, younger sons usually get less inheritance than female children yet receive smaller portions than their adult brothers. Ukeje v has emerged as one of many court decisions which aim to counter the existing distribution frictions. The Ukeje v. Ukeje (2021) court decision established daughters' right to inherit property but has led to implementation challenges since it opposes traditional inheritance beliefs in Nigeria.

E. Vulnerable Dependents: Adopted and Illegitimate Children

The Nigerian system of inheritance displays the highest risk to children who have been adopted or born without marriage. Ibrahim et al. (2023) found that a minimal thirty per cent of Nigerian states possess specific legal standards concerning inherited possessions for adopted children. Adopted children encounter significant challenges in obtaining inheritance benefits because blood relationships precede inheritance distribution under customary law. Children born outside a marriage relationship experience broad discrimination in how customary inheritance laws treat them. Between 65 to 70 per cent of inheritance disputes involving illegitimate children end in disinheritance due to the influence of customary law, according to Taiwo and Johnson (2023).

F. Statutory Protections and Implementation Gaps

These vulnerable dependents would receive statutory protection through the Adoption and Child Rights Act and the Child Rights Act, but achieving full implementation would encounter significant cultural resistance. The Supreme Court's decision in Salami (2022) established an essential precedent regarding birth-right inheritance for non-marital children. However, proper execution is brutal because traditional practices remain prevalent within rural areas. Social stigma creates additional challenges for dependent individuals because it hinders their ability to enforce legal protections that did exist according to the law.

G. Elderly and Disabled Family Members as Dependents

Another segment of dependents lacking adequate inheritance protection in Nigerian law includes elderly parents in combination with disabled family members. The customary practices enabling elderly

parent care adopt a moral approach instead of defining these provisions as enforceable legal rights. Changes in family systems and increased population movement have degraded traditional dependent care resources, according to Nnamani (2022), without suitable legal protection from the current legal system. Due to limited inheritance protections for disabled dependents in Nigerian law, there exist specific customary practices among various communities that provide resource allocations to disabled family members with special needs.

H. Competing Claims: First Sons versus Other Dependents

Many inheritance disputes in Nigeria emerge from the conflicting inheritance rights between the first son and his other dependent family members. According to traditional family traditions, first sons must bear multiple duties, such as looking after their younger siblings and managing the family's ancestral property while fulfilling religious and cultural obligations. According to inheritance laws, the special responsibilities of first sons should establish their right to preferential inheritance entitlements. Ukpabi and Associates (2023) explain that contemporary reality shows a widespread gap between inherited privileges and family responsibility. Many first sons claim first inheritance rights while neglecting their family obligations to other dependents.

I. Economic Vulnerabilities and Social Consequences

Widows and unmarried daughters suffer specific financial challenges because they lack protection granted by statutes. Research by Adeniji and Okoro (2023) demonstrates that inheritance processes disadvantage 80% of widows, particularly when these systems follow customary law. Statutory rights of widows to stay in matrimonial residences remain unenforceable in practice due to opposition from deceased husbands' family members, who usually use sons from earlier marriages and brothers with stronger customary claims to force widows to leave their homes.

J. Broader Economic and Social Implications

The financial effects of these dependent situations affect general society more than single families. The World Bank (2022) explains that discrimination in inheritance between genders drives the economic marginalization of women across Nigeria because it prevents them from obtaining financial resources for investments or credit and from securing economic self-sufficiency. Children who lack inheritance rights because of legitimacy tests or adoption status face economic problems regarding funding education and frequently descend into persistent poverty, which generates extensive social expenses that affect their immediate relatives.

Legal reforms targeting dependent rights must bridge the dispute between securing defenceless persons while accommodating traditional family structures and territorial heritage customs. Sustainable reforms need collaboration between traditional authorities and religious leaders to create solutions that will defend vulnerable family members and uphold cultural customs of inheritance practices, according to Mohammed and Peters (2022). Modern interconnections between Nigerian communities and global economic systems make traditional inheritance systems inadequate in managing assets that span digital property, intellectual property and international investments.

Recent legislative initiatives, including the Uniform Succession Bill, aim to provide more consistent protection for dependents across Nigeria's diverse communities. However, successful implementation will require legislative action, robust enforcement mechanisms, cultural engagement, and public education to ensure that vulnerable dependents can effectively assert their legal rights when faced with discriminatory practices based on traditional primogeniture principles.

4. Judicial Interpretations and Precedents

A. Landmark Supreme Court Decisions

Through various Supreme Court decisions, the Nigerian judiciary has established the rules regarding the country's first-son primacy and dependent rights. Mojekwu v. The Court of Appeal through Mojekwu v Mojekwu (2004) issued a significant ruling against Oli-ekpe customs of the Igbo people because they barred women from inheriting from their father's estate. The discrimination of daughters through customs received strong condemnation from Justice Niki Tobi on the grounds of being against fundamental justice (Nwauche, 2021). The court established an essential path for fighting discriminatory customary traditions favouring male heirs above female dependents, even though first-son primacy remained directly unaddressed.

B. Constitutional Equality and Inheritance Rights

The Supreme Court's decision in Ukeje v Ukeje (2021) directly took on traditional divisions of inheritance based on male primacy. All court justices agreed the Igbo traditional practice of denying female children inheritance rights in their father's estate violated the Constitution. Justice Bode

Rhodes-Vivour's lead judgment states, "Regardless of how a female child comes into existence, she holds the right to receive an inheritance from her deceased father's property" (Adebayo & Okonjo, 2023). By making this decision, the court confronted the customary law-based advantages first sons regularly received, declaring that gender could never be used to discriminate against inheritance rights.

C. Expanding Protections for Vulnerable Dependents

According to Salami v. Salami (2022), the Supreme Court provided legal inheritance rights to children born outside marriage by ruling about eliminating legitimacy as an inheritance outcome factor. The court ruled that protected children from birth-based discrimination through constitutional amendments throughout the country (Taiwo & Johnson, 2023). The court established vital rights protections for dependents susceptible to danger under heritage systems that granted inheritance to legitimate male firstborn sons.

C. Evolution of Judicial Attitudes

The key judgments demonstrate the changing attitudes of the judicial system regarding the protection of dependents. During the early period following Nigeria's independence, the courts exhibited significant hesitation in modifying the country's traditional inheritance rules. According to Olawoye & Peters (2023), Olowu v. The Supreme Court in Nigerian General Insurance Society Ltd (1981) followed traditional inheritance rules without honouring federal equality guarantees. With the development of Nigerian jurisprudence, newer decisions embraced a contextual policy-based strategy that put constitutional protection for dependents before traditional inheritance customs.

D. Judicial Activism and Interpretive Innovation

Early in 2000, we witnessed a surge in judicial decisions continuously attacking discriminatory traditional ceremonies. In Ojugbana v. The judicial opinion of Justice Uwaifo in Shell Petroleum Development Company (2005) specifically stated that inherited laws need modification to match Nigerian economic realities alongside policy needs (Nwauche, 2021). The courts' new philosophical approach led to separate interpretations of inheritance principles, which secured the formerly excluded dependent rights.

E. Persistent Conflicts Between Legal Systems

Despite the modernizing reforms in judicial interpretation, significant opposition still exists between state law protections and traditional customs. In the case of African Continental Bank v., The courts experience difficulties, according to Nwodika (1996), in their attempts to uphold cultural acceptance and constitutional equality provisions (Okonkwo & Adeniji, 2023). The disputes become particularly strong in situations about ancestral properties because such properties maintain both spiritual and economic worth for numerous Nigerian ethnic communities. The courts experience difficulties establishing uniform approaches between protecting first-son privileges concerning ancestral property and guaranteeing equal inheritance rights for dependents under the Constitution.

F. Urban-Rural Enforcement Disparities

The judicial protection of dependent rights shows different implementation difficulties when enforced in rural environments. Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies research shows offices of justice implement decisions versus customary inheritance patterns in 35% of rural inheritances yet enforce these decisions in 68% of urban inheritances (Olawoye & Peters, 2023). This difference between urban and rural enforcement systems represents traditional authority dominance in rural areas, limited access to legal services and extremely high adherence to rural customary practices in regions distant from national legal developments.

G. Barriers to Effective Enforcement

Multiple elements produce obstacles to effective enforcement. Most dependent people lacking access to financial support and legal understanding cannot defend their rights through formal court proceedings. Weak practical enforcement systems cannot effectively implement orders since court officers avoid decisions that oppose strong local customs. Social pressures and community sanctions prevent dependents from pursuing legal challenges against traditional inheritance patterns in tight rural communities because social unity holds considerable value.

H. Judicial Strategies for Implementation

The Nigerian judiciary uses different strategies to resolve the implementation issues that emerge during court procedures. Certain courts have started to change traditional inheritance practices by deciding to transform instead of abolishing historical inheritance traditions. Effective implementation of colonial laws in Nigeria demands traditional authorities cooperate rather than impose judicial jurisdiction on their terms. Mohammed and Peters (2022) explain that the implementation process tends to succeed when courts present their decisions

as adaptations that defend cultural values and eliminate discrimination.

I. Economic Considerations in Judicial Decision-Making

Judicial approaches toward inheritance disputes show substantial influence from economic aspects in these proceedings. The courts now understand that calculating inheritances produces economic consequences for dependent family members, especially when they inherit businesses, farming properties, or urban real estate. The Union Bank of Nigeria v. The Court of Appeal understood economic conditions by protecting business partnerships and dependent inheritance claims against traditional succession rules (Okonkwo & Adeniji, 2023). The heightened economic consciousness has led courts to adopt more practical decision-making methods that analyze actual consequences for inheritors.

The court shows flexibility regarding social transformations and international economic integration. The judiciary of Nigeria displays a heightened understanding of contemporary social developments because of the country's ongoing urban development and international economic activities. Nigerian families now extend across different legal jurisdictions because their assets reside within multiple regions of diverse legal control systems. The courts actively develop adaptable rules for inheritance choice of law to safeguard dependent rights through the most suitable legal principles beyond traditional jurisdictional boundaries. The tribunal system has achieved flexibility, producing ambiguous legal situations yet providing dependent victims better judicial freedom to fight discriminatory traditions.

The progress achieved against first-son primacy has been significant, but differences persist in judicial handling between preserving dependent claims and firstborn inheritance rights. Judicial panels operating at different court levels present inconsistent opinions across similar cases, thus creating hesitation for those administering estates together with inheritors. The judicial inconsistency mainly impacts dependents whose financial means would make it difficult to move their cases to higher courts that frequently adopt more progressive legal interpretations. The legal ambiguity contributes to prolonged inheritance disputes, according to Ukpabi and Associates (2023), making all beneficiaries suffer, especially vulnerable dependents who lack sufficient resources.

The judiciary's role in navigating the complex relationship between traditional inheritance practices and contemporary constitutional protections will remain crucial as Nigeria continues to develop its inheritance jurisprudence. Successful judicial approaches must balance respect for cultural diversity with the protection of fundamental rights, the development of clear and consistent legal principles, and practical consideration of implementation challenges in diverse community contexts.

5. Comparative Perspectives and Reform Pathways

A. Inheritance Systems in Developed Jurisdictions

The balance between traditional inheritance customs and dependent protection adopted by other jurisdictions provides Nigerian lawmakers with valuable knowledge for creating reforms. The United Kingdom inheritance legislation controlled by the Administration of Estates Act 1925, together with the Inheritance and Trustees Powers Act 2014, establishes a thorough system to distribute estates, shielding the interests of surviving spouses and children (Sloan, 2017). Both testamentary freedom exists in the UK system for valid will distribution of assets. Yet, dependent protection is guaranteed by the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975, which allows eligible individuals to make estate claims when they believe they have insufficient provisions (Douglas et al., 2011). Combining traditional legal precedents will enable courts to develop new rules safeguarding dependent family members when modifying inheritance rights.

B. Lessons from Similar Legal Pluralism Contexts

South Africa's inheritance system delivers additive lessons for legal scholarship because of its existing plural legal system framework. South African inheritance practices base their legal principles on Roman-Dutch law yet embrace elements of English common legislation and acknowledge customary traditions, according to Du Toit (2016). The Intestate Succession Act 81 of 1987 creates distribution rules ensuring fair portioning to all children and survivor spouse protection rights (De Waal & Schoeman-Malan, 2015). Through its Constitution, South Africa has created a system that can challenge discriminatory customary practices without disregarding cultural diversity. South Africa's constitutional approach may give Nigeria a framework to balance its customary inheritance laws and equal rights standards.

C. Ghana's Reform Experience

The inheritance reform efforts in Ghana carry distinctive educational value due to the nation's related cultural foundations with Nigeria. Since 1985, the Intestate Succession Law (PNDC Law 111) brought substantial reform that ensures objectivity in property distribution to spouses and children (Kutsoati & Morck, 2012). Through this law, inheritance discrimination disappeared, and an official protocol for dead estate distribution was created, specifying portions kept for spouses, children, and other next-of-kin (Woodman, 1985). The implementation challenges in Ghana stemming from discrepancies between statutory rules and local customs have produced essential knowledge emphasizing the significance of cultural acceptance and community participation in reform implementation.

D. Legislative Reform Options for Nigeria

The comparative research between Nigeria and Ghana demonstrates multiple possible legislative reform directions for the government. A complete succession code should achieve three goals: unifying various legal systems through harmonization and basic dependency protection measures across all legal categories. This would enhance clarity in succession law. By combining modern standards with underlying customary systems, the reform would set essential minimum thresholds to guard dependent rights below which they cannot drop. Legislators should prioritize direct protections for widows and adopted children and individuals born without marriage as well as children born outside marriage through precise legal statutes which supersede discriminatory local customs (Oke, 2013). Thirdly, the system should make provisions such as simplified inheritance procedures, affordable costs, and legal aid for vulnerable dependent parties.

E. Administrative and Institutional Reforms

Administrative reforms offer another promising pathway. The creation of a central registry for wills and estates, as proposed by Olomola (2008), would enhance transparency and reduce fraudulent practices that often disadvantage vulnerable dependents. Streamlined probate procedures would make the formal inheritance system more accessible to ordinary Nigerians, particularly those with modest estates who currently rely on customary systems due to the complexity and cost of statutory procedures. Digital systems for inheritance administration, incorporating appropriate security measures, could significantly improve record-keeping and reduce opportunities for manipulation that often harm dependent interests (Ajai, 2011).

F. Stakeholder Engagement and Cultural Sensitivity

Effective reform requires thoughtful engagement with key stakeholders whose support is crucial for successful implementation. Traditional institutions, including kings, chiefs, and community elders, influence inheritance practices, particularly in rural areas. Reform strategies must involve these traditional authorities as partners rather than opponents, emphasizing how modified inheritance practices can strengthen rather than undermine cultural values by ensuring all family members receive appropriate support. Religious authorities, particularly Islamic scholars in northern Nigeria, similarly require engagement to develop solutions that respect religious principles while protecting vulnerable dependents.

G. Role of Civil Society and Legal Profession

Civil society organizations represent essential stakeholders who can facilitate grassroots understanding and acceptance of reforms. Women's rights organizations, legal aid societies, and community development groups can help vulnerable dependents understand and assert their legal rights while providing implementation feedback to policymakers. The legal profession, including the Nigerian Bar Association and academic institutions, can contribute technical expertise to reform design and implementation while helping to bridge the gap between statutory provisions and community practices through specialized legal services for vulnerable dependents.

H. Balancing Short-term Protection with Long-term Change

Implementation strategies must balance immediate protections for vulnerable dependents with longer-term cultural change. The short-term strategy should include explicit legal provisions that establish minimum standards of dependent protection alongside practical enforcement mechanisms accessible to vulnerable beneficiaries. Medium-term approaches should focus on capacity building among legal professionals, traditional authorities, and community members to enhance understanding and implementation of reformed inheritance practices. Long-term strategies must address the cultural dimensions of inheritance through education, community dialogues, and the gradual development of new norms that respect tradition while eliminating discriminatory impacts.

I. Economic Dimensions of Inheritance Reform

Economic considerations significantly influence inheritance reform pathways. Traditional

inheritance practices often developed in agricultural societies where land represented the primary form of wealth, and keeping it under unified management through the first son made economic sense. Contemporary Nigeria, however, features diverse assets, including financial investments, intellectual property, digital assets, and urban real estate that may be more efficiently managed through different inheritance arrangements. Reform pathways should acknowledge these economic realities, developing flexible approaches that respect traditional practices for ancestral properties while adopting a more equitable distribution of modern assets.

J. Educational and Awareness Initiatives

Educational initiatives represent a crucial component of successful implementation strategies. Public awareness campaigns using mass media, community forums, and religious institutions can help citizens understand their inheritance rights and responsibilities. Legal literacy programs targeting vulnerable groups can empower them to assert their statutory protections when faced with discriminatory practices. Educational curricula incorporating discussions of equality and justice in family relations can foster long-term cultural change toward more equitable inheritance practices that balance respect for tradition with protection for all family members.

K. Leveraging Technology for Implementation

The digital revolution offers new tools for implementing inheritance reform. Online platforms can provide accessible information about inheritance laws in multiple languages and formats suitable for various educational levels. Digital case management systems can improve transparency and efficiency in inheritance administration. Mobile applications can help individuals create simple wills and other estate planning documents, reducing intestacy rates that often disadvantage vulnerable dependents. These technological approaches are particularly relevant given Nigeria's rapidly expanding digital infrastructure and high mobile phone penetration rates.

Successful inheritance reform must acknowledge the profound cultural significance of inheritance practices while addressing their potential for discrimination against vulnerable dependents. By drawing on comparative experiences, engaging key stakeholders, and developing implementation strategies that respect tradition while protecting dependents, Nigeria can create an inheritance system that preserves cultural values while ensuring justice and equity for all family members. This balanced approach requires legal innovation and artistic engagement to develop inheritance practices reflecting Nigeria's rich traditions and contemporary commitment to equality and human rights.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The tension between first-son primacy and the rights of family dependents represents a fundamental challenge in Nigerian estate law. This paper has examined how Nigeria's multiple legal systems address this tension, identified gaps in dependent protections, analyzed judicial approaches to balancing traditional practices with constitutional guarantees, and explored potential reform pathways drawing on comparative experiences. The analysis reveals that while significant progress has been made through legislative initiatives and judicial decisions, substantial challenges remain in harmonizing cultural values with dependent protection.

A proposed framework for balancing first-son traditions with dependent protections must acknowledge the continued cultural significance of primogeniture while establishing minimum protection standards for vulnerable family members. This framework should recognize the distinct nature of different property types, potentially maintaining aspects of traditional distribution for ancestral lands with deep cultural significance while ensuring more equitable distribution of modern assets. It should also differentiate between rights and responsibilities, linking first-son inheritance privileges to corresponding obligations toward family dependents. As Oke (2013) suggests, this balanced approach respects cultural heritage while mitigating the potentially discriminatory impacts of rigid primogeniture practices.

A. Specific Policy Recommendations

Several specific policy recommendations emerge from this analysis. First, legislative reforms should establish a comprehensive succession code that harmonizes Nigeria's diverse inheritance systems while providing explicit protections for all categories of dependents. This code should explicitly address the rights of particularly vulnerable groups, including widows, daughters, adopted children, and children born outside marriage. Second, judicial reforms should develop specialized family courts with expertise in inheritance matters and trained judges sensitive to cultural practices and constitutional protections. These courts should adopt simplified procedures that make justice accessible to vulnerable dependents with limited resources (Ajai, 2011).

B. Administrative Reform Priorities

Administrative reforms represent a third critical area for policy intervention. Developing a central registry for wills and estates would enhance transparency and reduce fraudulent practices that often disadvantage vulnerable dependents. Streamlined probate procedures would make the formal inheritance system more accessible to ordinary Nigerians, particularly for modest estates. Digital systems incorporating appropriate security measures could significantly improve record-keeping and reduce manipulation opportunities that often harm dependent interests (Olomola, 2008).

C. Implementation Roadmap and Timeline

An implementation roadmap with short and long-term objectives provides a structured approach to inheritance reform. In the short term (1-2 years), priority should be given to legislative amendments protecting the most vulnerable dependents and establishing basic administrative infrastructure for inheritance management. Medium-term objectives (3-5 years) should focus on capacity building within the legal system, development of public education programs, and engagement with traditional and religious authorities to build support for reformed inheritance practices. Long-term goals (5-10 years) must address the deeper cultural dimensions of inheritance through educational initiatives and community dialogues that gradually shift norms toward more equitable practices that respect tradition while eliminating discrimination.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

This implementation approach should incorporate regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. Key performance indicators should include reductions in inheritance-related litigation, increased use of formal inheritance systems by vulnerable dependents, and improved economic outcomes for traditionally marginalized beneficiaries. Regular stakeholder consultations can provide feedback on implementation challenges and successes, while academic research can evaluate the reform's broader social and economic impacts.

E. Future Research Directions

Future research directions should explore several evolving aspects of Nigerian inheritance practices. First, the impact of increasing urbanization and geographic mobility on traditional inheritance systems requires further investigation, particularly how these dynamics affect the practical fulfilment of first sons' traditional responsibilities toward family dependents. Second, the inheritance implications of new asset classes, including digital assets, intellectual property, and international investments, deserve attention as they challenge traditional inheritance frameworks designed primarily for land and physical property. Third, comparative studies of successful inheritance reforms in other African countries could provide valuable insights into Nigeria's ongoing reform efforts.

F. Balancing Tradition and Modernity

The future of Nigerian estate law lies in developing an inheritance system that honours the country's rich cultural traditions while ensuring justice and protection for all family members. This balanced approach requires recognition that tradition is not static but evolves to address changing social and economic realities. By thoughtfully engaging with cultural values while establishing explicit protections for vulnerable dependents, Nigeria can develop inheritance practices that strengthen rather than divide families, contribute to economic development, and respect the dignity and rights of all citizens regardless of gender, birth order, or legitimacy status.

Ultimately, inheritance reform aims not to eliminate cultural practices but to refine them in ways that preserve their positive aspects while addressing potential inequities. A system that balances respect for first-son traditions with adequate protection for all family dependents would represent not a rejection of Nigerian cultural heritage but its thoughtful adaptation to contemporary.

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Jurisprudential Appraisal of the Interplay between International Law and Politics in Israel-Gaza Conflict

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Abstract. The Israel-Gaza conflict is one of the longest and most intractable in modern international relations, characterized by recurring bloodshed, competing claims to territory, and deeply entrenched political tensions. This research examines the conflict's tension between international law and international politics, observing that principles of law take a secondary position to geopolitical interest. This research brings to the limelight such issues as humanitarian law's selective application, Palestine's status in law, self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter, and limits of institutions such as International Criminal Court and United Nations. This research attempts to critically assess the jurisprudential foundation of international law applied in the conflict, judging to what extent political motives inform decisions in law. Using a doctrinal approach to research, this work is founded on primary sources such as treaties, UN resolutions, and judicatures, in addition to secondary sources such as scholarly articles and expert reports. The work observes that international frameworks of law are applied inconsistently owing to interference of powerful states, rendering mechanisms of ending conflict ineffective. The work also demands reforms in United Nations Security Council institutions, more accountability in terms of violations of humanitarian law, and more efforts towards support of a Palestinian state in foreign policy. The work posits that in order to have a credible umpire of international law, principles of law should be applied without political interference impartially.

1. Introduction

The Israel-Gaza conflict is one of the longest geopolitical crises, punctuated by sporadic bouts of violence, clashes on their respective peripheries, and humanitarian crises which is underpinned by deep grievances in each of their respective narratives and competing nationalisms, it has become a multidimensional struggle over national sovereignty, self-determination, international law, and human rights (Ware, 2024). The circumstances over time have been of concern to the rest of the world, to a point of eliciting a response from international institutions, states, and non-state actors, each of whom has brought their respective political and legal interpretations to it (Antai, 2024). The underlying conflict is that between Palestine and Israel over territory, i.e., over the Gaza Strip, a highly concentrated strip of land in control of the Palestinian armed group Hamas (Antai, 2024, p. 88). Where Israel invokes a right of self-defence in reaction to perceived terror attacks, Palestinians and their allies argue that Israeli action is occupation, apartheid, and systemic human rights violations (Edet et al., 2022, para 39). The disequilibrium of power between the two actors has also been a challenge to attempts towards a negotiated resolution, in that Israel has more powerful military and economic capabilities over Gaza, largely cut-off and economically weakened owing to lengthy closures and blockades (Antai et al., 2024, para 66).

The conflict in Israel-Gaza is fraught with serious questions of international law, theory of just war, humanitarian intervention, and liability of a state (Kisubi et al, 2024., para 206). The applicable bodies of armed conflict law, i.e., Geneva Conventions, United Nations Charter, and customary international law, become relevant in determining the legality of action of the two actors. The International institutions of International Criminal Court (ICC), International Court of Justice (ICJ), and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) have also been active in investigating claims of violations of international law, though to varying extents of efficacy and application (Aidonjie et al, 2024, para 201). The political nature of conflict also makes it difficult to be resolved in that actors in Middle East and across the world such as United States, European Union, Iran, and Arab actors apply their

influence in terms of strategic interest (Antai, 2024, p. 40). The excessive politicization of political ideologies, security matters, and religious narratives has created a recurring process in that efforts in diplomacy fail to yield a permanent peace. The involvement of actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah, in addition to international human rights groups, has also created a new level of complication in deliberations (Anifowose et al, 2024, para 41). This research pursues a jurisprudential approach to analyze the international politics in the conflict in Israel-Gaza to unravel underlying theory of law, principles, and political forces that have influenced the conflict over time (Ekpenisi et al, 2024, para 9). The work attempts to determine to what extent international norms of law apply, bend, or violate in pursuing political and military strategies. This research also examines the response of international institutions and primary actors of a state to determine efficacy of global governance in containing the conflict. This is also going to explore fundamental questions of jurisprudence such as constructivism, realism, and critical studies of law in their contexts in the international political context of the conflict between Israel-Gaza (Akpanke et al, 2022, para 7). The analysis of such concepts in their different contexts is meant to illuminate their connotations in terms of perpetuating or ending the crisis, in accordance with international political alignments, precedents in law, and diplomacy (Aidonojie et al, 2024, para 293). The work is aimed at providing a sophisticated appreciation of political and legal crossroads that mark one of humanity's longest and most volatile conflicts, indicating potential ways to a just and permanent ending of it (Antai, 2024, p 5).

1.1 Methodology

The method used in this work is a doctrinal and analytical method of inquiry to explore questions of jurisprudence of international politics in the conflict between Israel and Gaza. The work is based on qualitative evidence, using largely legal doctrines, international treaties, scholarly critiques, to provide a fair review of the intersection of international law with political forces in the conflict. Secondary sources such as books, journal articles, reports of international institutions such as United Nations, official government reports, and diplomatic releases would be extensively searched to ascertain political and legal frameworks that inform the conflict.

2. Literature Review

The Israel-Gaza conflict has been debated extensively in a mixture of political and legal analysis, different scholars offering different interpretations of extent to which political forces and international law control course of conflict. Scholars such as Cassese (2005) believe that the conflict is a classic *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* problem, raising questions of extent to which military action of Israel and Palestinian resistance is compliant with requirements of international law (p. 19). He further believes that in spite of reliance of Israel on Article 51 of United Nations Charter to grant a right of self-defence, excessive use of force and civilian casualties in Gaza raise fundamental questions of law in accordance with Geneva Conventions and customary international law. Similarly, Gray (2018) analyses permissibility of military interventions in advancing that principles of proportionality and distinction in such instances of war of asymmetry do not apply in instances of conflict in which non-state actors such as Hamas move between civilian groups (p. 233).

Falk (2014) presents a critical analysis, positing that the conflict is representative of a failure of international law to limit political dominance, as great powers apply selected legal principles to support strategic objectives. Falk argues that politicization of the United Nations and international institutions of law has created a double standard in responding to human rights abuses, such that condemnation of human rights abuses is often met with diplomatic opposition, in particular from the United States (paras 66-69). This is in line with that of Chomsky (2016), in that he perceives a geopolitical alignments role in perpetuating the conflict, in referencing mechanisms in which great power blocs use narratives of law to legitimize or delegitimize actors in line with geopolitical interest over adherence to strict principles of international law. The Westphalian conception of state sovereignty is also challenged in that it is used inconsistently in a manner in which Palestinian claims of self-determination receive piecemeal legal recognition for geopolitical purposes (p. 221).

On the contrary, Dershowitz (2003) presents a realistic view, contending that legal reasoning around the conflict is secondary to security issues and national interest. Dershowitz claims that Israel's legal standing is made more complex by a skewed accountability system, such that democratic states face higher standards of accountability compared to non-state actors or groups that are designated as terror groups (Aidonojie, 2023; Aidonojie et al., 2022). Dershowitz argues that such doctrines of law such as the pre-emptive self-defence doctrine need to be reappraised in view of new patterns of war, in particular in countering terror (p. 79). His arguments differ with those of Koskenniemi (2011), who is a critic of instrumentalism of international law on the part of powerful states, contending that interpretations of law often take their coloration from political and ideological inclinations of dominant actors in the system of globalization (p.

59).

Crawford (2012) examines Palestine's status as a state critically in respect of its legal basis in claims to sovereign status in international law. He argues that recognition of Palestine's status as a state is more widely accepted in international diplomacy, yet there is a challenge to it in a legal realm in respect of divided government of Palestine and weak control over geography. This is compounded by Schabas (2016), in his explanation of application of international criminal law in conflict between Israel and Gaza, in respect of war crime charges and charges of crime against humanity. Schabas argues that though systems of international law such as that of the International Criminal Court (ICC) provide a system of accountability, political constraints in application have hindered practical application, casting doubts on impartiality and universality of international justice.

Shaw (2021) gives a contemporary account of political and legal dynamics of conflict, with a view to looking at players in the region, such as Iran, Egypt, and Turkey, in framing military intervention and legal reasoning. Shaw argues that even though there is a normative order imposed by international law, in reality, power politics trump legalism, in that diplomacy is more a function of strategic bargaining rather than rules of law (Aidonojie et al., 2021; Aidonojie & Victoria, 2022). The same is also in Orford (2015), in that she also critiques liberal order in law, arguing that in application to conflict, it is exceedingly discriminatory, reinforcing existing hierarchies of power more than actual dispensation of justice. The literature on conflict in Israel-Gaza is accordingly diverse in standpoints between legal positivism, natural law, critical studies of law, and realism, chronicling complex interaction between political interest and international law in the world. Some argue that there is a gap in enforcement in international law, yet others point to strategic use of legal norms for political ends (Aidonojie et al., 2020; Aidonojie & Francis, 2022). The jurisprudential analysis of such a conflict is accordingly tasked to walk a tightrope between political reality and legal doctrine, bearing in mind that international law plays out not in a vacuum but in a highly competitive geopolitical order.

3. International Law and Politics? A Jurisprudential Insight

In principle, international law is guided by the principles of equality and neutrality, whereby all countries, whether big or small, powerful or weak, are taken through the same legal standards (Aidonojie et al, 2024, p. 341). Bodies such as the ICJ, the ICC, and other UN organs have the roles of dealing with breaches of international law, conflict resolution, and punishing the perpetrators. However, operational realities often highlight weakness and biases of such a mechanism, making such purported neutrality quite questionable (Aidonojie et al, 2024, p. 89). The principal judicial organ of the United Nations, the ICJ is expected to settle, through the means of binding decisions and also advisory opinions, the legal disputes that states may bring to it. For many years, it has played a great role in shaping international law, though the most ardent criticisms regarding its objectivity have arisen on numerous occasions (Majekodunmi et al, 2024, p. 46).

The basic issue pertains to the limited jurisdictional purview of the ICJ since it can only adjudicate upon disputes with prior states' consent, but that would be a consent-based model that lets mighty states pull out, hence not be held accountable. Consider the United States, for example, which in the 1980s pulled out of the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ immediately after it had ruled against the United States in the Nicaragua v. United States case; the incident vividly illustrates just how vulnerable the authority of the ICJ is to the political will of the powerful. This selective intervention undermines the principle of equal application of the law and raises concerns about the court's ability to act as a fair arbiter (Izevbuwa et al, 2024, p. 35).

Similarly, the ICC, created to prosecute perpetrators of heinous crimes like genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, also has to deal with concerns regarding its objectivity. Although its mandate is what should finally be expected in terms of efforts toward impunity, its actions are nevertheless critiqued by many observers for one-sidedness in their focus, particularly with respect to Africa (Antai et al, 2024, p. 130). Those critics commonly consider the ICC case selection as hostile to the weak states and lenient toward the powerful countries or their patrons (Antai et al, 2024, p. 50). For instance, the ICC has hardly investigated those cases arising from possible war crimes and crimes against humanity under the conflicts involving powerful states, despite evidence to the contrary of various actors. This one-sidedness has generated claims that the ICC yields to political influence in the decisions that it makes on the investigation of situations and, subsequently, detracts its purported neutrality and ability to apply international law even-handedly (Kisubi et al, 2024, p. 185).

The United Nations Security Council's role for the maintenance of international law provides examples of how hard it is to achieve impartiality (Aidonojie et al, 2024, p. 139). As it is the primary body responsible for maintaining peace and security around the world, it has the power to enact sanctions, authorize military action, and refer situations for the attention of the ICC. Nevertheless, the decision-

making process of this organ depends a great deal on the geopolitical pre-sets by five permanent members -the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China- possessing the right of veto (Aidonojie et al., 2023; Aidonojie et al., 2024). Within the framework of such structure, these countries have a right to block resolutions which are against their or their allies' interests even when the latter commit evident violations of international law. Instead, it deploys the veto disproportionately to shield its allies or to advance strategic interests at the expense of legitimacy for the UNSC, further cementing perceptions of partiality and selectivity in the application of international law (Antai et al, 2024, p. 5). For instance, the US has consistently used its power of veto in UNSC resolutions censuring Israel's actions over the Israeli-Palestinian question, even when the latter are almost unanimously judged illegal by the international community. This is a pattern of veto usage that underlines how the interests of powerful states can overpower the enforcement of international legal norms, making the UNSC an incoherent and politically motivated instrument of law (Anani et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2024). Similarly, Russia and China have used their veto powers to protect the Syrian government against resolutions which would have invariably moved toward its responsibility for committing war crimes in the Syrian Civil War. These actions reveal the extent to which political factors can compromise the neutrality of mechanisms for the enforcement of international law.

Aside from the institutional dimension, neutrality in international legal frameworks follows deep from broader politico-economic inequalities among nations. This fact -the domination of powerful states in both the drafting and enforcement of international law- has bred accusations of double standards whereby weaker states are more often the ones that will fall under scrutiny and enforcement measures. This fact is also reflected in the issue of economic sanctions, as discussed below, which tends at times to be an enforcement tool used by predominant states or alliances. While sanctions may be employed to enforce adherence to international standards, they have more often been utilized selectively and tend to have excessive effects upon the civilian populations of targeted states, raising ethical and legal objections (Jufri et al., 2024; Haruna et al., 2024). For example, the results of the sanctions imposed against Iraq in the 1990s - detrimental and indiscriminate humanitarian harm - were widely criticized as a political interest taken at the expense of that country's citizens. These examples show better accountability and uniformity that are needed as far as using the instrument of international law enforcement sanctions is concerned. The other critical challenge to the neutrality of international law is the participation of non-state actors, be they in the form of multinational companies, activism groups, or mere citizens (Okpong & Antai, 2024, p. 15).

These actors frequently assume a significant position in the formulation of international legal standards and the strategies employed for their enforcement; however, their participation can also give rise to biases and conflicts of interest. For example, the advocacy activities of influential corporations or interest groups may influence international legal proceedings in manners that support particular agendas, thereby compromising the objectivity of the decision-making process (Aidonojie et al., 2025). Therefore, reliance on budgetary inputs, either from governments or the private sector, has the potential to tempt international institutions to make orientations in their functions according to the interest of the benefactors, hence more and more non-neutrality. Despite this, an attempt has been made to make the international rule of law less biased. The establishment of independent investigative bodies, elaboration of clear and transparent criteria with regard to case selection, supporting the principle of universal jurisdiction for certain types of crimes- each of these reflects a move in the right direction toward a more objective and even application of international law (Antai et al, 2024, p. 39). Nevertheless, such efforts need to be supplemented with a greater commitment from countries and international organizations for the principles of justice, equity, and neutrality in the application of legal principles.

While the structures of international law are pegged upon principles of objectivity and neutrality, in real practice, they are always susceptible to political, economic, and strategic pressures (Wakili et al, 2025, p. 185). The fact that the inequity of application of the law, the pre-eminence of key states' positions in policy making, and the role of non-state actors all reinforce the large-scale sense of partiality and anomaly. It calls for the will of the parties beyond the institutional changes to be committed to the rule of law. Without such an act of transformation, the impartiality of international legal regimes is to remain a discussable and elusive concept. A jurisprudential analysis of the interaction of law, politics, and international law from the Realist perspective shows a many-layered and often contradictory relationship. Realism is one of the most outstanding theoretical schools in the study of international relations; it regards international law as not being a set of neutral rules but as a tool used by states in furthering their national interests and power objectives. This analysis pits the idealism of liberalism-which looks upon international law as an autonomous adjudicator of justice-against the

understanding that its origin, interpretation, and implementation are invariably linked to a relationship of states about the distribution of power as well as the pursuit of political gain.

4. Jurisprudential Foundations of International Law

The various jurisprudential bases in international law stand on the various theoretical, principled, and practical elements that seek to govern the behaviour of the state and international actor in an increasingly interdependent global system. International law, in itself, basically consists of rules created and declared by customary practice and treaty, and other generally recognized sources, as legally binding by the international community. It is distinct from the law in force nationally in that it operates within a regime sans a centralized sovereign authority, yet it requires the consensus of states and the popular will of the international community in its formulation, interpretation, and application (Antai et al, 2024, p. 31). This structure of consent has influenced the theoretical underpinning of international law, which can be understood through several key jurisprudential traditions and schools of thought. Legal positivism is one of the most dominant frameworks in international law. Based on the works of such scholars as John Austin and later refined by Hans Kelsen, legal positivism regards international law as a set of norms created by states through explicit agreements and consistent practice. From this perspective, international legal rules are valid not because of their moral or ethical content but as a consequence of their formal acceptance by sovereign states. Positivism, in particular, emphasizes treaties, customary practices, and general principles recognized by states as the foundational sources of international law, as codified in Article 38(1) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice. This school of thought emphasizes the principle of sovereignty, where international law shall be primarily used to regulate relations between states without eroding their autonomy. Legal positivism, however, according to critics, all too often neglects the normative and ethical dimensions of law, especially in the context of coerced consent or asymmetrical power relations which may influence state consent.

In this respect, the natural law brings in a jurisprudence basis emanating from the general moral order independent of the will of the individual state. In so doing, the inspiration is largely by Hugo Grotius and Francisco de Vitoria, thinking of international law as a sort of derivation from intrinsic human values, laws of nature binding upon states whether or not the latter are based on their consent. It also forms an ethical basis upon which many of the essential principles of international law function, such as the prohibition against genocide, protection of human rights, and common heritage of mankind. This played a vital role in developing the trends of international law in the sphere of human rights and humanitarian law when moral imperatives happen to override the strict legal formalism. Universality, in this regard, invariably faces confrontation by cultural relativists and state-centric models on grounds that the application of universally perceived norms often encroaches upon the realms of local custom, sovereignty, and self-determination. While realism first and foremost is a theory of international relations, it has provided an important critique of some of the jurisprudential limits of international law. Realist scholars look intrinsically at how international law is shaped by the redistributive properties of the international system in which states emerge as preeminent pursuers of self-interest. This line of thinking frequently sees legal norms and international institutions as nothing but an instrument at the hands of powerful states to perpetuate and legitimize their domination over the weaker ones. Realism so challenges the idealist's picture of an international legal system working neutrally and impersonally; for realists, the creation, interpretation, and application of international law can always be reduced to hidden politico-strategic motivations. This view is further illustrated by current practices within the United Nations Security Council where it often appears that vetoes by the permanent members are motivated more out of geopolitical self-interest rather than out of concern for the legal merits. The critical legal studies, and further, some postmodernist approaches seriously question the neutrality and objectivity of international law. According to them, it is the product of historical, social, and political environments that propagate existing power relations. Among many other authors, Martti Koskenniemi and David Kennedy have reproached international law as a tool of hegemony, underlining its contribution to the legitimation of colonialism, economic exploitation, and undemocratic world government. These positions certainly question the basic assumption of the intrinsic justness or equitability of international law and argue for the inculcation of an inclusive, reflective jurisprudence representative of the voice of the marginalized and varied perspectives (Aidonojie et al, 2024, p. 197).

And yet, despite these various divergences in their theoretical underpinning, the various jurisprudential foundations comprising the theoretical underpinning of international law are ultimately all coalesced in their common purpose-to foster order, justice, and co-operation in the international community. This itself is encapsulated in normative statements such as principles like *pacta sunt servanda*, the prohibition of the use of force except in self-defence or with Security Council authorization, and

protection of human dignity via international human rights instruments. These include institutional frameworks of the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, and various treaty-monitoring bodies that, in sum, purport to provide means for the peaceful handling of disputes and holding international actors accountable. In contrast, the jurisprudential basis of international law is contradictory because its functions have dual purposes: one, serving as a normative framework, and two, serving as a political tool. Universal in their aspiration, neutral as such, they nonetheless suffer from their selective application and disparate effectiveness due to state consent and the lack of a central enforcement authority. Further complications due to the dual nature are that international law is at continuous evolution, be it to respond to new challenges brought about by globalization, rapid technological innovation, environmental degradation, and transnational conflicts. International law is jurisprudentially interwoven into a multi-coloured tapestry of several theoretical standpoints and pragmatic challenges-from the formalism of legal positivism through the ethical imperatives of natural law, from realist critique through the power political to the transformationalist ambitions of critical legal studies. These represent the different standpoints from which a view of what the role and limits of international law today could conceivably be is possible. It is clear that, for as long as international law pursues an inchoate development, its jurisprudential bases will remain one dynamic and disputed field between legal norms and political realities shaped by the collective aspiration of the global community (Umo et al, 2024, p. 262).

4.1 Realist Perspective

The central tenet of realism, at least in its most influential variants, is that the sphere of international relations is anarchic, with sovereign states as the principal actors, each impelled by the survival-safety-domination imperative in a fiercely competitive environment, and it is radically incompatible with the finding of genuinely impartial and strictly universal standards of international law (Aidonojie et al, 2025, p. 14). From a Realist viewpoint, international law stems from the balance of powers in the system. It is the manifestation of what the most powerful states feel and desire and not an independent set of laws applicable across the board. Therefore, for the Realists, equality in the eyes of international law is little more than a sound, considering that power discrepancies among states will always shape how statutes are drafted, implemented, and enforced. The Realist critique harbours an underlying supposition that international law often provides a process through which hegemony for powerful states can be legitimized and consolidated. Indeed, this process has been visible in the historical development of key international legal regimes, such as the United Nations Charter and the Bretton Woods institutions, each of which was largely the product of the vagaries of the Second World War victors. It is best described by the makeup of the United Nations Security Council, having five permanent members holding the rights of veto. The UNSC is more a child of the geopolitical times in which it was born than representative of democratic principles of equity and fairness, lending too much power to a select few powerful countries. They have continued to exploit these favourable statuses in advancing their strategic interests, while purportedly advancing international peace and security, and in most cases at the expense of weaker states.

The Realist school further highlights the partial application of international law as a reflection of its political nature. While legal standards for condemning aggression, war crimes, and crimes against humanity may be universal in theory, in practice their application is often at the mercy of political agendas. Rarely are dominant powers or their allies held accountable for violations, while smaller states or adversaries may be far more vulnerable to investigation and censure.

For instance, the US has invariably used its powers to get out of liability for a number of controversial military operations, such as in Iraq or Afghanistan, deemed to run in contravention of international legal principles. In the same way, the actions taken by Russia in Ukraine, most especially over Crimea, have seen stringent condemnation and legal challenges. Yet, the lack of any robust enforcement apparatus acts to remind one of the inabilities of international law to restrain the powerful. The International Criminal Court was formed to prosecute individuals accused of heinous acts under international law, although many have characterized it as a political tool. Those critics-mostly from Africa -have been vociferous that the ICC has been used as an instrument against the leaders of less influential nations while closing its eyes on atrocities committed by the most influential states or their allies. The fact that the ICC is unable or unwilling to investigate or prosecute war crimes from powerful actors, for instance, those conducted by the United States in Afghanistan-again strengthens the perception that the court works within the boundaries of global power. In this instance, a realist would identify that his contention is asserted: international legal institutions are neither independent nor neutral but highly embedded in the broad structure of international politics. Another aspect of the Realist critique concerns the practice of international law as a form of soft power exercise; states whose political clout in the formulation of legal norms is significant often manage to stamp the

legal regime with their values and strategic interests, whereby the latter condition the global legal system in their favour. This fact has been clearly dramatized in trade agreements, intellectual property regulations, and environmental protocols, where dominant states have succeeded in setting standards that perpetuate their economic and technological lead. For realists, such behaviour logically points to the proposition that international law functions as a method of consolidating state power, not as a means of seriously embracing the ideal of good governance. The Israel-Palestine conflict provides a poignant case study for examining the Realist critique of international law. The fact that the international legal framework has consistently failed to bring about a successful resolution to this intractable conflict only underlines the extent to which legal precepts remain subordinated to political ones (Ogu et al, 2024, p. 331).

United Nations resolutions, including Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, do provide a basis for a legal settlement to this conflict-in particular, such resolutions impose upon Israel an obligation to withdraw from occupied territories while recognizing all regional states within secure boundaries. These have remained mere rhetoric, however, in view of the political support Israel enjoys from powerful patrons, above all the United States. As reflected by the latter's habitual use of its UNSC veto power in order to protect Israel against censure, international law is manipulated in a way that serves strategic alliances, not impartial justice. Apart from that, the legality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian land, being prohibited under international legal frameworks by the ICJ, the UN, among others, shows the ineffectiveness of international law in containing the activities of strong actors. While the legal prohibition against the expansion of such settlements is clear, political dimensions have so far been introduced to ensure that no effective enforcement mechanism is in place, demonstrating an inability for international law to operate in a vacuum devoid of those power relations which Realism seeks to underscore. Realists, for their part, stress the utilitarian function of international law in cloaking military interventions and other strong-arm actions in a veneer of legitimacy. The so-called R2P doctrine stands as a vivid example, invoked to legitimize interventions allegedly intended to prevent mass atrocities, but criticized for serving as a license for dominant states to pursue regime changes or strategic interests under the cloak of humanitarianism. Meanwhile, the selective application of R2P in Libya, not replicated in Syria, underlines inconsistency as the hallmark of international law's application and reinforces the Realist claim that law is subservient to politics.

The realist critique of international law as an instrument of power politics is unflinching in its look at what it sees as its limitations and inherent biases. It is against this view that Realism despises the notion of international law as a neutral middleman of international order, through the elaboration on how those norms are constructed, implemented, and enforced according to the interests of hegemonic states. It does not belittle the relevance or utility of international law but rather presses for an understanding in its proper place within the greater structure of power relations. The point for Realists is that, structurally linked to the strategic interests of states-particularly the most preeminent in the international system-international law could never be effective or fair because it would always be undermined. This is a critique that is quite fair and invites an insight into how the dynamics of justice and equality work in congruence with the dynamics of power, a point at the very heart of the ongoing development and application of international law.

4.2 Constructivism View

The theory of Constructivism, through a jurisprudential approach to the interaction among law, politics, and international law, would give the analyst a rather different perspective, putting into importance the role of norms, identities, and intersubjective understandings in shaping the structure of international law. While constructivism is opposed to the Realist vision, which views international law either as a handmaiden of power politics or a set of inflexible rules, the former looks upon international law as a structure of variable shape moulded by social interaction, culture, and the identity of states and other diverse international actors. From this perspective, international law is by no means a passive product of power relations but a carrier of values, beliefs, and understandings shared in the world community. The roots of constructivism begin with one assertion: the international system is socially constructed. Brunnee & Toope (2012) believe that while Realists perceive international relations as being essentially anarchic and driven by material power considerations, Constructivists suggest that state behaviours are shaped, indeed, by ideational factors, such as norms, values, and identities. Herein, international law would serve both as a repository and as a carrier of such norms, crystallizing collective beliefs and guiding the behaviours of states (p. 32).

From a Constructivist perspective, international law is organic and thus not static. It is constantly evolving over time according to global norms and the shifting identities of its actors. For instance, the phenomenon of human rights law was one of a shift in priorities that took the international community

from a state-centric view to one focused more on human dignity and simple justice. The Constructivist critique explains how international law and international politics interact. While political factors determine the genesis and application of legal norms, international law in turn affects political behaviour by stabilizing or questioning the existing norms and identities. Legal norms are not simply tools to be used for the pursuit of material interests but possess in themselves constitutive power: they define the roles and responsibilities of states and other actors in the international system (Hughes & Shereshevsky, 2023). The ban on genocide, for instance, in international law is not simply a legal prohibition but a normative standard guiding how states think about themselves and others. It is possible that a state accused of genocide would suffer reputational harm beyond mere material sanctions, illustrating the normative weight of legal principles.

A key constructivist insight is that international law derives much of its strength from the fact that it forms one important site where identities are constituted and shared understandings of proper behaviour are developed. To a considerable extent, actors will comply with international legal rules not just out of fear of material reprisals, but also because those legal norms reflect and project how they understand themselves, and wish to be seen by others (Akram et al, 2010, p. 6). This dynamic is perhaps most apparent in the role of customary international law, which springs from the converging practices of states with the belief in the legal necessity to act one way or another-a process known as *opinio juris*. For the constructivist theorist, these sorts of practices reveal the operation of collective norms and social identity in the making of rules. This is more the case with those areas in which the structure of international law has been readjusting in line with shifting global concerns. In the case of environmental law, for example, its development has reflected a strengthening sense of agreement among nations over the need to address climate change and preserve natural resources for future generations. The shift in normative priorities has heralded the creation of legal frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, which, even if not legally binding in the strictest possible sense, still exerts powerful normative influence on countries to align their policies with international goals related to the environment. As far as constructivist scholars are concerned, what gives such agreements their effectiveness is not the legal detail but their potential to alter state identities and the moral and political obligation that comes with it. On the other hand, however, the Constructivist critique points to the limits and possibilities existing within international law. Inasmuch as norms and identity are decisive elements in marking legal arrangements, they do not stem from one single international community. The cultural, political, and historical differences of various countries provide different perceptions of legal norms and, hence, resistances to their adoption. For example, debates about the universal applicability of human rights standards versus cultural relativism are indicative of the conflicts occurring when international legal principles meet regional identities and beliefs. As constructivists will argue, such a conflict is more than a mere technical or legal disagreement but, instead, one about which norms and values should be hegemonic within the global legal system. It is the extraordinary example from the Constructivist approach to international law, whereby the whole Israeli-Palestinian conflict has obtained deep roots in conflicting identities and historical accounts shaping the legal and political attitudes of both parties. For example, the claim of statehood on the part of the Palestinians is framed in a narrative of self-determination and historical righteousness, while that of the Israelis appeals to the necessity of security, ancient links to the land, and a homeland for the Jews. The meaning and practice of international legal norms related to self-determination, occupation, and the protection of human rights have been shaped by the double sets of conflicting identities.

But relevant United Nations resolutions in relation to the Israeli-Palestine conflict, such as General Assembly Resolution 181 and Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, are manifestations of normative changes and multi-layered interplay of identities. But whereas there has been a legal foundation for resolution through those resolutions, implementation has remained premised on the diverging identities and interests of the parties. Constructivists would go further and argue that such legal structures' success would depend not only on their legal validity but also on the degree to which these could be inculcated into the identity and normative commitments of participating actors. The same constructivist critique would apply to the enforcement of international law. Whereas Realists stress the material power present in enforcement mechanisms, Constructivists stress normative pressure and legality that are embedded in norms and central in compliance. Indeed, the ICC relies essentially on the normative authority of its mandate to assume responsibility through crimes such as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. Obviously, the ICC does not have striking powers of enforcement; rather, it lies in discrediting a certain behaviour and engraining international norms of accountability and justice. In the case of Israel and Palestine, ICC, through investigations into war crimes, has raised questions over accountability and its normative impact, and the role legal institutions can play in conflict resolution. Constructivists

further contest the proliferation of international legal regimes that reflect the embedded norms and identities of powerful states or coalitions. While the reach of international law may be universal, its development and practice tend to be exclusionary, often marginalizing other ways of narrating the self and other. A case in point is how the modern structures of international law are rooted in the West, raising suspicions of bias and misrepresentation, especially from states in the Global South. Constructivists argue that these biases can only be addressed by a more pluralistic and inclusive methodology in international law, one that recognizes and incorporates diverse identities and normative structures. In other words, the Constructivist critique of international law is a sophisticated approach in which it is viewed as a social creation born out of norms, identities, and shared knowledge. By contrast, this perspective argues that international law is neither objective nor neutral but essentially murky and contested. Insofar as international law might have the potential to reshape state practice and foster international cooperation, international law itself depends on whether or not it resonates with the identity and the normative commitments of the community of states. The Constructivist approach underlines the need not to overlook either the normative or the identity-related facets of international law, especially in complex, entrenched conflicts such as that between Israelis and Palestinians, whose contested narratives and identities keep shaping legal and political outcomes. (Akram et al, 2010, p. 35)

5. Theoretical Implications for International Law's Legitimacy

From calling into question the validity of international law itself, to foundational principles, via societal perceptions, to the empirical consequences that mould its recognition, effectiveness, and authoritative status internationally. International law may be understood as a set of norms advising states and other subjects of international law on what their actions should be. Existing at the juncture of sovereignty, the precepts of power, and normative principles, its validity is drawn not solely from its so-called establishment or codification but heavily from commanding respect, compliance, and recognition by the international community (Finkelstein, 2018, p. 218). The theoretical debates on such validity often dwell on questions of consent, universality, enforcement, and the normative basis of law in an anarchical international structure. State consent remains a very promising theoretical consequence in terms of its validity of international law. In a positivist scheme, international law is considered legitimate because it represents the free will of independent states in upholding the code of conduct that it prescribes. Treaties are the building blocks of international law, having acquired their validity from the express consent of states reflected in their processes for negotiation, ratification, and execution. On its part, customary international law is seen to come into being when states follow constant and general practices combined with a belief of legal obligation, that is *opinio juris*. However, this salience of consent generates a paradox: while it consolidates state sovereignty, it also allows mighty states to be selective in their choice of compliance with or retreat from legal commitments, which undermines the universality and impartiality inherent in international law. This selective compliance calls into question the status of international law as a binding framework, at least insofar as it is heavily reliant upon the voluntarist consent of its subjects.

Another theoretical implication concerns the universality of international law. A basic principle of international law is that it applies to all states and peoples; it is an intrinsic part of its claim to validity. Normative approaches to international law, but in particular those based on the natural law perspective, would contest that their validity is derived from correspondence with universal moral values, such as justice, human dignity, and equality. This latter principle of universality finds codification in foundational legal documents like the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Universality in international law, critics hold, is, for the most part, an aspiration rather than a fact, in so far as in formulation and implementation, it is often expressive of hegemonistic values and priorities. Its contemporary underpinning rests on the back of European colonial efforts, which have indeed made allegations of partiality and marginalization possible. Many Global South countries view international law as a tool for maintaining inequality and exploitation, instead of a framework which truly advocates for universality. The legitimacy of international law is questioned through this critique, pointing out how it may bolster current global power inequities rather than challenge them. Another important aspect related to the question of the validity of international law is how it is put into practice. While national laws function within well-detailed structures and are subject to one central force or method of enforcement, international law operates within an anarchic system with decentralized enforcement, often dependent on the goodwill of states to take action. All this takes away the legitimacy from the international law- flagrant breach going unpunished or application of the law seemingly unfair and politically engineered (Sabel, 2022, p. 65). According to the realists, it is inherent in international law that legitimacy is curtailed because it depends on state power and particularly the great powers that exercise disproportionate influence in

international institutions such as the United Nations Security Council.

The wielding of veto powers by permanent members of the Security Council to block resolutions, even when clear violations of international law are at issue, is perhaps the clearest example of how enforcement often yields to political interests. This inconsistency relinquishes any notion of international law being an impartial and effectively applied norm, hence opening questions on its ability to truly claim legitimacy without reliable means of enforcement. The legitimacy of international law is also heavily intertwined with its normative grounding. Constructivist approaches have pointed out that the legitimacy of international law is inextricably intertwined with its ability to reflect and foster shared norms and values of the international community. Legal rules which correspond to widely shared principles-for instance, prohibition of genocide or the protection of human rights-are more likely to be regarded as legitimate and thus complied with. On the other hand, international law has equally been denounced as illegitimate, if interpreted as running against the grain of the dominant normative positions, or as a means of imposing foreign values in disregard for cultural diversity. The debate on universal standards of human rights versus cultural relativism probably is the most characteristic example, evidencing the tension between the objective of proclaiming a universally applicable legal regime and the fact of cultural, political, and historical diversity. Therefore, the validity of international law relies not solely on its formal validity but also, and essentially, on whether it substantively reflects the values and priorities shared in the global community. The validity of international law also draws a lot from the procedural dimensions. In this vein, its making and application processes come with publicity, inclusiveness, and accountability, which, under democratic perspectives of international law, make it more legitimate. This approach, therefore, underlines participatory processes in the negotiation of treaties, representative diversity in the composition of international organizations, and the accountability of states and international organizations for their activities and performance. The issues of process legitimacy assume particular importance in challenging the assumption that international law is the monopolistic domain of a few powerful states or actors. The reformist tendencies of the United Nations Security Council to make it representative of the existing world order show the realization of the fact that substantive justice together with procedural justice is essential to attain legitimacy. Without these attributes, international law runs the risk of being perceived as a tool of hegemony and not representative and objective (Nijhoff, 2023, pp. 47, 91).

Discussions regarding multiple theories on the legitimacy of international law do often go hand in hand with questions regarding its effectiveness or inefficiency in achieving stated objectives. Effectiveness itself is often an important determinant of legitimacy: laws that prove ineffective in their outcomes, or in terms of addressing pressing international concerns, undermine their legitimacy and moral authority. It is seen as moderate because the very limited success of international law regarding dispute settlement, climate change policies, or accountability for serious human rights abuses can only establish the claim of legitimacy. According to critics, it seems very unlikely that international law will bridge the gap between normative aspiration and the real world on more occasions than not, having stronger mechanisms ensuring compliance and effectiveness. Still, adherents believe that the efficiency of international law cannot be estimated based solely on its short-term output; it is about whether, in the longer term, it serves as an agent for norms, interactivity, and a common basis for peaceful cooperation. Ultimately, the credibility of international law is deeply connected with its capability to adapt to new situations and challenges in the world. The international system is in a state of flux, marked by shifts in relative power, addition of new players, and establishment of norms at an international level. To this extent, international law needs to retain its element of flexibility and responsiveness. To fail to do so-to remain impervious to current reality, be it the increased relevance of non-state actors, the attacks in cyberspace, or the urgent appeals for climate control-threatens it with irrelevance and redundancy. This flexibility needs, however, to be balanced by stability and predictability, for eternal change would also destroy confidence in the legal regime. The theoretical debate on legitimacy therefore needs, in discussing the manner in which international law can be subject to change without losing its underlying bases and legitimacy, to take into account the dialectic between continuity and renovation (Agboti et al, 2024). The legitimacy of international law is, in the final analysis, multidimensional and highly contested, informed by theoretical debates about consent, universality, enforcement, norms, procedural fairness, effectiveness, and flexibility. The claim of its legitimacy stands or falls with whether it can balance the various dimensions: it actually serves the needs of a great variety of stakeholders while retaining its relevance and authority in a complex and fast-changing world. There are, indeed, important ways in which international law is on much shakier grounds from a validity perspective: issues relating to bias, selective application, and narrow scope. It could prove a basic instrument for equity, cooperation, and peace in the

world. The theoretical reflections of its legitimacy underpin that it is only through continuous critical engagement of its principles, processes, and practices that it can be considered valid and representative in the way it deals with concerns common to human beings (Chinweze et al 2024).

6. Findings and Conclusion

The research indicates that the conflict between Israel and Gaza is not only a geopolitical conflict but also a matter of law in that political interest is in conflict with international law. The evidence indicates that despite there being mechanisms of regulation of armed conflict in international law, including Geneva Conventions, customary international law, and the Charter of the United Nations, political interest dictates their application to a great extent over strict adherence to the rule of law. The use of self-defence provision in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations is used to justify military action by Israel, yet it is controversial in the face of conflict asymmetry and heavy civilian loss of lives. The Palestinian groups, including Hamas, accused of attacking civilian populations in contravention of international humanitarian law have a spotty system of accountability due to their status as a non-state actor and political interest of global superpowers.

The selective application of international law is a challenge that undermines its universality and impartiality, reinforcing the argument that principles of law take a secondary position to political and strategic requirements. The study also indicates the legal challenges of Palestine's struggle to be a state. The recognition of Palestine as a state is increasingly gaining popularity in international diplomacy, yet there are still challenges in sight of a deficiency of unambiguous sovereignty, governance, and control of a specific territory that would enable application of Palestinian rights in international law.

Further analysis shows that doctrines of military necessity, distinction, and proportionality are used by each of these actors to justify their actions that, in most instances, violate basic principles of international humanitarian law. The results also indicate that institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) provide a system of accountability in law, yet political realities intervene heavily in their attempts to do their work. The action taken against actors in Palestine or Israel is often slowed up in diplomatic manoeuvrings in which actors in the global and regional contexts use argumentation in terms of law as tools of advancing their geopolitical ends rather than in a genuine pursuit of justice. The study also indicates that theory of state sovereignty, one of the cornerstones of international law, is enforced in a disordered manner in the conflict. The sovereignty of Israel is staunchly upheld by its patrons, yet demands of Palestine to self-determination get a political and legal reaction that indicates contradictions in system of law in the world. In short, Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a classic example of contradictions between international politics and international law. There are mechanisms of law to control and intervene in the conflict, yet their use is in many cases more in control of strategic interest of great powers than neutral reasoning of law. Non-interference of international law in a conflict undermines efficacy of international institutions of law to manage entrenched geopolitical rivalries. The analysis indicates that without a trend towards more neutral application of international law, in which rules of law prevail over political loyalties, the conflict would continue to be a battlefield of armed clashes as also of political and legal battles.

The need for a more even-handed and more just approach of law, backed up by diplomatic action that gives precedence to human rights and conflict resolution over political compulsions, is of decisive importance in addressing age-old issues of a conflict between Israel and Gaza.

7. Recommendations

The research recommends that international law be applied without political bias to all participants in the conflict in Israel-Gaza, such that principles of proportionality, distinction, and necessity be applied without political favouritism. The United Nations Security Council must be reformed to restrict the monopoly of veto powers that generally obstruct adoption of resolutions that pursue prosecution of war crimes and human rights abuse. This would uphold credibility of processes of law at the international sphere and deter great powers to use their power to protect their friends in order to exempt them from accountability in courts of law. There must be increased resort to diplomatic and legal methods of resolution of conflict, in place of use of military campaigns that exacerbate humanitarian crises. The international community must support institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) in pursuing their mandate and ensuring that proceedings in respect of suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity are not obstructed by political interference.

The report also recommends that efforts towards a Palestinian state be strengthened in respect of processes of law and diplomacy, ensuring that Palestine’s rights in international law be not subordinated to geopolitical objectives. International recognition of Palestine as a sovereign entity with unambiguous boundary limits would be a vehicle of law for disputants to negotiate their

divergences and would be a beginning towards a long-term peace. Humanitarian law must be enforced more strictly, independent monitor bodies ensuring that it is respected by both Israel and groups in Palestine. International institutions such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) must be endowed with more powers to undertake impartial investigations and propose sanctions or action in respect of violations of international humanitarian law.

Furthermore, regional actors, such as Arab neighbouring countries and international institutions, must become more active in efforts towards peacebuilding, applying diplomatic pressures in support of ceasefires and arrangements in the long term in accordance with international law. Economic reconstruction and relief must be redirected to rebuilding Gaza in a way that avoids humanitarian relief to fuel political dimensions of conflict. Scholars of public international law and practitioners must undertake more serious studies and advocacy to challenge ambiguities in law that allow for selective application of rules of law in conflict. The provision of more explicit rules in responding to conflict involving actors other than states would be a more formal approach to addressing issues around groups such as Hamas.

The work signals a need for more accountability in applying international law, insisting on mechanisms that hold everyone, regardless of political affiliations, to the same expectations of law. This would require working in cooperation with international courts, human rights groups, and scholars of law in unmasking contradictions in law and in advocating reforms that depoliticize legal adjudication in international conflict. In proceeding forward, it is crucial that international law is not perceived to be a mere instrument of reinforcing hierarchies of power but a genuine instrument of ensuring justice, accountability, and protection of human rights in the conflict in Israel-Gaza and beyond.

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Towards a Just and Egalitarian Africa: Eradicating Injustices and Inequalities

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Abstract. Africa is a continent of paradoxes. The continent is richly blessed with abundant natural resources such as gold, diamond, oil, gas, bauxite, arable land, forests, wildlife, water, platinum, chromium, cobalt, etc. The continent also has abundant human potential and resources. Despite all these, the resources are poorly managed and this is one of the reasons why there is a high rate of *japa* (migration) out of the continent. Africa is massively underdeveloped. Despite political independence from the colonialists many decades ago, the land of Africa is inundated with injustices and inequalities. Through critical hermeneutics and analytic methods, this paper argues that there is a need to eradicate injustices and inequalities in Africa. The paper finds out that many factors are responsible for inequalities and injustices in the continent, such as bad and inept political leadership, corruption, colonialism, neo-colonial influences, ethnicism, poor administration of criminal justice, etc. The paper concludes that if Africans mitigate injustices and inequalities, they will create a more just and egalitarian society.

Keywords: Africa, egalitarian, justice, inequalities, injustice, leadership, politics, society.

1. Introduction

The African society and continent remain a troubled one and politically unstable. There is hardly any part of the continent you travel to that is free from injustices and inequalities. Africa is a continent of paradoxes. Africa is a land, unfortunately, that is inundated with violent conflicts and wars. Most of these violent conflicts and wars arise from situations of injustice, ethnic marginalization, denial of minority rights, cronyism, and inept and bad leadership. Take Nigeria, for instance, there have been so many ethnic agitations and cries over marginalization by ethnic-based groups such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP,) the Urhobo Progress Union, the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), Ijaw Youth Congress, etc.

It amounts to injustice when people come to power or political leadership positions and become dictators/sit-tight rulers. They believe it is their birthright to rule their countries until their deaths. The continent has witnessed people like Mobuto Sese Seko of Zaire, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Hussene Habre of Chad, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and Omar al-Bashir of Sudan who came to power and remained in power until they died or were butted out. In places like Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, etc, there are ongoing wars and violence either over resources or cries of marginalization from certain parts of the countries. Thousands of African youths are illegally trekking through the Sahara Desert and crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Thousands have died in the sea. Many of the countries they are struggling to leave have been impoverished by corrupt and bad leaders who care nothing for the good of the people. Thousands of Africans were killed in the Rwanda genocide. The atrocities that took place there were committed by fellow Africans. Among us not too long ago, Idi Amin of Uganda terrorized foreigners and his native people. Africa has not succeeded in effectively managing its enormous natural resources. Wherever there are natural resources in Africa, there is always war and violence, either in the past or in the present. Democratic Republic of Congo is embroiled in wars over natural resources. There is continuous tensions in the Niger Delta of Nigeria over natural resources and environmental degradation.

What is currently happening in many African countries is not what people expected in the wake of independence from colonialism. At the dawn of independence in African countries, there were high hopes that the continent would develop and advance rapidly in all areas, such as science, technology, culture, etc. In many African countries, these dreams

have been shattered. For what you now have are looted national treasuries, massive youth unemployment, xenophobic attacks against foreigners, ethnic tensions, waning of authentic African values as a result of globalization and westernization, high rate of "Japa" (migration out of the continent), etc. Many of these issues border on social injustices and deprivation of egalitarian ethos. When there is egalitarianism and justice, there is bound to be a more peaceful order and a society in which people's welfare and well-being are catered for at all levels.

Given the above, this paper, through critical hermeneutics and analytic methods, probes into the lack of total justice and egalitarianism in the African continent. It argues that it is not yet *Uhuru* (freedom) in Africa. The continent is still oppressed by both internal and external unjust forces. The paper shows that the continent is still filled with so many inequalities, such as gender inequalities, social inequalities, political marginalization, religious discrimination, etc. In pursuing the goal of the paper, the following procedure is adopted: an examination of the basic concepts, followed by a look at the situation of inequalities and injustices in the continent. After that has been done, some way forward is proposed.

2. Clarification and Analyses of Concepts

The basic concepts necessary to be clarified in this paper are justice and egalitarianism. The word "just" is an adjective of justice. The word just is generally understood as what is correct. A thing is just when it corresponds to order or what has been laid down. Justice is the administration of what is considered just. Just and justice are two words that are intertwined, for just is simply an adjective of justice. Justice can be defined as an "attribute of political systems, relations between individuals, actions, and we also say of persons that they are just" (Mautner, 2005). In the history of Western Philosophy, there have been varied discourses on what justice is. In *Plato's Republic,* justice consists of the three parts of the soul (rational, spiritual, and appetitive) performing their proper functions (in the political society, it is three parts -the guardians, the auxiliaries, and the artisans- performing their duties); in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, justice in the general sense means habits and dispositions of a good citizen such as courage, loyalty, honesty, sobriety, etc (Mautner, 2005). In another sense, justice is one of the virtues (Mautner, 2005. It is distributive justice, which allocates benefits and burdens in a society in a fair manner, and also rectificatory or commutative or corrective justice, which restores the balance between two individuals (Mautner, 2005). In Stoicism and the systems that follow it, justice is the disposition of being a good human being living as a citizen of the world and not just the city-state (Mautner, 2005). Justice is what conforms with the law, respect for people's rights, and giving each person their dues (Ekabo, 2016).

From the perspective of the organization of society, justice is often called social justice, and it refers to:
…economic welfare of social groups. As such, it demands a proportionate share for the social partners in the fruits of their economic cooperation…. Social justice further demands a proportionate and equitable distribution of the wealth of a nation among the different groups and regions of a society. Hence the concentration of a nation's wealth and land-ownership in the hands of a few extremely rich families while the majority of citizens live in poverty, offends against justice. Social justice likewise demands a balancing of wealth between stronger and weaker sectors of a society, such as often the well-to-do industrial and less favoured agricultural sector, or between developed and less developed regions in a nation (Peschke, 1992, pp.234-235).

It is important to distinguish justice from other concepts. Justice is not mercy, love, kindness, compassion, etc. Indeed, justice is not the only virtue needed in society. For instance, a welfare state may provide social security for all the unemployed, but that may not be entirely just. The redistribution of wealth must follow just principles, if not, other forms of injustice are created, for there are some of the unemployed who are lazy and refuse to work. The just thing to do will be to deprive them of social security. Because of the adverse effect of denying lazy people who are unemployed social benefits, the government may decide to adopt principles that help all, no matter the situation. This is why society, at times must move beyond legalistic forms of justice.

Because justice is so important, let more be said about it. Justice can also be seen as legal justice, social justice, distributive justice, commutative justice, and vindicative justice. These are explained as follows: legal justice deals with individual citizens' relationship with the state requiring observance of laws; distributive justice deals with fairness of distributions of goods and duties in the state; commutative justice requires fairness in transactions among individuals in the state; vindicative deals with punishment being appropriately apportioned to offenders (Omoregbe, 2007). All types of justice are needed in society to various degrees. If society were to be free of elements of vindicative justice, society may likely be filled with criminals. Vindicative justice can deter people from committing crimes. Social justice that is attentive to the needs of the poor and vulnerable and enables individuals to obtain their dues is also needed (Royal, 1997). In Christian ethics, especially

from the biblical prophetic perspective, justice concerns right relationships among people, concern for the politically oppressed, exploited, and marginalized, and calls for addressing concrete human needs to eradicate inequalities and transform structures that oppress human beings, other earth creatures and the planet itself (Hobgood, 2007). Note that: "Social justice is placing the rights of all people at the heart of economic, social and environmental policies. It means tackling issues such as poverty, exclusion, inequality, unemployment, and lack of social protection, all of which are challenges in Africa" (International Labour Organization, 2024, para 3).

The term egalitarianism refers to "an outlook that opposes privileges and favours equality between individuals. The equality is always in some respect which is specified explicitly or understood from the context" (Mautner, 2005, p. 179). There are different shades of egalitarianism (while radical egalitarians oppose rewards based on skill or luck, favouring equal reward for everyone; others are tolerant of rewards based on skill or luck, etc.) (Mautner, 2005). The term egalitarianism can also be seen as:
…a philosophical perspective that emphasizes equality and equal treatment across gender, religion, economic status, and political beliefs. Egalitarianism may focus on income inequality and distribution, which are themes that have influenced the development of various economic and political theories. Egalitarianism may also look at how individuals are treated under the law (Kenton, 2024, para 1).

Another way is to state that: "Egalitarian is the belief in the equality of all persons and the conferment of all equal rights to all persons. Cambridge Dictionary sees egalitarian as the belief that all people are equally important and should have the same rights and opportunities in life. Collins Dictionary states that egalitarian means supporting or following the idea that all people are equal and should have the same rights and opportunities" (Okeke, 2023, para 1). Egalitarianism does not mean identical treatment for every human person. Equal treatment does not mean identical treatment, if not since the sick and healthy, young and old, should not be treated in the same way, for they have particular needs that need to be attended to. (Adekunle and Yunisa, 2012). Equal treatment means no discrimination. Both justice and egalitarianism go together and are intertwined.

A society is unjust if it fails to promote principles of egalitarianism. It should also be recognized that the opposite of justice is injustice, while the opposite of egalitarianism is inequalities. To work for justice is to work to eradicate injustices that exist in society. And to promote egalitarianism is to work to end inequalities in society. It is in this light that the situation of injustices and inequalities in society are examined. As this is done, a deeper understanding of what are injustices and inequalities will manifest.

3. The Situation of Injustices and Inequalities in Africa

There is a call for a just and egalitarian society in Africa because, in much of the continent, the land is still inundated with injustices (opposites of justice) and inequalities (opposite of egalitarianism). If justice and egalitarianism can prevail, it will be the end of injustice and inequality. This is what the paper implies, as it examines injustices and inequalities in this section. When they are mitigated, then a just and egalitarian order will prevail. Africa is still grossly underdeveloped. Inequalities are a global challenge, especially in Africa, as a result of poor development, educational disparities, poor healthcare systems, insecurities, and migration (Saoudi and Louis-Sarbib, 2023). On wealth inequality, it is regrettable to note the following:

Income inequalities in Africa are high. In 2021, according to the World Inequality Database, the share of the top 10% cluster on the African continent accounted, on average, for approximately 54% of the total national income, which is more than six times the share held by the bottom 50%. Wealth inequalities are even more pronounced, with the 10% richest Africans concentrating nearly 71% of total wealth, more than double the wealth held by the bottom 90%. Strikingly, the bottom half of the population possesses a meager fraction of the total wealth, amounting to nearly 1%. These findings underscore the pressing need to fully document the dimensions of inequality and to work towards a more equitable distribution of the fruits of development across African societies (Saoudi and Louis-Sarbib, 2023).

The African continent is the second largest in the world in terms of size, filled with abundant natural resources and human potential. However, due to poor leadership, it is massively underdeveloped. It is in a situation of injustice. Africans do not deserve what they are experiencing now that is meted out to them by corrupt and inept leaders. The enormous financial wealth of the continent that should be used in the development of social infrastructures like roads, railways, airports, seaports, electricity, education, etc, is looted away by kleptocrats. Africa is a land in which "there is poverty everywhere. Infrastructures breakdown, compounded with wars, insurgencies, increased number of refugees, hunger, sufferings, deaths, etc." (Ogundowole, 2006). The immediate previous statement was written about 20 years ago. You would have thought that the situation had changed. The change that Africa has

experienced in those 20 years is very little. Indices in Africa show a deteriorating situation with low incomes, poor health facilities, inflation and unemployment on the rise, breakdown of social infrastructures, and many persons living on less than $1.90 per day (Nnadozi, 2019). All these amount to unjust situations, for even though Africa can feed its citizens yet, many go hungry daily.

Corruption is one of Africa's greatest problems. Corruption includes things like stealing, inflation of contracts, bribery, embezzlement, kickbacks, etc (Bolokor, 2013). Despite many laws and agencies established in various African countries, corruption continues to be on the rise. There are many anti-corruption agencies in different African states, and the African Union has an anti-corruption board. Corruption impoverishes the land, breaks the economy, makes life miserable, and deprives people of the dividends and benefits that the government should provide for the people. It contributes to injustices and inequalities in the land. The few rich, especially those in power, get richer at the expense of the generality of the people. Society cannot be just as far as corruption exists. For services that the government should provide, corrupt government officials and employees continue to demand extra and illegal money from the people before providing the services.

The continent is still inundated with wars as a result of either struggle over mineral resources, cries over ethnic marginalization, or injustices. In the face of injustice, some persons turn to the barrel of the gun, and before you realize it, there is the emergence of another militant group. The cry over ethnic marginalization is a common one in Africa. In Ethiopia, many ethnic minorities are crying marginalization (Freeman, 2003). In Nigeria, almost all regions in the nation are crying marginalization. In 2020/2011, there was the Arab Spring that broke out in North Africa. It came essentially as a cry against dictatorial governments and the economic hardships that had been experienced by the people. The people were suffering from many injustices. There were protests in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and some other countries in the Middle East. These protests were attributable to the misrule of entrenched dictators in these countries, economic inequality, lack of full political rights, and governmental corruption, and it is important to note that the governments in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt were brought down as a result of these protests (Null, 2021). In much of North Africa, where these protests took place, people are still groaning in poverty, economic hardships, and under bad governance. Despite years of political independence from Apartheid rule, there are still many in South Africa who are yet to enjoy full and real political freedom (Hamilton, 2017). South Africa has experienced many protests as people agitate for economic freedoms, and because of the failures of the government to fully provide economic dividends, some turned to xenophobic attacks as they blamed foreigners. There is no doubt that conflicts and crises affect the realization of social justice (Bonny, 2022). The fact is that as conflicts, especially violent ones, take place people are displaced, dislocated, lose their habitation, have their properties destroyed, and are deprived of basic social amenities. Violent conflicts precipitate inequalities.

Another area where there are so many inequalities and injustices is the whole issue of gender. There is so much gender disparity and discrimination in the African continent. Much of Africa, if not all, is a patriarchal society where the male personalities dominate and subjugate. Women are denied many rights. Childless women are battered and insulted. The girl-child does not have equal access to education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 29% of income from labour goes to women as a result of only 46% of women participating in the labour force (Saoudi and Louis-Sarbib, 2023). Male dominance in Africa has led to gender inequality as women are made to play second fiddle, and women who are unable to bear male children or are childless are discriminated against (Anumudu and Boakye (2021). Female genital mutilation is still common, and some claim it is part of the culture that should remain. There are still barbaric widowhood practices that take place, and women are denied many other basic rights. The marriage institutions in many African countries inherently as constituted allow for a lot of discrimination that women suffer. In the Democratic Republic of Congo: "The husband is the head of the household. He owes protection to his wife; his wife owes obedience to her husband" (Democratic Republic of Congo, art 444). While there may be nothing wrong with the husband being the head, the challenge often is that headship that should be used for service and caring for family needs is used for domination and denial of the rights of women (Ikeke, 2024). The majority of child marriages in the world take place in West Africa according to available statistics (Jousse, 2021). In politics in many African countries, political positions are occupied by men.

Many factors account for inequalities and injustices in Africa. As always, it is difficult to excoriate colonialism from these factors. Indeed, colonialism is long gone. But in much of Africa, what many African countries got is paper independence, lacking deep-rooted political and economic independence. Africa is still troubled by neo-colonial forces. Inequalities and disparities arise from historic colonial legacies such as land distribution policies in some regions, especially in Southern Africa (South

Africa, Zimbabwe, etc), where these historic policies have contributed to racial discrimination (Saoudi and Louis-Sarbib, 2023). The colonialists, without caring for cultural and linguistic affinity, brought people of different affinities into balkanized so-called nations. And so there continue to be agitations for self-determination on the part of these ethnic nations. African politics is often riddled with ethnic sentiments, and people often vote on ethnic lines. Africa is a land in which, nationally a corrupt leader is condemned but when he comes to his locality, he is celebrated as a hero. Neo-colonial forces continue to impede Africa's development and quest for a just society. Through aid and multinational corporations, former colonial powers continue to influence African nations for their interests (Chinonye, 2007). As a popular adage says: "the payer of the piper dictates the tone." Over-reliance on foreign powers and bodies such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization are factors that contribute to eroding African economic independence, and it is these powers that dictate policies for Africa (Nnadozie, 2019).

When there is injustice and inequality in society, it is attended with many consequences. They slow down economic growth, hinder social cohesion, erode the confidence of the people, especially the middle class, limit the use of human capital and lack of opportunities, and cause a state of hopelessness that causes people to illegally immigrate and even resort to internal strife (Saoudi and Louis-Sarbib, 2023). There is hardly any region of Africa that is free from civil unrest. As disparate and nationalities groups fight over power and management of the state apparatus, the attention to development projects is weakened (Nnadozie, 2019). While in a short paper like this, it is not possible to enumerate and explain all the issues regarding injustices and inequalities, they must be dealt with to foster the African people's dream.

4. Way Forward in Building a Just and Egalitarian African Society

There are many ways to promote or foster a just and egalitarian society. Many factors can promote justice and mitigate inequalities in African societies. What the 1999 Nigerian constitution states is not different from what should be attainable in every African country. Citizens should be treated with equal rights and opportunities, the sanctity of human life should be respected, the government should be humane, natural resources should be exploited for the common good, and there should be impartial administration of justice and criminal law (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011).

One of the ways is through a social education that is liberatory and fosters values of equality. Education should be accessible to all, no matter their gender, creed, religion, or political affiliation. No one should be discriminated against when it comes to education. It should be an education that frees and empowers people. It should be an education that liberates the human mind. In his legendary song, one of African Diasporan's greatest sons, Bob Marley, cried "emancipate yourself from mental slavery." Education can break shackles. The kind of education that Africans need is not indoctrination or dogmatism but a Freirean type of education, an education that rejects a banking concept of education but rather encourages critical consciousness and struggles for freedom from all forms of oppression (Freire, 2010). As previously noted, a society that denies some persons, especially females' education is unjust. The consciousness that should be educated for and promoted in African societies should be that of theistic humanism that attends to the welfare and well-being of the people (Dukor, 2021).

Social and public policy is also very crucial in fostering an egalitarian and just society. It is through social and public policy that the government carries out its wishes and desires. Public policies should not end at the level of policy. Policy should be pragmatically implemented. An area where there should be policy to tackle injustices is land. Colonial policies deprived many Black Africans of their land. "Reforms of property rights and access to land are therefore necessary, and the proper articulation of these two policies remains a central issue" (Saoudi and Louis-Sarbib, 2023, p. 11). It is the government that makes public policies and enacts laws to govern the land.

Poor leadership, as previously noted, is one of the banes of African problems. Africans need good leaders who will foster equal development in all regions of their nation. Not leaders who are ethnic warlords/bigots who develop their areas of origin to the neglect of other regions in their nations. If Africa can get the political leadership question right, many other things like social justice, egalitarianism, social welfare, effective environmental governance, etc, will be in place. All across the continent, there is a political leadership problem, and this has caused a socioeconomic crisis, a syndrome of failed states, and mindless exploitation of the people and the natural wealth of the continent by corrupt politicians (Nwozor, 2014). It is painful to state that: "The reign of greed, dictatorship, and oppressive government, exercised through coercive fist by some African leaders, has made the political climate unfriendly for the realization of the dreams and aspirations of the common man" in Africa (Arinze, 2014). Many African leaders have billions of dollars stashed in Western banks; one wonders where all the money

came from. Many feel entitled and loot their national treasuries damning the consequences.

There is also corporate regional leadership. Outside the African Union, Africa has many regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community, etc. These organizations have a role to play in fostering a just and egalitarian Africa. The leaders of the African Union and the regional bodies should exercise vibrant corporate leadership to see that the objectives of the African Union and the regional bodies are fully implemented. Africa will be truly great and just if the African Union can achieve its aim of existence. It is the role of political leadership in different countries to determine the exact policies to be implemented to achieve a just and egalitarian society. All policies and laws that foster discrimination and promote injustices and inequalities should be abolished. African leaders have a grave role to play to ensure that wars and violent conflicts are curbed. Africa is bedevilled by a lot of wars that have caused displacement and dislocation of people, precipitating more inequalities. It is of African leaders, both as individuals and at the corporate levels, to ensure Africa is ridden of the plague of violent conflicts and wars. If wars can end in Africa, there is hope of building a better and more just society.

Related to policy and leadership are laws. The instrument of the law should be used to adjudicate for egalitarian values. There should be strong laws that are enforceable to curb social discrimination, deprivation of human rights, and other social ills. A society in which law is weak is bound to be an unjust society. Might become right, and there will be lawlessness. A lawless society cannot be just. It is leaders who have to ensure that the laws made for the good of the nation are enforced and implemented. In some African countries, there are still many child marriages in which children are allowed to get married to adult men. There is a need for laws that prohibit child marriages (United Nations, 1979).

A strong civil society is also important in the different countries to promote a just and egalitarian society. Where civil society is weak, it gives room for governmental impunity. A strong civil society should be critical of the government and question those in power. There is no generally accepted definition of civil society. According to K. Ranchod, it can include groups such as consumer organizations, trade unions, social movements, religious organizations engaged in corporate social responsibility and welfare services; and for M.J. Mafunisa, it includes religious groups, labour unions, cultural and educational organizations, student groups, sports groups, ethnic groups and political parties (Mkhize, 2017). Civil societies have a role to play in helping to transform society and promote good governance (Mkhize, 2017). Religious bodies, whether Christian, Muslim, African Traditional Religion, etc, have a great to play. They should, in their worship and homilies, speak about the values of justice and egalitarianism. Religions need to speak to themselves also about the values of egalitarianism, for often there are many inequalities in religious bodies, especially discrimination against women and people of other religions. The values of authentic prophetic justice and human rights should be the frequent messages that should come from the religions. In Catholic Dioceses throughout Africa, there are justice, peace, and development departments or commissions. Some other Christian or religious organizations may have similar organs. These bodies should not relent in their struggle for justice and peace in the African continent. Religious leaders must stay bold and vigilant in campaigning for human promotion and justice in Africa. In Africa, you have the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), All African Conference of Churches, etc.

A strong media is necessary to promote a just and egalitarian society. A strong and vibrant media should hold the government accountable and set an agenda for government. The media is often called the fourth estate of society. It should serve the cause of justice and egalitarianism. The social and mass media should devote more programmes to campaign for good governance, good leadership, free and fair elections, respect for human rights, etc, in the various countries in Africa.

5. Conclusion

The question of creating a just and egalitarian society is an important one. No society can obtain the optimal good life without just and egalitarianism. It is crucial to end inequalities and injustices to enable justice and egalitarian values to prevail. The paper deals with these issues just mentioned by examining the situation of injustices and inequalities in Africa. It was shown that many injustices and inequalities exist in Africa in different ways, such as gender discrimination, political discrimination; corrupt and inept leadership that causes suffering and pain, and oppresses the people; income and wealth inequalities, wars and violent conflicts, ethnicism, etc. Without curbing and eradicating, all these injustices and inequalities will continue in the land. Towards eradicating all these social ills and problems, the paper proposes critical education in consciousness that struggles against discrimination and oppression, enactment and implementation of good and healthy social and public policies, good national leadership, and corporate leaders from the

African Union and other regional bodies, a strong and vibrant civil society, a critical media, good laws, end to corruption and so forth. There needs to be in Africa a society that treats all people equally (not identically) without discrimination, offers people their due, and is concerned about the plights of the poor, vulnerable, marginalized, etc.

Finally, the pursuit of a just and egalitarian society in Africa is an urgent and crucial endeavour, demanding the elimination of entrenched injustices and inequalities that have stifled the continent's progress for far too long. Despite Africa's vast wealth in natural and human resources, the prevalence of poor governance, corruption, and external exploitation has perpetuated cycles of poverty, conflict, and marginalisation. To realise the continent's full potential, there must be a concerted effort to address these underlying issues, promote transparent and accountable leadership, and ensure inclusive development that benefits all. Africa's future rests on its ability to build societies founded on fairness, justice, and equal opportunities for every citizen. Achieving this vision will require the commitment of African governments, civil society, and the global community to dismantle systems of oppression and foster a spirit of unity and social justice. A truly just and egalitarian Africa is not only a possibility but a necessity for the continent's sustainable development and the upliftment of its people.

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Machiavellism and Political Power in Nigeria: Implications to the Nation's Political System

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Abstract. This work accentuated that Machiavellism, 'a political philosophy that emphasizes the pursuit and maintenance of power as the primary objective of political leaders with total exclusion of morality,' has dominated the spheres of politics in Nigeria. Politics all over the world is a game expected to be played by the rule and with some degrees of decorum among politicians who are the key actors. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Nigeria, where politics is rather seen as a do or die affair. The standard of good politics is seen to be abandoned and politicians have assumed a dangerous dimension in their struggle for power with total disregard for morality. The research aimed at examining the influence of Machiavellian morality of power control in the State and the effect of the struggle for control of political power in Nigerian political system. Using analytical, historical and comparative approaches and the services of secondary sources of data collection, the work discovered that trust and morality have been eroded in the political system, which has given room to corruption, nepotism, authoritarianism, instability and conflict in the Nation's political system, given its embrace of Machiavellian political views. The authors recommended that, upholding of the rule and supremacy of the law, respect for Fundamental Human Rights and dignity, will create a healthy political system; and where separation of powers, free and fair elections, will be of help to the democratic practices in Nigeria. Therefore, a more inclusive, transparent and accountable approach to governance can help build trust, legitimacy, and stability in Nigeria.

Keywords: Machiavellism, Political Power, Political System, Nigeria, Morality

1. Introduction

Political power all over the world is been played with some standard of decorum and the politicians playing it tend to abide by the policy and standard of the game. Aristotle, in Nicomachean Ethics (1099b:30), said: "the end or goal of politics is the best of ends; and the main concern of politics is to engender a certain character in the citizens and to make them good and disposed to perform noble actions." This view is quite different in Nigeria political system. Here, the politics is not seen as that which provides the best of ends but rather, it is seen as a "do or die" affair and a means of exploitation of the common wealth. The roles of good political power have been abandoned and its practice assumed a dangerous dimension. No wonder politics and its practices in Nigerian is seen as a dirty game.

In recent times, politics has been made up by thuggery, arson, murder, kidnapping, maiming and torturing of political opponents, falsehood, rigging of election, buying of votes with money, intimidation of voters and lots more. Politicians and those seeking for political positions in Nigeria use some of these methods to get power and retain it at all cost. They remain unruffled as they adopt these measures whether fair or foul; because they see these practices as nothing but politics. The basic question is, can the present political leaders and the political practice today be admired for molding man's moral, social, religious and political life? The answer to this question, forms part of the details this research hopes to provide.

This paper in what follows, will appraise and evaluate how Machiavellian political philosophy is in control of political power in Nigeria and its implications to the political system. The work in turn will make some recommendations and suggestions for further studies to help reposition Nigerian political landscape and move Nigeria forward in a better political environment.

2. Conceptual Framework

Under this sub-heading, the research will delineate few salient concepts that formed the nexus of this work, which are Machiavellism, political power and political system

2.1 Machiavellism

On the meaning of Machiavellism, Grazia posited that it is associated with realism in both foreign and domestic politics and with the view that those who lead governments must prioritize the stability of the regime over ethical concern (67).

Omoregbe commenting on this said, "the essential thing in politics which is the ultimate goal of politics, according to Machiavelli is grab political power and retain it. Any means, foul or good, moral or immoral can be used to achieve this goal" (38).

Another side of Machiavellism is that it advocates that moral principles should be eschewed in politics and warned rulers not to encourage what is called "Christian Virtue." These Christian virtues are: patience, meekness, mercy, humility, self-denial, compassion and forgiveness (Omoregbe 65). So Machiavellism is a political and social philosophy that emphasizes pragmatism, realism and the pursuit of power. It has remained a thought provoking and influential philosophy shaping international politics.

In all, Machiavellism teaches that a ruler, leader or political power holder needs no moral soundness, religious, honest, compassionate and humane attributes. But rather he should always remain watchful, examine the condition and then know when to apply moral, immoral, humane or cruel means in attaining his political quest.

2.2 Political Power

The issue of political power is all around us both visible and invisible. It is seen in every day social relations, in people's ideologies and their actions. When someone seeks power, power affects the process; but when he wields power, power is the man. Political power is not only a complex concept but also it is the core essence of a society. When power evolves, it affects the core essence of the society. Some scholars identified power as single concept and they have presented political power as identified with its exercise, domination, subject dispositions, freedom or empowerment. In all these concepts, the most prevailing concept of power is to preserve the powerful by domination or power over those with less power or the powerless (Subrata 101).

Defining political power, a prominent political theorist, Charles presents the context of political power as mobilization of the need for organized political action. It is a kind of "the personality types to be adjusted and adopted in social living" (115). He emphasized that "power" is first a phenomenon of group cohesion and aggregation, a child of group necessity or utility, a function of the social relation of men (Charles 121). In this sense, political power can similarly be seen as an inseparable recurrent character of a political community or a political institute, function in order to satisfy its need to do its advantage. So, political power means that an individual or group of people hold authority in a nation's government. With this power, they can do good or evil things because they have authority over people. We have many examples of power in government which involves the power to tax, raise army, make laws and regulate businesses.

Therefore, political power is the ability of persons, groups and institutions to influence and control the behaviour of other people, shape policies and make decisions that can impact the society.

2.3 Political System

A political system refers to the structure, institutions, and processes that govern a society or state. It encompasses the mechanisms for making decisions, exercising power, and allocating resources. Political systems are of different types which includes: Democracy, Monarchy, Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism, Oligarchy, and Theocracy (Ebestein 545).
Moreover, in political science, political system is the form of political organization that can be observed, recognized, or otherwise declared by a society or State (Odey 49). So, it is seen as process for making official government decisions.

According to David Easton, "a political system can be designated as the interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society" (David 79). So, it is referred broadly to the process by which laws are made and public resources allocated in a society, and the relationships among those involved in making decisions (Dobratz 112).
Furthermore, it is seen as a set of different institution established politically, to ensure the free and fair distribution of resources within a given society (Ebestein 157). These systems are formed with certain objectives, like determining who will be leaders, their roles and critical responsibilities. One of the major characteristics of political system is that it enjoys the monopoly of using legitimate force to control citizens and the affairs. It also has the power to propose and implement policies that are beneficial to its people (Francis 529).

3. Machiavellism on Morality and Political Power: An Essay

Morality is concerned with rightness or wrongness of behaviour. Morality also deals with character or actions judged as being good, evil, right or wrong. Certain actions could generally be judged by people as morally wrong or seen as morally good (Ejizu 115).

Writing on morality and politics, Niccolo Machiavelli affirmed that, "a ruler should base his actions on how situations present itself not basically strictly on whether the action should be considered good or bad" (116). A ruler in the process of getting power could use evil means to achieve his goal. His work on "Prince" and "Discourses" showed equally the qualities for which he has been specially known as the use of immoral means for political purpose and the ideology that politics depends mainly on power. He noted that a ruler did not necessarily have all the good virtues but should certainly appear to have them, he further noted that if a ruler has these good virtues and lived accordingly, he would find them ruining him but when he only appears to have them, they would save him and render him services (Machiavelli 116).

In the same vein, a ruler cannot observe all those things which men consider reputation or integrity. The reason for this is that for the ruler to maintain his state, he is sometimes forced to act in defiance of good faith, kindness, religion and among others (Machiavelli 135). Moreover, Machiavelli rejected the demands that a ruler is supposed to be the embodiment of human virtues, he advised by warning the rulers not to heed to the question of whether his action would be called virtuous. In acquisition of power, a ruler ought to do whatever that is needful to the condition in which he finds himself and may lead to success (Machiavelli 125).

Furthermore, for Machiavelli, a successful ruler is one who would be able to acquire, maintain, consolidate and increase power. The survival and preservation of the common wealth was his fundamental concern. He prudently calculated what would be the consequences of political actions that would be an achievement for the national safety. A ruler in a state had to be judged by an independent criterion, the morality of success, which was majorly for the protection of citizens guaranteeing their well-being, expansion of territory and a zealous safeguarding of the interest of the nation. He noted that politics is ultimately and finally constant struggle for power and domination. In Machiavelli's view, politics had to be judged by its own rules and norms so that states can survive. Machiavelli pointed out that in writing about the rules of politics, he was projecting the real truth and not leaving anything to imagination (Machiavelli 156).

Machiavelli went further to separate the private from the public sphere of morality. Maintaining that the state had a morality of its own - the morality of success. The private individual must at all times display qualities that were in consonance with the highest moral standards (Machiavelli 165). For him, in politics, fair was foul and foul was fair, all depends on circumstances of the time. No general rule was valued, for everything becomes a matter of political expediency. Machiavelli argued that political actions were to conform to high moral standards in times of stability, but however in times of strife, chaos and disorders, principled politics would spell ruin (Machiavelli 189).

Unlike traditional political theory which is of the view that ethical conduct was desirable for it would bring about moral elevation, Machiavelli was too realistic to overlook the irony of the political situation. For Machiavelli, in politics, it was not possible to assess the effect of a virtuous or a wicked act, for it would result in the opposite effect. His rejection of traditional ethics and the quest to find an alternative political ethics that was suitable and appropriate was derived from a firmly held conviction that history moved with abrupt jerks in a frenzied way for him, politics had to be linked with necessities; meaning those factors that compelled individuals to find ingenious solutions. This was possible only if purely political factors were taken into account, excluding others. The attempt of Machiavelli to establish the autonomy of politics was tantamount to a denial of ethical absolutes (Grant 189).

Therefore, Grazia noted that Machiavelli broke with classical theory which had approached the problems of political action with questions of how men could develop their moral potentialities through a life devoted to political office. For Machiavelli, the problem became more, acute, for the issue no longer involve the statesman quest for a moral perfection which by its very moral quality; would benefit the community; it involved instead the political actor which was driven to break the moral law in order to preserve his society (Grazia 113).

4. The Manifestation of Machiavellism in Nigerian Political System

The seed of Machiavellianism planted in Italy in the 15th century grew like the mustard seed and has negatively affected many political systems round the globe and Nigeria is not an exception (Odey 89)

The hallmark of every democratic culture and government is periodic elections. It could be in four,

five or six years respectively depending on the constitutional provisions in any given country. In Nigeria, for example, elections are held every four years and due to the inordinate ambitions and deceits of the political class; it is seen as "a do or die affair" and "a must win." This is to say that in Nigeria today, we have witnessed a great deal of politics marked with impunity, lawlessness, thuggery and massive rigging of elections. Nigeria as a nation is still struggling to get herself out of the woods politically (Mamadu 142)

Bertrand Russell asserted that, "the aim of politics is to make the lives of individuals as good as possible" (207). However, the above assertion is the opposite in Nigeria's political sphere, as the politicians have submerged morality to the lowest ebb of the political pyramids. Omoregbe in his work on ethics, noted that, "Nigerians have been made to believe that politics and morality do not go together and that once a person starts politics, he ignores morality" (Omoregbe 93). Although it is widely believed that politics is a dirty game, but ideally, it is not, rather the unscrupulous men made it seem or look dirty.

The politicians have perfected the art of rigging, thuggery and other forms of electoral malpractices to the extent that winners emerge even in places where elections did not hold. And the number of votes recorded in some places are higher than the number of registered voters. Little wonder, John Odey in his book, 'This Madness Called Election', described it as "electoral coup" and "political charade" (Odey 110).

Furthermore, Odey, lamented that, "Nigeria will not be a home as long as politicians continue to turn political elections into a kind of civil war when young people are denied all decent opportunities and are conscripted into the burgeoning and money-spinning industry of political thuggery, where they kill and maim the so-called political opponents" (Odey 57). Later on, they set up election tribunal even though it has yielded some positive result; it is yet to measure up to the expectation of the masses. But the fundamental question is, how can one expect anything good from it since it was set up by the perpetrators themselves?

5. The Implications of Machiavellism on Nigerian Political System

Machiavellism's implications for Nigerian political power and system are far-reaching and complex. At its core, Machiavellism advocates for a pragmatic approach to politics, where the end justifies the means, and morality is secondary to maintaining power. In Nigerian political system, this could lead to a focus on short term gains and political survival, but potentially at the expense of the greater good.

On absolutism; Machiavellism promotes the concentration of power in the hands of a single leader or group, which could result in authoritarianism and diminished checks of power which is applicable in the present-day Nigeria as a nation governed in authoritarianism by the present political power (Odey 51).

Moreover, morality in Nigerian political power and system takes back seat. The prioritization of political expediency over moral principles may lead to corruption, nepotism and human rights abuses. In Nigeria today, there is the challenge of political instability because of the focus on maintaining power at all costs which created an environment of constant political maneuvering, undermining stability and effective governance in nation (David 43).

The lack of accountability in the governance of Nigeria because of the challenges of lack of strong moral compass, leaders may feel less strong accountable to their constituents, leading to poor governance and unresponsiveness to the need of the people.

Considering Nigeria and the political philosophy of Machiavelli which is prevalent, one can discover the undermining of democratic institutions. Machiavellian tactics can erode trust in democratic institutions, potentially destabilizing the entire system of politics in Nigeria.

Furthermore, looking at Nigeria today, just like in Machiavelli's Florence, and Italy of his period, it is made of people who exhibit the same attributes that Machiavelli identified in the lives of the people of his time. The present-day Nigeria is filled with politicians who are greedy and selfish that can do all kinds of cruel and violent things in order to get and maintain political power.

The evidences at hand show that the struggle in Nigeria for political power, maneuvering for political positions and fighting over offices or political appointment, have led to many intimidations, kidnapping or killing of political opponents. Some have even entered into sorcery and ritual practices of all kinds in order to secure political positions.

The manifestation of violence and cruelty in Machiavelli's narrative has brought to the fore the state of things in Florence and Italy within his period, they were facing enormous challenges of how to sustain her statehood that is full of incessant political conflict, violence and cruelty. It was a period of political turbulence, insecurity and chaos, violence and influence. Likewise, Nigeria is today facing some challenges of political development coming from all fronts, which involves the use of violence and cruelty to acquire political power and

to express ethnic or religious grievances. Some evidences have shown the fact that violence and cruelty are part of social and political lifestyle of many politician/political leaders in Nigeria which is the implication of Machiavellian political philosophy.

It is very vital to note that the implications of Machiavellism in Nigerian political power and system are not inevitable. Nigerian citizens can work to fight against the negative effects of Machiavellism by promoting transparency, accountability, and democratic values.

6. Summary and Conclusion

In the modern-day politics, Machiavellism has become a method and manual for the enhancement, preservation and appropriation of political power. The practice of Machiavellism in the political system of Nigeria is no blessing but a big issue. Machiavellism as the political philosophy of Machiavelli has introduced a lot of retrogression in the political, economic, social and religious growth and development of the nation. Machiavellian principles are clearly incompatible with democracy. And adopting the principle will further deteriorate the already bad political atmosphere that exists in Nigeria. Remove morality from democracy and politics, one has also removed democracy itself because democracy and politics presupposed morality, justice, liberty, honesty, fairness, peaceful and decent behaviour, openness of mind, and readiness to step down if one loses.

There must be a redress beginning from the individual to the state at large in the cultivation of purpose and will of the people. Evil practices in politics must not be allowed but exposed and punished and the political leaders in the nation must be careful on how they handle the political issues of the nation. It is necessary for the people to vote for the person that is qualified and not the money making and self-ambitious politicians, because the problem is not in our star as noted by Shakespeare quoted by John Odey, but in ourselves knowing that individuals will eventually form a virtuous state (Odey 69).

Nigerian citizens should work hard to dethrone deceit and brutality, so that they can pave way for morality to take full place in political scene. The Nigerian politicians should know that “the end does not justify the means” as posited by Machiavelli but rather they should know that if the action must be good, the end must also be good and the means for achieving the end will also be good.

7. Recommendations

Based on the research carried out, the following recommendations are hereby put forward:

(i) The Rule and Supremacy of the Law: This implies that nobody should be above the law. There should be no discrimination in the application of the law. Every Nigerian citizen both the leaders and the led should abide by the guiding principles of the Nigerian law, and the law should take its effects on any defaulter no matter his/her political status.
(ii) Respect for fundamental Human Dignity and Rights: In our nation Nigeria and in matters of politics by the political leaders, they should respect the fundamental Human dignity and rights and also the protection of the inherent value and worth of every human/Citizen. For example, treating individuals with dignity, respect and compassion regardless of their race, ethnic group, gender age, religion, among others.
(iii) Free and Fair Election: The only democratic way of enthroning a civilian political leader is by election. So, in Nigeria, free and fair election should be allowed so that the people can choose leaders that will serve them better and be accountable to the people not by imposition.

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Epistemology and the Bounds of Human Comprehension

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Abstract. The paper examines the nature of knowledge and the boundaries of human comprehension in John Locke's theory of knowledge. Within the study of epistemology, the nature of knowledge and the issue of justification hold key roles. Locke rejects the rationalist assumption that the human intellect possesses a unique access to reality. The paper argues that the limits of the concept of human comprehension has sparked debate ever since the release of *the Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Locke strives to identify the boundaries of human comprehension and aims to pave the way for future advancements by presenting a theory of knowledge that aligns with the examination of human nature. The paper points out that the question of how we can understand the existence and characteristics of the external world is among the most ancient and challenging topics in philosophy. John Locke's definition of knowledge through concepts renders an understanding of the real world unachievable. Recognizing concepts does not appear to be the type of activity that can provide us with understanding of an object. Examining an object section by section cannot yield comprehensive understanding, however, if the human mind does not directly perceive the physical object, how can we assert that physical objects exist? we can merely assert that ideas are present.

Keywords: John Locke, Knowledge, Comprehension, Basic Concepts, Ideas

1. Introduction

Philosophers have deeply contemplated the essence, worth and purpose of knowledge. John Locke believed that human comprehension and concepts originate from experience. The first of these is sensation, which we derive from the tangible world. The second is reflection, which is gained through mental operations. John Locke's epistemological contributions are among the most significant justifications for contemporary empiricism. He endeavors to identify the boundaries of human comprehension and aims to establish a foundation for upcoming advancements by offering a theory of knowledge that aligns with the examination of human nature. The boundaries of human comprehension, according to Locke, are defined by the constraints of perception and our cognitive abilities. However, in his book, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Locke's main focus is on the fundamental issue of knowledge, that is the origin of insight and comprehension, he presents ideas as the purpose of comprehension when a person reflects, where thought is often employed to encompass all mental activities. He writes: Every individual is aware of himself, recognizing that he thinks, and the subjects his mind focuses on during this thought process are the concepts present in that moment. There is no doubt that men hold various concepts in their thoughts, such as are those conveyed through the terms, whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others. (1959:121).

For John Locke, thought and thinking are synonymous; he views ideas as the components of thought, as the elements that the mind, in a manner of speaking, processes. within thinking. The paper evaluates closely John Locke's concept of thoughts and their roots in experience and contemplation. This leads us to John Locke's assertion that individuals are born unaware of all things. Our examination of John Locke's theory of knowledge and the boundaries of human comprehension will connect the idea theory with his theory of understanding. The paper contends that his framework of ideas holds significant importance for our comprehension of the outside environment and the manner in which our minds interpret the world around and us. Our examination depicts him as a balanced skeptic, as he recognizes and accommodates the constraints of human perception, which paves the way for the impartial scientific

method. This subsequently offers extra philosophical instruments for Cartesian skeptical examination. This implies that the most effective approach to start seeking truth is within the boundaries of our sensory capacities.

2. The Nature of Epistemology

What can we know? How do we come to know? These inquiries are fundamentally important to philosophy. Epistemology is the technical terminology for the theory of knowledge. As a division of philosophy, it examines the origins, characteristics, and legitimacy of knowledge. The ensuing issues or inquiries that emerge in this area of Philosophy include: what are the origins of knowledge? This relates to how we obtain authentic understanding. How do we ascertain the essence of knowledge? Is our understanding reliable? Here, we seek to determine if we can differentiate between truth and falsehood. In fact, different philosophers at some point or another have offered responses to these inquiries. A person is an aware entity. This awareness is perpetually present within him, even if he is unaware of it. It is essential for us to seek the assurance of what we assert we understand. We are all aware of the questioning skepticism; uncertainties regarding our assertions of knowledge are inherent in our interactions with others. The skeptics reject the validity of our knowledge claims. If the skeptic's challenge is proven incorrect, our exploration of that challenge allows us to better define our conception of understanding and validation. The skeptics emphasize that it is feasible to be mistaken about the majority of things we typically assert to know regarding the world.

John Locke, an empiricist, holds the view that all the content of our understanding comes from sensory experience and self-reflection. He contends that we ought to present all opinions and convictions to the judgment of reason (Copleston, 1964:79). Locke maintains that ideas are the subject of human comprehension. For him, it is clear that the mind does understand things instantaneously, but solely through the influence of their concepts regarding them. Thus, our understanding is genuine only to the extent that there is alignment between concepts and the actual state of affairs (Locke, 1959:228). If Locke is correct, how can we possess knowledge of the outside world? Are we not confined within our own thoughts? What John Locke seeks to accomplish here is to understand the origin of ideas and thus to delineate the limits of human comprehension.

Locke's concept of knowledge is based on the dualistic distinction between the one who knows and the thing known, between tangible items in the universe and perceptions and concepts in our consciousness. However, we are uncertain if those concepts accurately represent the world to us. The skeptics question our right to claim that we possess knowledge or justified belief, (Ajayi, 2016:16). Perception cannot be taken as a source of knowledge, as it is always feasible that our perceptual beliefs may be erroneous. The important inquiries then are: should we accept the skeptic's perspective on our cognitive situation? If not simply counter the questioning challenge. The skeptics insist that we understand our approaches to be suitable for the task without employing the method in discussion. Nevertheless, the Cartesian skeptic will not allow us to utilize perceptual convictions to defend the sufficiency of perception. It is crucial to note that the skeptical outcome appears unavoidable.

When we contemplate the essence of knowledge and the world we are striving to comprehend, we discover that it is more intricate and perplexing than we realize, for example when we observe an object, it seems to possess color, but what is color? If I wear blue lenses, everything around appears blue. In this case, color seems to be somewhat influenced by the state of our visual organs. (Ajayi, 2016:16). Epistemology examines the essence, circumstances, and worth of knowledge without pre-determining what the outcomes and implications will be (Steenberghet, 1949)). The power of reflection provides epistemological analysis using a device (Steenberghet, 1949:27). The essential inquiries are: what does this reflection actually entail? What significance does it hold? We can only uncover answers to these inquiries in epistemology, since for epistemology to exist, we must have the capacity to comprehend knowledge, even if we perceive knowledge as an obscure enigma or something of an internal and secret existence. Epistemology, as a field of philosophy, addresses questions like: how can we differentiate between what we have justification to believe and what we do not have justification to believe? How can we determine if we have a valid reason to trust one idea over another idea? All these inquiries pertain to us. We can label it as a Socratic inquiry. When we contemplate these questions, we have the ability to rectify and enhance our own knowledge context. (Ajayi, 2016:18). Our capacity to inquire about what we can understand and what we are warranted in believing indicates that we possess the ideas of knowledge and epistemic justification. The word justify, when related to a belief, is an epistemic concept appraisal e.g. to say that F is more warranted for B than A it is incorrect to assert that Ais is at minimum warranted for B as F. St. Augustine contends that there could be reasons to

doubt the trustworthiness of the senses; however, we are typically more justified in trusting them than in believing we cannot depend on them (Chisholm,1989:8).

If knowledge is justified belief, we occasionally recognize that we know, which implies that we sometimes understand that we are warranted in our beliefs. Russell in his expressions argues that the level of trust we assign to a statement can, at times, be considered a piece of information itself. (Russell, 1948:381). While we frequently possess knowledge, for instance, I am aware that we are located at Olabisi Onabanjo University; I have this understanding without needing to engage in any deep exploration of epistemology or theories of epistemic justification. A proposition is classified as evident when it has justification. (Ajayi, 2016:18). Additionally, there exist justified propositions that do not qualify as evident, for example, it might be clear to me that I will have a meal tomorrow and what I consumed yesterday and the day prior, I might have valid reasons to believe that I will eat tomorrow and the following day; this could be reinforced by induction, yet it is not clear to me or anyone else that I will eat tomorrow. That remains beyond a reasonable doubt; for me, there is nothing today that can demonstrate to me that I will eat tomorrow.

Perry believes that knowledge provides the light and direction for all aware actions. (Perry, 1968:6). When Socrate states that to "know thyself" goes beyond just being aware of our emotions, motivations, etc. The ultimate aim of understanding oneself is to embrace and dedicate oneself to a particular lifestyle; thus, knowledge of oneself cannot exist without recognizing one's connection to others. When I express that I understand my feelings, it indicates that I can only grasp others' emotions in a lesser and indirect manner, meaning we comprehend other people's psychological states by comparing them to our own. Strawson support this when he asserts that the fundamental requirement for attributing mental states to oneself is the readiness to attribute them to others (Strawson, 1959:99). Empiricism is a theory of knowledge that prompts us to gather sensory proof for our beliefs and warns us against speculating on the evidence provided by our experiences. This group is exemplified by John Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

3. The Essence and Source of Concepts

The word ideas are from two Greek verb *'ideiv',* meaning 'to see', 'to be aware' and closely derived from the noun signifying 'that which is observed' 'to create', 'mold', 'outline', (Hamilton and Cains, 1987:15). When used properly, the term 'idea' has taken on two definitions: (1) An understanding or depiction that is recognized, and (2) A framework or design by which something is created. In the realms of psychology and philosophy, it signifies the thought about, or deliberate mention of, something that is not currently present but possesses its unique qualities. For psychologists, an idea is viewed as a cognitive occurrence that a character of its own. For the philosopher an idea serves as a way to understand, and it is examined through the objects that it brings to our attention. When we refer to Plato's philosophy, we find that the concept carries a Platonic nuance. It is a significant element of Plato's philosophy.

Plato sought to provide a counterpoint to the philosophies of Heraclitus and Socrates. Heraclitus highlighted that the universe is constantly changing, while Socrates maintained that the philosopher's aim was to achieve unchanging and eternal truths. The term idea in Plato's examination carries two distinct interpretations: (a) what the mind comprehends and (b) the model according to which objects are formed. Conversely Plato also refers to ideas as (a) the model that things endeavor to replicate. Conversely Plato likewise refers to (a) the entities of intellect, as opposed to the entities of sensory experience. (b) realities that genuinely exist, in contrast to transformations, meaning the objects of perception that are in a condition of becoming (c) eternal in contrast with the transient realm of transformation. Aristotle, a student of Plato, strongly contested the concept of a world of forms. He deemed it as inconsistent; instead, he utilized the term form when referring to ideas.

John Locke in his An Essay Concerning Human Understanding stated that ideas is the object of thinking: Every individual is aware of his own existence, recognizing that he thinks and focusing his thoughts on various matters. While contemplating the concepts that exist. There is no doubt that individuals possess numerous thoughts in their minds, like those conveyed by the terms, whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thought, movement, man, elephant, army, intoxication, and others. (1959:121). Thought and thinking for John Locke, likewise, ideas serve as the substance of thought; they are the items with which the mind engages during the process of thinking. In other words, they are the essential components that a mind needs in order to think effectively. (Stroud, 1991:17). David Hume, another empiricist, refers to the object of the mind perception, he further divides into impressions and concepts. John Locke regards ideas as the components of thought that originate from experience. What John Locke refers to as ideas, Hume

refers to as perception, and according to Hume, every perception is classified as either an impression or an idea (Stroud, 1991:19). Hume believes that all perceptions of the human mind can be categorized into two separate types known as impressions and ideas, with those perceptions that come in with intensity and potency being termed impressions. By ideas, he signifies the dim representations of these in contemplation and logic. For example, consider all the sensations stimulated by the current discussion, anticipating solely those that originate from sight and touch and excluding the direct joy or discomfort it may cause (Hume, 1978:1).

For Locke our knowledge and comprehension will be unattainable without concepts, as every actuality originates in and depend on ideas. In Book II of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* Locke divides ideas into straightforward and intricate. Straightforward concepts are further broken down divided into four categories based on their origins in experience (a) simple ideas from a single sense (b) simple idea from multiple senses (c) simple ideas derived from reflection (d) simple ideas resulting from both sensation and reflection (Locke, 1959:48). For Locke, no ideas exist that fall outside these categories. Complex concepts can be clarified through their basic components; no ideas are exclusively simple or complex. Although sensory perception involves the emergence of straightforward sensory ideas, perception through reflection is the occurrence of simple ideas of reflection. In John Locke's analysis of the operations of the mind on its ideas terms like 'recalling', 'observing', 'conceptualizing', 'synthesizing', represent concepts and not merely as labels for the processes by which our ideas are generated.

Locke believes that ideas in the mind cannot exist without being perceived. However, how do we account for those who assert they are oblivious to numerous straightforward reflective ideas present in their experiences? Locke contends in his examination of the well-known Molyneux dilemma that an individual who is born blind and later gains sight would not solely through vision be able to differentiate a cube from a sphere. "Suppose a man who was born without sight, now grown up, has learned through touch to differentiate between a cube and a sphere made of the same metal, and nightly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and the other, which is the cube, which the sphere. Assume then the cube and sphere positioned on a table, and the blind man is granted sight: whether through his vision, prior to touching them, he could now differentiate and tell which the globe is, which the cube? To which the acute and judicious proposer answers, "Not" (Locke, 1959:187). While he has the experience of a globe and a cube and the way they affect his touch, he is yet to grab the experience that what influences his tactile senses also impacts his vision. John Locke believes that it is essential to comprehend concepts such as "judgment", ""gathering", "allows it to proceed", "structures", as they all represent the functioning of the mind, the modification of the appearances into their causes arise when we fail to pay attention to them. In many instances, it is due to an established routine; activities we encounter often are executed so routinely and swiftly that we interpret them as a direct reflection of our sensations, which are ideas that are formed so consistently and rapidly that we consider them as the perception of our sensations, which is an idea created by our judgment (Locke, 1959:189).

Locke contends that ideas are clear or distinct based on the mind's capability to perceive, remember, and distinguish the subtlest of which it possesses concepts. In Book II, chapter II, 22 of: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, he contends that complex ideas fall into categories of modes, substances, or relations (Locke, 1959:215). Complex ideas arise from the mental processes that combine simple ideas derived from experience. Knowledge is attributed to the diverse methods in which intricate concepts of modes can be classified into two categories: (1) simple modes and (2) mixed modes. Simple modes consist of various combinations of the identical simple idea without any mixture e.g. a dozen of score, whereas mixed modes consist of the straightforward concept of various types combined to form a singular complex notion, for instance, beauty, figure, theft. Complex ideas of substances are amalgamations of simple ideas as they are utilized to depict distinct individual entities existing independently, such as the simple idea of a specific dull whitish hue, along with certain levels of weight, hardness, ductility, and fusibility we have the idea of lead. A combination of ideas of a certain sort of figure, with the powers of motion thought and reasoning, linked to substance, create the common conception of a person. The notions of substance can be individual or collective.

Locke contends that we recognize external objects through the perception of their representations: ideas, from which we deduce the existence and characteristics of these external objects by perceiving their ideas, the essence of which we understand directly and that there is no separation between external entities and concepts, and therefore when we observe ideas, we are observing external objects. however, in this context, Locke would require to off provide an account of what is remarkable about ideas

that allows us to be directly cognizant of what they denote whenever we encounter one. (Ajayi, 2016:31). If this responsibility can be fulfilled, then we can assert that we are cognizant of external entities. According to Locke, the concepts of yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, bitter, and sweet arise from sensation. The concepts of perceiving, contemplating, questioning, trusting, understanding, reasoning, and choosing arise from reflection. Occasionally, the ideas that we get directly from the experience of sensation and reflection merging together, we subsequently obtain intricate ones. For Locke, the mind possesses the ability to merge multiple simple concepts into a complex one; he views the mind as an agent, an operator working on ideas. This perspective sets him apart from Lodge, who perceives physical objects as embodiments of ideas.

We are unable to comprehend a meaningful object unless we are there to receive it, and we cannot envision it without incorporating the consideration of the observer. Many would agree that envisioning a form in its absence resembles observing it, and contemplating a melody in a silent space can sometimes be akin to listening to it. Locke dedicates the initial book of his *An Essay About Human Knowledge* to a critique of inherent concepts. He offers a compelling argument against innate ideas. Numerous academics, particularly in theology, philosophy, and psychology, have contended that such ideas exist. Runes define innate concepts as: concepts that emerge into awareness when specific conditions are fulfilled that are available to the mind as a inclination or predisposition to consider things in a specific manner. (2001:12). Locke is of the opinion that knowledge can refute any natural perceptions and that individuals can achieve the understanding they possess their inherent abilities without any foundational concepts or principles

4. The Boundaries of Human Comprehension: Concepts Arise from Experience

John Locke differs from those who label their confidence and faith in inherent understanding. Locke's essay demonstrates that knowledge, agreement, or any mental or verbal statements about concepts are only possible if the concepts themselves are present, leading to the conclusion that principles cannot be deemed inherent unless the concepts can be seen as such. It would be highly challenging for individuals who subscribe to innatism to formulate or accept statements where the terms lack significance. To John Locke innate propositions are not in harmony with true understanding and awareness, which is a crucial element of concepts. Locke contends against the notion of innate knowledge (1) he claims that specific knowledge abilities and universal, we realized later when we understood the challenging nature of abstraction, yet since all the alleged inherent principles are universal, they are far from being initial, as they should be if they were indeed inherent. (2) the concepts derived from these principles are not found in the consciousness of every individual and to be universal they must adhere to the fact that there exists knowledge in a mind which contains the specifics that are initially evident to us; this indicates that such knowledge cannot be inherent. (3) we cannot comprehend the concept that knowledge resides in a mind that has never encountered it, as any idea that the mind has not previously encountered, for Locke, was never present in the mind.

Whenever an idea exists in the mind, it is either a current perception or one that was once perceived and is now recalled by memory. If tangible things turn out to be innate, Locke's thesis will be inconsistence because he contends that all knowledge is obtained from rational understanding, whether explicitly in the instance of external sensation or indirectly in the instance of internal contemplation. Considering Locke's submission on substance, it is not a separate positive concept and it does not originate from sensation or contemplation, it is a comparative notion, an assumption of he knows not what foundation (Locke, 1959:391). He ascribes the source of this idea to an internal drive to think that prevents us from supposing ideas can exist without a topic or foundation for them. This resembles Descartes' essence as an inherent cognitive that is inherently present in the thought process of the mind. Substance represents a unique concept; Descartes views substance as the notion of the thing itself, regarded without regard to its characteristics. A positive idea examined from the perspective of self-sufficiency as contrasted with the concept of its form, or hue, material comprehended in this manner cannot be simplified to any perceptions or visualizations of sensation.

Locke's argument is directed to the observable occurrence regarding the condition and development of knowledge within us, yet overlooks the nature of that knowledge. This contrasts with Descartes, who claims that the substance of our knowledge is such that it cannot be fully explained in solely empirical terms. It is essential to emphasize that there is no conflict between the inherent ideas of these two prominent philosophers; instead, their discussions ultimately pertain to concepts that possess a dual nature of existence: first unconsciously, whether they are recognized or not, and secondly, consciously when

they are. This suggests that 'existing in the mind' does not equate to 'being recognized' as John Locke argues (Ajayi, 2016:41). Additionally, there is a difference between unconscious knowledge that has not been learnt but is not being reflected on, and the other that is supposed to be possessed unconsciously but has never yet been learnt. The former can be brought to mind at will, while the latter cannot. This is in line with Plato in his argument when he says that the soul had acquired knowledge prior to birth but had lost it upon entering the world. Thus, learning now essentially becomes a form of recollection. This recollection differs from the usual interpretation; it resonates when we talk about the cognitive process of recalling matters we have previously understood in this existence.

The conflict between John Locke's empiricism and Descartes' rationalism is not primarily concerned with the source of thought but rather its essence. It is noteworthy to emphasize that the distinction between them lies not in the origin of knowledge from, empiricism or the inherent capabilities of the mind? but rather what is the essence of thought—is it, or is it not fundamentally different from sensation and imagination? Descartes asserts that: thoughts are fundamentally separate from sensations or images; hence, they cannot originate from them but must be intrinsic. In contrast, Locke argues that: no knowledge is inherent but instead stems from sensory experience. The two philosophers share a similar premise underlying their arguments based on sensory reasoning. Descartes contends that the distinction between thought and sensation implies that the former cannot originate from the latter, as he assumes the supplementary premise that if thought is derived from sensory experience, then it cannot be the case that it is solely based on the latter, because he takes for granted the additional premise that if thought is sense-derived it must ultimately be equivalent to sensation. Locke, conversely, argues that the acquisition of knowledge through sensory experience indicates that it must entirely consist of sensible knowledge, it is also due to the assumes that if all understanding comes from sensory experience, it must ultimately align with sensation. Thus, if knowledge reaches the mind via the senses, it should be knowledge that can be perceived or simplified to such knowledge. It is evident that while Locke embraces the former approach, Descartes opts for the latter.

The scope of our understanding revolves entirely around comparison, Locke claims that our understanding reaches only as far as our concepts allow, lacking ideas there would be no chance for connection and identity, which then hinders comprehension. For him, knowledge is limited to the extent that we can observe their consensus or dissent; we can recognize the integration of the theory of ideas and the theory of knowledge as Locke's objective. Nevertheless, analysts have identified this integration as conflicting with one another. As O'Connor aptly notes: Book IV is widely regarded as the least effective and least significant section of the Essay. This is partly due to a severe inconsistency between Locke's account of understanding in the initial three volumes and the information provided in the concluding one. The discrepancy between the first three volumes of the Essay and the last is found in this: Books I, II, and III present an empiricist explanation of knowledge where the origins and confines of our understanding are confined to the data offered by sensation and reflection. Book IV provides a rationalist perspective on how these fundamental materials are integrated and connected within the mind (O'Connor, 1960:217), which then prevents comprehension. For him, knowledge cannot extend beyond what we can observe. Their Locke's explanation of knowledge in the initial three books does not align with the fourth book in the essay, due to his concept of ideas is intended to offer an empirical explanation of how knowledge is acquired. However, it does not succeed in this regard because his empirical approach to ideas does not adequately justify or clarify the primary types of knowledge discussed in Book IV. (Ajayi, 2016:43). Contrary to this view Russell is of the opinion that such discord symbolizes Locke's practical opposition to anxieties regarding paradox. Gibson perceives Locke's concepts of ideas and knowledge as a means to address the apprehensions surrounding innate principles without referencing the theory of ideas (Gibson, 1917:33). In accordance with O'Connor's depiction of the conflicting inclinations within Locke's theory of ideas and theory of knowledge, Jolley notes: It is frequently claimed that in Book 4 of the Essay, Locke resembles a rationalist the most.

There is more than a hint of truth in this assertion, that is, even though he believes that all our concepts are either derived from experience or formed from the information provided by experience, he does not assert that all our assertions of knowledge can be validated by experience. Furthermore, it is accurate that, similar to the rationalists, Locke works with a robust idea of knowledge such that its typical instances are a priori truths. (1999:169). The aim of Locke's historical straightforward approach is to keep the theory of knowledge aligned with the theory of ideas. When we look into the significance of reflection in Locke's compositionalist view of relations, we notice that the initial relations he explores are those of cause and effect. In the Essay, he subsequently addressed

proportional, natural, institutional, and moral relations. *Book IV* of the essays opens with a declaration of the meaning of knowledge as the awareness of the connexion of an agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our concepts (Locke, 1959:167). He provided (1) identity or variety, (2) relation (3) co-existence or essential link (4) actual presence as the four categories of accord or discord that form knowledge.

While establishing this agreement or disagreement as the four types of knowledge he similarly differentiates knowledge of identity from knowledge of relation, and subsequently recognizes that identity and co-existence is essentially just relations, but they represent such unusual forms of accord, or divergence of our thoughts, that they merit careful consideration as separate heads, and not under relation in general, as they represent such distinct bases of affirmation and negation, which will become clear to anyone who simply contemplates what is expressed in various sections of this essay. (Locke, 1959:171). Whether Locke's concept of ideas was flawed or contingent upon the type of theory he intended to present. In this context, Locke is not focused on the principle that nothing should be included in our description of the world unless it has been or can be a matter of experience, but instead he aims to illustrate where the understanding gathers all its concepts, which is through experience where all our knowledge is rooted and from which it ultimately originates, and that sensation and reflection combined furnish our understandings with all the elements necessary for thought. This suggests that the understanding can engage with these elements.

5. Understanding the Consensus and Dissent among Concepts

In his examination of knowledge as the understanding of the concurrence and divergence of two concepts, Locke argues regarding the constraints of human understanding, both concerning the concepts recognized and the comprehension of those concepts. He differentiates between recognizing two ideas independently and understanding the relationship between them. In the scenario where a relation between two ideas is recognized, we can gain knowledge. Recognizing two ideas individually involves two separate perceptions. The act of relating two ideas involves comparison. Here we clarify the perception of agreement and disagreement regarding relationships. The understanding of agreement or disagreement represents a multifaceted concept. The reflective simple functions in the mind to generate complex ideas. Both the perception of agreement and disagreement between two ideas comprise reflective simples attached to other ideas, whether simple or likewise complex.

Rationalism is the conviction that the intellect can acquire truth or knowledge independently of sensory experience. Prior to Locke, various scientists and philosophers asserted that there was certainly a boundary to human comprehension, for instance Chillingworth, yet Locke also seeks to pinpoint precisely what these boundaries are. To clarify the range of our knowledge, he revisits the source of our thinking, which fundamentally comprises ideas derived from experiences and memories that reside in the brain. From this reality, Locke deduces that understanding arises from experiences; we need to have experiences to gain knowledge. For Locke, our recognition of the alignment and divergence of ideas can produce three distinct levels of knowledge are recognized: intuitive, demonstrative, and sensitive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge consists of understanding two concepts without any intervening ideas influencing that perception.

Demonstrative occurs when we recognize two concepts through the lens of a third concept acting as a mediator for the perception. Any consensus or dissent not recognized in these three manners goes unnoticed and is unknown. Each of the two can be acknowledged independently, whereas any agreement or disagreement between them remains unrecognized. Judgment occurs when consensus and dissent are not recognized but are instead assumed. Level of likelihood and basis of assent and belief all belong to the realm of judgement instead of knowledge. What set apart knowledge from judgement lies either in the arrangement of the intricate concept created by the cognitive processes involved in recognizing and assuming alignment or discord, or in the configuration of the concepts observed and believed to align or not, or in both. The distinction between perceiving and presuming boils down to various configurations of reflective simples and their associations with other concepts.

The distinction between knowledge and judgment highlights the importance of basic concepts of reflection in Locke’s explanation of knowledge. Evaluating two ideas results in either a recognition of their agreement or a recognition of their disagreement. Intuition acts as the source of utmost assurance. In his examination, Locke clarifies the unique significance of intuitive understanding of identity and diversity for our understanding, he simplifies the concept of identity to the theory of ideas, regarded as fundamental instances of thought, on which all other thoughts rely.

The awareness of the concordance or discordance of identity is based on the mind possessing clear ideas as Locke's Puts: for starters, the instant recognition of the conformity or divergence of identity, rooted in the mind possessing separate concepts, provides us with as many self-evident statements as we have separate concepts (Locke, 1959:269). Locke additionally establishes another criterion for knowledge that presents a unique situation, as he differentiates between knowledge in itself and genuine knowledge. Knowledge in itself merely necessitates the awareness of a connection between ideas, whereas genuine knowledge requires, in addition, that the ideas align with the reality they are representing: our knowledge is thus considered genuine only to the extent that there is an additional alignment between our ideas and the actual state of affairs (Locke, 1959:28). Locke believes that true understanding can only be attained if our concepts are genuine concepts. No matter what concepts we possess, the consensus we discover they share with others will still constitute knowledge; however, in order to render it substantial regarding substances, the concepts must originate from the actual existence of objects. In knowledge itself, the mind understands an agreement through perception. (Locke, 1959:237).

Commentators have contended that Locke broadened the scope of knowledge beyond mere external reality, as sensitive knowledge cannot include both the awareness of a consensus between ideas, since Locke's characterization of knowledge is confined to the consensus among ideas. However, the reality is that sensitive knowledge is regarded as genuine knowledge. Locke addresses sensitive knowledge through the lens of necessary connections, indicating that it aligns with the broader view of knowable agreements understood a priori, which corresponds to the comprehension of knowable arguments as idea-containments, where these containments encompass truths about specific instances. In Locke concept the notion of substance holds significance in Locke's philosophy comparable to that of an idea. Locke's idea of substance plays a crucial role in establishing the objective toward which the overarching theory of ideas and knowledge serves as a tool or a precursor, outlining the range and boundaries of human comprehension.

6. Conclusion

Locke disavows innate ideas and opposes rationalism, which refers to knowledge acquired through principles that provide the mind insight without the need for experience. Furthermore, he dismisses moral and political principles that could not be said to arise out of sense experience. To him, we gathered understanding through the collection of sensations and the formation of concepts rooted in this experience, the mind at birth is a *tabula rasa* before impression from outside fell upon it: idea is the most significant word in Locke's essay. Idea in the essay signify that specific object is directly recognized in the process of comprehension. Removing all concepts would render knowledge unattainable, as there would be nothing left for us to understand.

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Does the Government really care about the Citizens? Exploring the Impact of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Crime Rate in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This intriguing study delved into the government's decision to eliminate subsidies on petroleum prices and how this move has influenced crime rates in the vibrant city of Benin, Edo State. The research aimed to uncover the connection between the withdrawal of fuel subsidies and the alarming rise in criminal activities, as well as to assess the repercussions of this policy change on social unrest across different socioeconomic groups in the city. The study focused on residents aged 18 and older, gathering insights from a sample of 156 individuals selected through a random sampling method. Employing a mix of descriptive statistics—like frequencies, percentages, and tables—and inferential statistics, including p-values, t-values, and F-statistics, the analysis revealed a striking correlation: the removal of fuel subsidies is significantly linked to the uptick in crime rates in Benin City. Furthermore, it highlighted that this policy shift has notably impacted criminal behavior and social unrest among various socioeconomic demographics within the community. Finally, the study recommends that removing subsidies must be done gradually and strategically. Initiatives that are specifically tailored to alleviate socio-economic inequality are crucial and that thorough approach that incorporates economic diversification, crime prevention, and continuous monitoring is advised

Keywords: Fuel Subsidy Removal, Crime Rate, Criminal Activity, Social Unrest.

1. Introduction

The elimination of subsidies on petroleum prices in Nigeria has emerged as a pivotal topic, carrying significant implications for the nation's economy and the overall welfare of its citizens. Fuel subsidy which was first used in the 1970s to lessen the effects of oil price shocks, were meant to raise living standards by making petroleum products more available to the general public (Ogwuche, Adejor, Dabish, Garba & Dole, 2024). But over time, these subsidies have become a major financial burden, eating up a sizeable amount of the national budget—₦4 trillion, or around US$6.088 billion in 2022 alone, or 23% of Nigeria's overall budget (Couharde & Mouhoud, 2020; Ozili & Obiora, 2023). The dependence on imported refined petroleum products due to malfunctioning of domestic refineries has aggravated this financial strain, resulting to increased corruption and inefficiencies within the sector (Ogboru & Akinyotu, 2024).

Nigeria's economic policy underwent a dramatic change in May 2023 when President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration removed fuel subsidy. The immediate consequences of this decision included a hike in petrol prices from ₦189 to ₦800 to ₦900 per litre (Ozili & Obiora, 2023). Low-income households have been disproportionately affected by these sharp price increases, which have also raised inflationary pressures on necessities and transportation costs (Esekpa, Ekarika & Njama, 2024). Although removing subsidy is viewed as an essential first step in economic reform, there are serious worries about the social effects of this move, especially given the high crime rates in urban areas like Benin City, Edo State.

Numerous studies have shown ample evidence of the connection between economic hardship and criminal activity. Economic theory suggests that when individuals find themselves grappling with stagnant wages and rising costs of living, they may resort to criminal behavior as a desperate survival tactic (Scott, 2000). The removal of fuel subsidy may make matters

worse for many families in Nigeria, who already face high unemployment rates and insufficient cash. Households that struggle with reduced purchasing power are more likely to experience social unrest and criminal behaviour as they turn to illegal means of coping with their financial circumstances (Ozili & Obiora, 2023).

Although the removal of fuel subsidies may present an opportunity for economic restructuring and improved resource allocation toward critical sectors such as education and health (Hoy, Kim, Nguyen, Sosa & Tiwari, 2023), it is imperative to consider its broader implications on social equity and crime. This research will contribute to the on-going discourse surrounding fuel subsidy reforms in Nigeria by highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive planning and targeted support mechanisms for vulnerable populations.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Considering the effects it might have on socio-economic activities in urban areas like Benin City, Edo State, the removal of fuel subsidy in Nigeria marks a turning point in the country's economic development. Fuel subsidy has historically been used as a tool to boost economic activity and lessen the financial burden on consumers. But the continuation of these subsidies has also caused the Nigerian government to face serious financial challenges, which has resulted in a complicated relationship between economic policy and social stability (Gambo & Rufa'i, 2023; Ozili & Obiora, 2023). It is authoritative to comprehend the possible repercussions this policy shift may have on crime rates within affected communities.

Despite the government's intentions to promote economic growth through subsidy reforms, little is known about how these measures can worsen socioeconomic inequality and lead to a rise in criminal activities. Immediate hike in prices of fuel has been linked to the removal of subsidy, which has led to inflationary pressures that impact necessities (Ogwuche, Adejor, Dabish, Garba & Dole, 2024). Families with limited financial resources feel the pinch of these economic strains more acutely, as they often allocate a significant chunk of their earnings to cover fuel costs. People may resort to criminal activity as a survival strategy as a result of this increased financial hardship (World Bank, 2023).

Moreover, past experiences with subsidy removals have revealed that without support mechanisms and adequate planning, such reforms can result to widespread discontent and social unrest. The historical background of Nigeria's fuel subsidy schemes shows that, despite their stated goals of stabilising prices and helping vulnerable groups, these policies have frequently led to corruption and market inefficiencies (Harring, Jönsson, Matti, Mundaca & Jagers, 2023). Protests and public outcry have already been triggered by the recent subsidy removal, underscoring the precarious link between public trust and governmental policy. This circumstance highlights a critical research problem: How does the elimination of fuel subsidies impact crime levels in Benin City, especially in the face of escalating economic challenges?

Additionally, the narrative is further complicated by the political economy around fuel subsidy. In the past, subsidies have served as a tool for political patronage, providing governments with a means to gain popular support (Steadman, Tindall, Tan, Okereke, Chukwuemeka, Id, Onyeneke, Id, Nnamani, Nwajiaku-Dahou & Simpson, 2024). The sudden removal of these financial supports could cause local economies to become unstable and undermine public confidence in government agencies, both of which are strongly correlated with crime rates. The difficulty is in managing these intricate relationships while making sure that changes to the law do not unintentionally increase crime or worsen already-existing inequalities.

This study attempt to fill a significant gap in the literature by examining the specific impacts of fuel subsidy removal on crime rates in Benin City. By analysing quantitative data, this research will provide insights into how economic policies can shape social behaviours and community safety. Understanding these relationships is crucial for policymakers seeking to implement effective reforms that balance fiscal responsibility with social equity.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This research embarks on an intriguing journey to uncover the impact of the government's choice to scrap fuel subsidies on petroleum products and its ripple effect on crime rates in the vibrant Benin City, Edo State. The investigation will delve into a variety of essential goals, including:

(i) To delve into the connection between the elimination of fuel subsidies and the rise in crime rates in Benin City, Edo State.

(ii) To explore how the withdrawal of fuel subsidies influences criminal behavior and social turmoil across different socioeconomic groups in Benin City.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The null hypotheses formulated for investigation in this study are:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and increase in crime rate in Benin

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and criminal activities and social unrest among the various socioeconomic groups in Benin.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical foundation, exploring how the withdrawal of government subsidies on petroleum products influences crime rates in Benin City, Edo State, is woven from a tapestry of interrelated theories. These theories illuminate the intricate dance between social behavior, economic policies, and the ebb and flow of crime rates.

2.1 Economic Theory (Supply and Demand Dynamics)

The foundation for comprehending market dynamics, particularly how price changes impact consumer behaviour and economic situations, was established by Marshall's principles (Marshall, 1890).

The removal of fuel subsidy alters the supply and demand equilibrium in the petroleum market. Prices usually increase when subsidies are removed, which lowers the purchasing power of consumers. People may turn to illegal activities as a result of this financial burden as they look for other ways to make ends meet (Kolawole, Adegun & Adebo, 2023). According to the hypothesis, people may turn to crime to satisfy their basic needs as lawful options become less affordable.

2.2 Opportunity Cost

According to the opportunity cost theory, people evaluate the advantages of committing crimes against the possibility of finding gainful employment. Particularly for lower socioeconomic groups, the perceived advantages of crime may surpass those of lawful employment if the cost of living increases significantly as a result of the removal of subsidies (Agunbiade, 2024). This viewpoint is consistent with research showing a link between economic hardship and higher crime rates (Ozili & Obiora, 2023).

2.3 Social Disorganization Theory (Community Structure and Crime)

The study by Shaw and McKay examined urban juvenile delinquency and the impact of social structures on crime rates (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

The social disorganization theory suggests that neighborhoods lacking strong social structures are more prone to criminal activity. Removing fuel subsidies may make pre-existing socioeconomic problems like poverty and unemployment worse and cause societal disarray. In Benin City, increasing transportation costs have previously been reported to reduce passenger traffic and significantly increase fare prices (Nigerian Observer, 2023). These economic burdens can lead to heightened frustration and unrest among the people.

2.4 Strain Theory (Adaptation to Economic Stressors)

Merton's theory paints a vivid picture of how societal expectations can push individuals toward the shadows of crime when they find themselves unable to achieve culturally endorsed goals through legitimate means (Merton, 1938). This strain theory suggests that when there's a gap between society's aspirations—like financial security—and a person's ability to reach those aspirations legally, the pressure can become overwhelming, leading some to stray into unlawful behavior. The recent withdrawal of fuel subsidies could intensify this pressure on various socioeconomic groups, particularly those already teetering on the edge of vulnerability. Such stresses can lead to societal unrest and criminal activity, as evidenced by recent protests in Edo State over the hardships brought on by the removal of subsidy (Punch Newspaper, 2023).

2.5 Routine Activity Theory (Opportunity for Crime)

Picture this: crime is like a dance that unfolds when three key players take the stage. According to the routine activity theory, a motivated wrongdoer waltzes into the spotlight, locking eyes with a perfect target—someone who's blissfully unaware and unprotected. This intriguing concept, introduced by Cohen and Felson in 1979, suggests that when these elements align—vulnerable victims, eager offenders, and absent guardians—the stage is set for mischief to occur. The economic outcome from the removal of subsidy may intensify the number of motivated offenders while at the same time reducing community resources for policing and social services (Kolawole et al., 2023).

There may be more opportunities for crime if transportation costs rise and services become less accessible.

3. Methodology

This study made use of descriptive survey research method as its research design. The population of this research consists of all residents of Benin City who are 18 years and above. This study used the primary source of data collection. In this study, we gathered insights from a diverse group of 156 participants, carefully chosen through a random sampling method to ensure a fair representation. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were both used as methods of data analysis.

4. Results and Discussions

The demographic characteristics of the respondents is hereby presented

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	44	28.2
	Female	112	71.8
	TOTAL	156	100.0
Age	18 – 25 years	92	59.0
	26–35 years	8	5.1
	36-45 years	20	12.8
	46-55 years	20	12.8
	56 years and above	16	10.3
	TOTAL	156	100.0
Occupation	Employed	42	26.9
	Self-employed	16	10.3
	Unemployed	4	2.6
	Student	86	55.1
	Retired	8	5.1
	TOTAL	156	100.0
Monthly Level of Income	Below ₦50,000	72	46.2
	₦50,000 - ₦100,000	40	25.6
	₦100,001 - ₦500,000	40	25.6
	Above ₦500,000	4	2.6
	TOTAL	156	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Work (2024)

There were 112 (71.8%) females and 44 (28.2%) males. This suggests that there may be gender-related insights in the context of fuel subsidy views, as the sample has a strong female majority.

Ages 18 to 25: 92 (59.0%); 26 to 35: 8 (5.1%); 36 to 45: 20 (12.8%); 46 to 55: 20 (12.8%); and 56 and older: 16 (10.3%). Nearly 60% of the sample is composed of people between the ages of 18 and 25. This might represent the opinions of younger people on economic matters, especially those pertaining to subsidies.

42 (26.9%) were employed, 16 (10.3%) were self-employed, 4 (2.6%) were unemployed, 86 (55.1%) were students, and 8 (5.1%) were retired. Since students make up the majority of respondents (55.1%), their opinions on economic policy may differ from those of employed people.

72 (46.2%) are under ₦50,000; 40 (25.6%) are between ₦50,000 and ₦100,000; 40 (25.6%) are between ₦100,001 and ₦500,000; and 4 (2.6%) are over ₦500,000. Since nearly half of the respondents make less than ₦50,000, economic policies like eliminating subsidies may have a significant effect on those with lower incomes.

Objective 1: To find out the Relationship between the Removal of Fuel Subsidy and Crime Rates in Benin City, Edo State?

Table 2: Fuel Subsidy Removal and Crime Rates

S/N	Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD DEV
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)		
Q1	The removal of fuel subsidies has resulted in a rise in crime rates within Benin City	4	2.6	10	6.4	13	8.3	51	32.7	78	50.0	4.21	1.02
Q2	I believe that increased fuel costs are a factor that leads to higher levels of criminal activity in my community.	5	3.2	9	5.8	17	10.9	52	33.3	73	46.8	4.15	1.04
Q3	Following the removal of the subsidy, I have observed a surge in incidents of theft and robbery in my neighbourhood	7	4.5	15	9.6	22	14.1	55	35.3	57	36.5	3.90	1.14
Q4	The financial burden created by the removal of subsidies has compelled some individuals to engage in criminal behaviour	6	3.8	12	7.7	16	10.3	54	34.6	68	43.6	4.06	1.09
Q5	I feel that the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies has directly impacted my sense of security.	6	3.8	17	10.9	8	5.1	68	43.6	57	36.5	3.98	1.10
	Grand Mean											4.06	1.08

Researcher's Field Work (2024)

The respondents' average answers to the statements outlining the reasons for crime rates in Benin City are shown in Table 2 above. The respondents (mean=4.21) agreed with the first statement in Table 2, which states that the removal of fuel subsidies has resulted in a rise in crime rates within Benin City. Similarly, respondents agreed that they believe that increased fuel costs are a factor that leads to higher levels of criminal activity in their communities (mean=4.15); that following the removal of the subsidy, they have observed a surge in incidents of theft and robbery in their neighbourhoods (mean=3.90); that the financial burden created by the removal of subsidies has compelled some individuals to engage in criminal behaviour (mean=4.06); and they feel that the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies has directly impacted their sense of security (mean=3.98). There is general agreement that the removal of fuel subsidies is seen adversely in relation to crime rates, as evidenced by the grand mean of 4.06 with an SD of 1.08.

Objective 2: To find out the Effect that Removal of Fuel Subsidies Has on Criminal Activity and Social Unrest among Various Socioeconomic Groups in Benin City?

Table 3: Fuel Subsidy Removal and Criminal Activity/Social Unrest Among Socioeconomic Groups

S/N	Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD DEV
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)		
Q6	The removal of subsidies has sparked social unrest among low-income families in Benin City	5	3.2	7	4.5	10	6.4	52	33.3	82	52.6	4.28	0.99
Q7	I have observed a rise in protests and demonstrations concerning the economic consequences of increasing fuel prices	7	4.5	12	7.7	10	6.4	60	38.5	67	42.9	4.08	1.10
Q8	The withdrawal of subsidies has resulted in social unrest among economically disadvantaged families in Benin City	5	3.2	8	5.1	11	7.1	28	17.9	104	66.7	4.40	1.04
Q9	Young individuals in my area have become more susceptible to engaging in criminal behaviour since the subsidy was removed.	5	3.2	16	10.3	11	7.1	78	50.0	46	29.5	3.92	1.03
Q10	Since the removal of subsidies, there has been heightened tension between different social groups in my community	4	2.6	6	3.8	14	9.0	67	42.9	65	41.7	4.17	0.93
	Grand Mean											**4.17**	**1.02**

Researcher's Field Work (2024)

Table 3 shows that, with mean scores larger than 2.5 for each question, the respondents agreed with every item outlining criminal activity and social unrest among various socioeconomic groups in Benin City. The first item's mean score (mean=4.28) showed that respondents generally agreed that the removal of subsidies has sparked social unrest among low-income families in Benin City. Also, the respondents agreed that they have observed a rise in protests and demonstrations concerning the economic consequences of increasing fuel prices (mean=4.08). Respondents agreed that the withdrawal of subsidies has resulted in social unrest among economically disadvantaged families in Benin City (mean=4.40). Once more, respondents concurred that young individuals in their areas have become more susceptible to engaging in criminal behaviour since the subsidy was removed (mean=3.92) and that since the removal of subsidies, there has been heightened tension between different social groups in their communities (mean=4.17).

Analysis of the social unrest dimension yielded a grand mean score of 4.17 (SD = 1.02), indicating robust agreement among respondents regarding the potential for social instability stemming from the economic consequences of subsidy removal. The relatively high mean score, coupled with a moderate standard deviation, suggests a consistent and substantial level of concern regarding the societal implications of this economic policy adjustment.

Table 4: Removal of Fuel Subsidies

S/N	Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD DEV
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)		
Q11	I believe that removing fuel subsidies was essential for fostering economic growth	6	3.8	12	7.7	32	20.5	22	14.1	84	53.8	4.06	1.18
Q12	Since the removal of fuel subsidies, my daily expenses have risen considerably	6	3.8	9	5.8	11	7.1	35	22.4	95	60.9	4.31	1.08
Q13	The rise in fuel prices after the subsidy removal has negatively affected my household's financial stability	4	2.6	1	0.6	14	9.0	48	30.8	89	57.1	4.39	0.88
Q14	The removal of fuel subsidies has created social tensions within my community.	5	3.2	6	3.8	4	2.6	66	42.3	75	48.1	4.28	0.94
Q15	I have noticed a rise in community conversations or protests regarding the effects of subsidy removal	5	3.2	9	5.8	13	8.3	77	49.4	52	33.3	4.04	0.97
	Grand Mean											**3.79**	**1.18**

Researcher's Field work (2024)

Given that the mean score for every question in Table 4 is more than 2.5, it can be concluded that the respondents agreed with every item that explained removal of fuel subsidies. The first item's mean score (mean=4.06) showed that respondents were in agreement that they believe that removing fuel subsidies was essential for fostering economic growth. Again, respondents strongly agreed that since the removal of fuel subsidies, their daily expenses have risen considerably (mean=4.31); that the rise in fuel prices after the subsidy removal has negatively affected their household's financial stability (mean=4.39). Similarly, the respondents agreed that the removal of fuel subsidies has created social tensions within their communities (mean=4.28) and that they have noticed a rise in community conversations or protests regarding the effects of subsidy removal (mean=4.04).

Statistical analysis revealed an aggregate grand mean of 3.79 (SD = 1.18), indicating a moderately strong consensus among participants regarding the implications of subsidy withdrawal. The mean score, positioned above the scale's midpoint, coupled with a standard deviation that reflects reasonable response dispersion, suggests substantial concordance in participants' perceptions of subsidy removal impacts, though with some variability in individual responses.

Hypothesis Testing

Regression analysis (t-test) was used in this study to assess the hypotheses at the 5% significant level. The p-value determines whether or not we accept a hypothesis. If the p-value is >0.05 (more than 5%), we fail to reject the null hypothesis, meaning we accept it. If the p-value is <0.05 (less than 5%), we reject the null hypothesis.

The following are the hypotheses that were investigated in this study and are expressed in the null form:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the removal of fuel subsidies and an increase in crime rates in Benin City.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between removal of fuel subsidies and criminal activities/social unrest among various socioeconomic groups in Benin City

Model Summary				
Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.611[a]	0.373	0.369	0.58787
a. Predictors: (Constant), removal of fuel subsidies				

The value of R^2 which is 0.373 indicates that the independent variable (removal of fuel subsidies) explains only 37.3.2%; 62.7% of the dependent variable's (an increase in crime rate) systematic volatility goes unaccounted for. After adjustments of the R-squared, this percentage drops even lower to 36.9%. This indicates that an increase in crime rate is determined by factors apart from the independent variable (removal of fuel subsidies).

ANOVA[a]						
Model 1		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.701	1	31.701	91.729	0.000[b]
	Residual	53.222	154	.346		
	Total	84.923	155			
a. Dependent Variable: an increase in crime rate						
b. Predictors: (Constant), removal of fuel subsidies						

At 0.000, the F statistic of 91.729 is significant. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between removal of fuel subsidies and an increase in crime rate in Benin City.

Coefficients[a]						
Model 1		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.731	0.364		2.010	0.046
	removal of fuel subsidies	0.800	0.083	0.611	9.578	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: an increase in crime rate						

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the removal of fuel subsidies and an increase in crime rates in Benin City.

Removal of fuel subsidies is significant at the 0.05 level of statistical significance, as indicated by the p-value of 0.000. Therefore, with a t-value of 9.578 and P-values of 0.000, we reject the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between the removal of fuel subsidies and an increase in crime rates in Benin City. This implies that an increase in crime rates in Benin City is statistically predicted by removal of fuel subsidies

Model 2 Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.703[a]	0.494	0.491	0.38080
a. Predictors: (Constant), removal of fuel subsidies				

The value of R^2 which is 0.494 indicates that the independent variable (removal of fuel subsidies) explains only 49.4%; 50.6% of the dependent variable's (criminal activity and social unrest among socioeconomic groups) systematic volatility goes unaccounted for. After adjustments of the R-squared, this percentage drops even lower to 49.1%. This

indicates that criminal activity and social unrest among socioeconomic groups is determined by other factors apart from the independent variable (removal of fuel subsidies).

ANOVA[a]						
Model 2		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.788	1	21.788	150.252	.000[b]
	Residual	22.331	154	.145		
	Total	44.119	155			
a. Dependent Variable: criminal activity and social unrest among socioeconomic groups						
b. Predictors: (Constant), removal of fuel subsidies						

At 0.000, the F statistic of 150.252 is significant. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between removal of fuel subsidies and criminal activity and social unrest among socioeconomic groups in Benin City.

Coefficients[a]						
Model 2		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.501	.236		6.372	.000
	removal of fuel subsidies	.663	.054	.703	12.258	.000
a. Dependent Variable: criminal activity social unrest among socioeconomic groups						

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between removal of fuel subsidies and criminal activity/social unrest among various socioeconomic groups in Benin City.

Removal of fuel subsidies is significant at the 0.05 level of statistical significance, as indicated by the p-value of 0.000. Therefore, with a t-value of 12.258 and P-values of 0.000, we reject the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between removal of fuel subsidies and criminal activity/social unrest among various socioeconomic groups in Benin City. This implies that criminal activity/social unrest among various socioeconomic groups in Benin City is statistically predicted by removal of fuel subsidies.

5. Discussion of Findings

This research delves into the intriguing relationship between the government's decision to eliminate fuel subsidies and the surge in crime rates in Benin City, Edo State. To truly grasp the intricate dynamics at play, we must explore the deeper mechanisms and broader societal implications of this policy shift. The findings reveal a striking correlation: the withdrawal of fuel subsidies has notably influenced crime rates across various socioeconomic groups in Benin City. This study meticulously unpacks these results, situating them within the framework of existing literature and theoretical perspectives. One of the standout revelations is the clear link between the removal of fuel subsidies and the uptick in criminal activity in the city. There are multiple interrelated mechanisms that explain this relationship. The first direct consequence of removing subsidies is usually a dramatic rise in fuel prices, which has a knock-on effect on the entire economy (Ogwuche, Adejor, Dabish, Garba & Dole, 2024). This economic pressure has put a significant burden on household budgets in Benin City by raising food prices, travel costs, and overall inflation. These economic constraints are consistent with strain theory, which postulates that people may turn to illegal tactics to accomplish social goals when they are unable to do so through legal channels (Garland, 2022). Vulnerable people may turn to criminal activity as a means of surviving the abrupt economic shock caused by the termination of subsidies. This result is consistent with comparable research conducted in other developing countries, where quick changes to policies impacting necessities have been connected to a rise in property crimes and societal instability (Nullmeier, González & Obinger, 2022).

The second important finding reveals that the impact of fuel subsidy removal on criminal activity significantly varies across socioeconomic groups. This disparity shows important patterns about susceptibility and resilience within various groupings of the population of Benin City. Study shows that lower-income neighbourhoods experienced a more pronounced increase in crime rates compared to wealthier areas (Galster, Atkinson, Booza & Thompson, 2024).

There are several reasons for this discrepancy:

Economic Buffer Capacity: While lower-income groups might deplete their savings more rapidly, higher-income groups usually have more financial resources to withstand the shock of rising fuel prices (Sampson & Smith, 2021.)

Employment Vulnerability: People who work in transit-dependent or informal industries are more likely to experience economic instability, which may make them more likely to commit crimes (Edwards et al., 2023).

Geographic Considerations: Communities that rely more on private vehicles for revenue production or have less access to public transport are more vulnerable to rises in gasoline prices (Unegbu, Yawas, Dan-asabe & Alabi, 2024).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This research delved into the intriguing connection between the government's bold move to scrap fuel subsidies on petroleum products has sparked quite a conversation and the surge in crime rates in Benin City, Edo State. The aim was to uncover how this subsidy removal correlates with criminal activity and to determine if the subsequent rise in fuel prices has a notable impact on the economic well-being of households in the area.

The findings reveal a compelling narrative: the withdrawal of fuel subsidies is closely linked to an uptick in crime rates in Benin City. Moreover, it appears that this policy shift significantly influences criminal behavior and social unrest across various socioeconomic groups within the city.

6.2 Recommendations

Drawing from the insights gathered, we propose the following suggestions:

First and foremost, removing subsidies must be done gradually and strategically. To lessen the impact on vulnerable groups, policymakers should carry out the removal in stages, allowing for economic adjustment and the creation of focused social protection initiatives. Putting money into the infrastructure of public transport can lessen the impact of rising fuel prices. This strategy aims to reduce social disruption while acknowledging the strong relationship between the removal of subsidies and higher crime rates.

Secondly, initiatives that are specifically designed to alleviate socioeconomic inequality are crucial. This entails creating income assistance plans for communities with lower incomes, putting job creation plans into action in industries most impacted by rising fuel prices, and offering training in entrepreneurship and financial literacy. By addressing the disparate effects of subsidy removal on different societal segments, these policies seek to improve economic resilience across socioeconomic groups.

Finally, a thorough approach that incorporates economic diversification, crime prevention, and continuous monitoring is advised. This entails stepping up community policing initiatives, funding initiatives for youth empowerment, and improving cooperation between local authorities and law enforcement. Fuel subsidies can be lessened at the same time by encouraging investment in renewable energy sources and helping small and medium-sized businesses. It will be possible to track the continuing effects of subsidy removal and make data-driven policy modifications by putting in place a strong monitoring and evaluation structure. This comprehensive strategy seeks to promote social cohesion and economic stability in Benin City while addressing the possible rise in criminal activity.

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Dynamic Capabilities and Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs): A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) through PRISMA Protocol Statement

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Abstract. This paper provided insights on different empirical findings and extant literature on the theory of dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance using systematic literature review through PRISMA Protocol (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). Furthermore, the study also provided conceptual review on the theory of dynamic capabilities and its dimensions for measuring small and medium enterprise (SMEs) performance. The methodology for this study was based on use of systematic literature review through PRISMA Protocol statement to justify the review of related contemporary literature and data collected on the journals reviewed. Based on this methodology, the study indicated that the authors agreed that there is significant and positive relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs business performance. Also, the study indicated that Augier and Teece (2007); Teece, & Linden (2017) and Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997) were the prominent and well referenced work on the theory of dynamic capabilities which has contributed significantly to extant literature. The study recommended that there is need for further studies on the extent of relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance by considering other dimensions other than those provided in this study and determine if the inconsistencies that exist among authors on this investigation can be model appropriately.

Keywords: Dynamic Capabilities, Environment, SMEs, Performance, Edo State

1. Introduction

In this global economic era, the overall functioning and market power plays an important role but most times its does not impact positively on the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises and their ability to survive in a competitive environment (Garbellano & Da Veiga, 2019). The contribution of SMEs to the growth of any nation has led scholars, practitioners and researchers to show greater attention on how to measure their performance can be measured (Shu, Zhou, Xiao & Gao, 2016). In furtherance of this, Augier and Teece, (2007) posited that the prevailing environmental conditions within the different economies exposed most SMEs to different challenges which contributed to their inability to achieve their intended goals in the market. To this end, the field of strategic management has provided appropriate frameworks on how SMEs performance and their competitiveness in the market can be measured (Teece & Linden, 2017).

Dynamic capabilities have been considered as an important concept within the strategic management field that can provides sufficient propositions on how firm performance can be explained (Park & Kim, 2013). The theory of dynamic capabilities (DC) has continued to contribute to how firm mediate their activities with the prevailing conditions in the environment over the past ten decades (Palmie, Lingens & Gassmann 2016). Furthermore, discussions on dynamic capabilities prior to 1980 are few and limited within the field of strategic management. As at this time, Shi, Yuan, & Lee (2022) argued porter

five based model and resource-based view theory are the major subject of discussion within the field of strategic management not dynamic capabilities theory.

However, dynamic capabilities (DC) theory emerged as both an extension to and a reaction against the inability of the resource-based view (RBV) to interpret the development and redevelopment of resources and capabilities to address rapidly changing environments (Ettlie & Pavlou, 2006). But there was pragmatic change for last two decades where several available research were explored on how business firm can benefit from the concept of dynamic capabilities with specific focus on its peculiarities, diverse approaches and dimensions in relation to their performance within the business environment (Singh & Rao, 2017). Within this period, the discussion on dynamic capability has significantly increased with more publications each year (Khan, Bellini, Daddi & Iraldo, 2022). In response to this, dynamic capability has been considered as alternative approach to develop appropriate structure that can proffer practical solutions to the weaknesses of resource-based view theory (Atiku & Abatan (2021). More importantly, dynamic capabilities represent path-dependent processes that allow firms to adapt changing environment by building, integrating and reconfiguring their resource and capabilities portfolio (Bala & Ferreira, 2019).

In essence, dynamic capabilities provide adequate information for the firm to develop ability to continuously achieve innovative ideas to create pathway towards developing their competitive advantage (Otache & Usang, 2022). In the work of Teece et al., (1997), business firm within the environment must find ways to have adequate understanding of their capabilities in terms of organizational structure and managerial processes. In support of this, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) posited that dynamic capabilities of a firm involve different managerial processes that effectively utilized the available organizational resources to match and even create market change. Substantial evidence exist on lack of SME-specific studies as most of the studies such as Wilden, Gudergan, Nielsen and Lings (2013); Fainshmidt, Pezeshkan, Lance Frazier, Nair and Markowski (2016) focused on large organisations with limited attention to SMEs (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Most studies have focused on large firms, neglecting the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SMEs. This question remains unanswered as there is need for SME-specific studies that can investigate specific and peculiar dimensions of dynamic capabilities and how this can be developed and leveraged in resource-constrained environments.

There is lack of uniformity, conceptualization and uniqueness in the measurement of dimension of dynamic capabilities as different scholars have identified numerous variables such as Organizational resilience (Akpan, Johnny, & Sylva, 2022); Organizational ambidexterity (Shaibu, Ogbo, Agbaeze & Ukpere, 2019); competitive advantage (Ebegbetale & Okon, 2022); innovation (Enimola, Nafiu & Peter, 2020); Organizational agility (Gyemang, & Emeagwali, 2020) and knowledge management (Tsetim, Adegbe, & Agema, 2020). This study aims to fill this gap by adapting the seminal work of Teece, *et al.*, (1997) that identify dynamic capabilities component as sensing, seizing, reconfiguration and learning against performance of SME by taking into consideration the peculiarities, current situations and challenges of SMEs in Edo State. It is against this background that this study intends to examine the relationship between the dimensions of dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, reconfiguration and learning) and performance of SMEs through systematic literature review with the use of PRISMA Protocol (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). The broad research objective is to examine the dimension of dynamic capabilities on the performance of SMEs in Edo State. The research questions examine whether there is relationship between dimensions of dynamic capabilities on the performance of SMEs.

2. Theory and Hypothesis

This study is basically based on three major theories which are

2.1 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The dynamic capabilities theory assumes that organizations may create and exploit their distinctive skills to adapt to changing surroundings, shape their competitive advantage, and achieve better

performance (Kapoor & Aggarwal, 2020). According to this theory, firms must constantly detect and capitalise on opportunities and reconfigure and refresh their resources and competencies in response to dynamic and uncertain market conditions (Mele, Capaldo, Secundo & Corvello (2024). The theory also assumes that strategic decision-making and organisational learning processes are required for the creation and deployment of dynamic capabilities (Pitelis, & Wang, 2019). To improve their adaptability and responsiveness, businesses must make strategic decisions regarding resource allocation, investment in new skills, and organisational structure (Garbellano, & Da Veiga, 2019). Organisational learning is critical for obtaining and integrating new information, refining current competencies, and boosting the firm's capacity to detect and capitalise on opportunities (Blome, Schoenherr & Rexhausen, 2013). The theoretical implication is that resources and capabilities are not static but can be creatively reorganized and upgraded through dynamic processes in management and organisational routines (Girod, & Whittington, 2017). Though the dynamic capacities theory has significantly impacted strategic management, it is not without criticism.

2.2 Resource Based View Theory

Resource-based view theory was developed in the work of Penrose in 1959 which was formed out of the imaginative idea that a firm cites unused managerial resources as the primary driver of growth and that internal managerial resources are both drivers and limits to the expansion of any one firm can undertake (Ruivo, Oliveira & Neto, 2015). The resource-based view of the firm has become dominant within the field of strategic management, yet it has had surprisingly little influence on organisation theory (Davis & DeWitt, 2021). In support of the above, Utami and Alananos (2023) opine that firms with different qualities and quantities of resources are likely to perform differently, with the potential for one firm to outperform others in the same market by acquiring and exploiting distinctive resources. The theory assumes that a firm's resources capabilities determine the level of competitiveness, performance, and sustainability of the firm with a focus on how best they can combine their resources to achieve their market position (Estensoro, Larrea, Muller & Sisti, 2022). Researchers such as Utami & Alananos (2023) argue that a firm's performance is fundamentally determined by the resources it possesses. Noteworthy resources that can enhance a firm's competitive advantage include tacit knowledge, strategic capital, and the employment of skilled personnel (Kiyabo & Isaga, 2019). The justification for using RBV theory in this study is based on the assumption that the theory places greater emphasis on understanding how a company can adapt, maintain, and enhance its competitive advantage.

2.3 Ambidexterity theory

The theory of ambidexterity is rooted in organisational studies which provide some level of the basic assumption that represents a paradigm that underscores the importance of balancing exploration and exploitation within an organisation (Popadiuk, Luz, & Kretschmer, 2018). This concept is deeply entrenched in the seminal works of scholars who have grappled with the challenges of managing both innovation and efficiency (O'Reilly Iii, & Tushman, 2008). The theoretical foundations of ambidexterity can be traced back to the seminal works of March (1991) who introduced the concept as a means to reconcile the inherent tension between exploration and exploitation within organisations. The assumption of ambidexterity theory lies in how the firm strives to achieve a delicate balance between exploration (searching for new knowledge, technologies, and markets) and exploitation (exploitation involves refining and optimizing existing processes and capabilities (Van Lieshout, *et al.,* 2021). The challenge is to avoid the pitfalls of overemphasis on either exploration (resulting in a lack of focus and inefficiency) or exploitation (leading to stagnation and vulnerability to environmental changes (Sijabat, *et al.*, 2021). The justification for using this theory is that it assumes and provide theoretical basis for understanding why ambidexterity is important for organisations operating in dynamic environments and why managing the tension between exploration and exploitation is crucial for long-term success.

2.4 SMEs Performance

Past studies such as Halabi and Lussier (2014) have reviewed that the performance of SMEs is of great important to society and the overall economic

activities of any nation since the activities of SMEs serves as drivers for improving the growth and development of any nation (Amankwah-Amoah, 2016). However, SMEs performance is not a new discussion within the field of management and strategic management. In the work of Gupta and Wales (2017) opined that defined the different actions and procedures develop by firm towards achieving their intended goals and objectives. Furthermore, SME s performance depends on a lot of factors which determined the extent to which the firms are able to meet up their intended objectives (Agwu, 2018). Augustine, Bhasi and Madhu (2012) argued that the SME performance can measured either quantitatively or qualitatively or in form of financial and non-financial data. Firm performance can be seen as the ability of a firm to be able to meet up with the goals and expectations within their business environment (Richter, *et al*. 2017). However, it is imperative to state that firm performance is the outcome of befitting integration, reconfiguration, building strategies, resources and capabilities to respond as fast as possible and promptly to changes in within the business environment (Arifin, 2015; Khan, Zubair, Rathore, Ijaz, Khalil, & Khalil, 2021).

Firm performance on the other hand involves measuring market-related aspects like market share, performance, diversification, and product development (Coleman, & Wu, 2021). Firm performance measures also include excellence in internal business processes and the effective collection of timely and accurate data, a quality workforce, and a quality work environment (Ogunsanwo, 2019). Firm business systems serve as the basis for developing strategic plans and evaluating an organisation's attainment of objectives and goals (Ganiyu, Adelopo, Rodionova & Samuel, 2019). Firm performance can be described as an organisation's ability to efficiently acquire and utilize its limited resources and assets in pursuit of its operational objectives (Khan, *et al.* 2021). This supported the idea that firm performance is the ultimate result of activities carried out within a business, and it primarily concerns overall efficiency and productivity (Monday, Akinola, Ologbenla & Aladeraji, 2015). More importantly, in order for SMEs to develop dynamic capabilities, there is need for them to integrate and reconfigure their competencies to match their resources and business model to achieve outstanding business performance within their dynamic business environment (Tseng, Warner, & Wager, 2019).

2.5 Dynamic Capabilities

The concept of dynamic capabilities is a framework that promote better understanding on how business organization develop their capabilities in terms restructuring available resources in respond to changes within the environment (Di Stefano, Peteraf & Verona, 2014 & Li and Liu, 2014). Scholars argued that the dynamic capabilities are gradually converging towards common definition and conceptualization (Giudici & Reinmoller, 2012). However, different definitions and assumptions about dynamic capabilities exist in empirical findings and extant literature. This implies that in order to consider the effectiveness of dynamic capabilities, there is need to see it as part of the firm capabilities and competencies that give the business opportunity to create products and processes that can enhance their capacity to respond to changes in the environment (Swoboda, & Olejnik, 2016). More importantly, the theory of dynamic capabilities improves the quality of information available to the firm in responding to changes within the environment by integrating and building capacity around their resources and competencies to achieve competiveness within the market (Akenroye, Owens, Elbaz, & Durowoju, 2020).

Notably, argument exist among scholars that dynamic capabilities give rise to its own history for the firm since every business have some level of uniqueness that distinguish them from their competitors (Kurtmollaiev, 2017). In the opinion of Marco-Lajara, Sarmiento-Chugcho, Ramon-Ramon and Martinez-Falco (2023), dynamic capabilities is the way the firm adapt to it resources, processes such as knowledge to react to the changes within their business environment. This implied that all activities the firm develops in relation to how they reconfigure and integrate their competencies to respond to changes within the environment are dynamic capabilities (Helfat, Finkelstein, Mitchell, Peteraf, Singh, Teece & Winter, 2007). Jiao, Alon, Koo and Cui (2013) argued dynamic capabilities are the development of management capabilities difficult to imitate the combination of organizational functional,

technological and technological skills to change existing operational mechanisms in order to meet new customer needs and finally to improve performance.

Singh, Oberoi and Ahuja (2013) have criticized the underlying assumptions of dynamic capabilities and some of these criticisms include total absence of specific measurement of the level of firm capabilities, poor clarity, difficulties in providing detailed explanation on the approaches and nature of dynamic capabilities, level of repetitiveness is high, does not consider behavioral pattern of the individual element and does not have appropriate structure and guide regarding dynamic capabilities and how all these issues affect the firm performance, competitiveness and value creation (Ganesh, & Marathe (2019).

2.6 Sensing Capability

This is one of the key dimensions of dynamic capabilities which involve the identification of opportunities and threats that exist in the environment in order to develop appropriate structure that help the firm to respond changes (Weaven, Quach, Thaichon, Frazer, Billot & Grace, 2021). In the work of Miocevic and Morgan (2018) and Radulovich, Javalgi and Scherer (2018) opined that sensing is more significant to SMEs operational activities since the amount of changes in the marketplace is high and thus, making it more difficult to measure. More importantly, sensing capabilities help SMEs to improve their firm level and develop ways for them to control the amount of organizational information they have to monitor the changing environment. In the work of Teece and Linden (2017), sensing capabilities are used to scan the operating environment of the business to serves a guide to prevent any form of disruption within the firm. In addition, sensing capabilities involves learning and interpretation of information obtained from the environment to provide insights for the firm to make informed decisions. Thus, sensing capabilities is highly recommended for SMEs as it helps identify any changing opportunities within their operating environment that improve their performance (Wilden, Gudergan, Nielsen, & Lings, 2013).

2.7 Seizing Capability

This is an important element developed within the theory of dynamic capabilities for SMEs and other business enterprise to address new ideas and opportunities they notice in their environment. Matysiak, Rugman and Bausch, (2018) cited that seizing capabilities is the ability of the business firm to integrate opportunities in order to attract new individual knowledge for employee from external resources. More importantly, seizing capabilities in any stable environment can assist to integrate intangible resources of knowledge to achieve competitive advantage, performance and sustainability. Rashidirad, Soltani and Salimian (2014) opined that seizing capabilities is usually found within the business organization which involves identifying available opportunities through effective utilization of external knowledge and corporate value within the organization. Atiku and Abatan (2021) added that if the firm level of capabilities can change the prevailing environmental conditions based on their seizing, their competitors in the market cannot survive because it will too costly for them mediate in the market. In support of this argument, Teece *et al., (*1997) argued that it is essential for firm to implement competitive strategies that maximize performance and match external environmental conditions through effective mobilization of available resources to address their value.

2.8 Reconfiguration Capability

Reconfiguration capabilities refer to the creation and integration of internally or externally acquired capabilities. It is the transformation of existing capabilities, i.e. to change the form, shape, or appearance of capabilities existing within the firm (Teece, 2007) and the redeployment or recombination of existing capabilities (Leemann, & Kanbach, 2022). Reconfiguration capabilities develop a structure for the organisation in such a way that it combines their abilities and competencies that make goods and services stand out among their competitors in the market (Girod, & Whittington, 2017). In support of this, reconfiguration capabilities reflect the different unique ways that the firm develops frameworks to integrate their competencies and skills such as technology, processes, systems, and capital (Kump

Engelmann, *et al.,* 2019). Reconfiguration capability is defined by Teece *et al.,* (1997) as the rearrangement and transformation of existing resources that empower firms to adapt to changes in market conditions. However, reconfiguration capability encompasses issues that address the creating capabilities process of a firm which can be developed internally or procured from external sources (Wogwu & Hamilton, 2018). The significance of reconfiguration capabilities becomes evident in their pivotal roles in realigning existing resources with new strategies, creating new resources, and addressing gaps in a firm's resource base (Yeow, *et al.*, 2018).

2.9 Learning Capability

According to Wang, Senaratne, and Rafiq (2015), learning is the process of creating new information and developing fresh perspectives to improve already available resources. The capacity to acquire, absorb, modify, and utilise preexisting knowledge to produce new knowledge is known as learning (Vazquez, Barranco, Ramirez, Gruart, Delgado-Garcia, Martinez-Lara & Rueda, 2015). According to Vazquez et al. (2015), learning aptitude is necessary for the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge as well as for the application of sufficient knowledge to support the development and alteration of a firm's capabilities and resource base. Learning makes it possible to find new production opportunities and to do activities more effectively, faster, and better (Lin & Wu 2014). A high absorptive or learning capability results in greater company performance since learning is a strategic capability that is hard for rivals to copy (Teece et al., 1997). According to Che-Mat (2017), learning capacity is a dynamic capability that affects the firm's ability to generate and use the information required to develop other organisational capabilities. The literature on organisational learning serves as the foundation for learning as a dynamic process (Shuaib & Song, 2021). The idea of learning in dynamic capabilities has also been impacted by the concept of absorptive capacity (Akpan *et al*., 2022).

2.10 Hypothesis Development

In the context of SMEs, the link between dynamic capabilities and SMEs is necessary to focus the intention and the rationale for this study. Thus, there is need to provide background on the extent of relationship that exist between dynamic capabilities and SMEs business performance within the internal and external environment with focus on empirical findings and other related extant literature. In furtherance of this, different scholars such as Dejardin, Raposo, Ferreira, Fernandes, Veiga, & Farinha, 2023; Martins, 2023 & Nedzinskas, Pundziene, Buoziute-Rafanaviciene & Pilkiene, 2013) argued that dynamic capabilities can improve level of business performance among SMEs but there are divergent opinion and argument on the extent of relationship that exist between them. Notably, Likelenboom and De Jong (2019) reaffirmed based on the position of the scholars above that the relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance is significant and positive and this happened most SMEs to continuously develop ways to achieve their business goals. Augier and Teece (2007) argued in line with hegemony of quantitative studies that there is significant relationship between the level of dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance.

The study further argued that despite the positive relationship, dynamic capabilities influence other factors such as competencies, resources and operational activities which in turn affect performance. Swoboda and Olejnik (2016) supported the above position that the firm dynamic capabilities affect their performance and competitiveness. This implies that these studies considered that dynamic capabilities are essential toward providing sufficient level for firm to improve their performance. Girod and Wittington (2017) & Ko and Liu (2017) both supported based on their quantitative studies that it is possible for dynamic capabilities to improve the level of firm performance. Despite the argument above, dynamic capabilities can improve how firm utilize their available resources to improve their performance with the use of the available frameworks. There are also few studies that argued against this and does not align with the significant relationship that exist between dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance.

For example, Wilden *et al.,* (2013) provided that the relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance is negative indicating that there is not significant relationship between them. In support of this, Rice *et al., (*2015) supported that only dynamic

capabilities cannot be argued to be the only determinant of firm performance because there are other financial and non-financial variables that may be responsible. These inconsistencies on the extent of relationship stemmed from the assumption of scholars that considered dynamic capabilities a second-order construct thereby neglecting individual dimensions of dynamic capabilities and their effect on the variable of interest (Ettlie & Pavlou, 2006). In the opinion of scholars conceptualizing dynamic capabilities as higher order may render the concept less meaningful to contribute to firm performance. Arifin (2015) argued that the variation between scholars on the argument of relationship can be moderated through other inbuilt dimension such as firm, size, age, environmental dynamism and turbulence. It is against this the following research hypothesis are formulated:

H_1 Sensing capabilities and performance of SMEs in Edo State does not have significant relationship;
H_2 Seizing capabilities and performance of SMEs IN Edo State does not have significant relationship;
H_3 Reconfiguration capabilities and performance of SMEs in Edo State does not have significant relationship; and
H_4 Learning capabilities and performance of SMEs in Edo State does not have significant relationship.

3. Research Methodology

This paper adopted systematic literature review approach with the application of PRISMA Protocol which stands for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses to build database for the systematic review of studies into the concept of dynamic capabilities. In the opinion of Dewey and Drahota (2016), systematic literature review identifies and appraises research critically in order through step-by-step process of providing contemporary argument on a particular investigation. Systematic literature review is considered to be transparent, well thought and has clearly defined protocol that helps to improve search processes over multiple databases and grey literature done by scholars and authors.

PRISMA Protocol which stands for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses is a roadmap that has set of guidelines to help researchers with appropriate reporting of numerous knowledge synthesis and ensure that all aspect of the work are adequately reported. It is an evidenced based method that guide the researcher on what to do, how to do it, what was found and in the event of review protocol, what are researcher planning to do. In order to carry PRISMA protocol for this study, the following steps was developed in line with PRISMA Statement:

(A) In-depth analyses and planning about database needed for the study: At the level, the researcher developed protocols in line with the PRISMA statement to search quality database for articles based on the following conditions and select them:
- The article must have good impact factor;
- The articles must be published in good academic and scientific journal outlets
- The article must be published in the last 25 years within 1997 to 2023 and must be related to dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance.
- The articles must be in English language
- The articles must not have any constraint in terms of seeking request for permission before access.

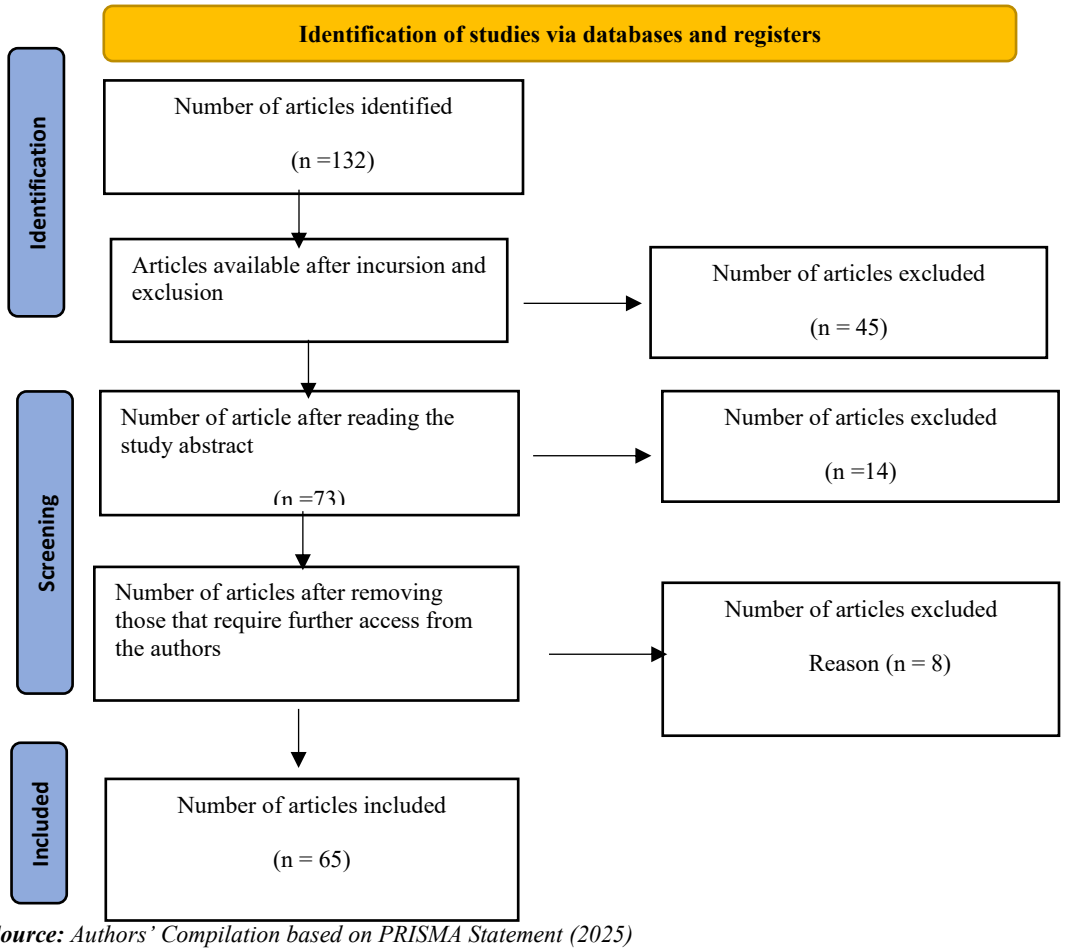
(B) Searching for databases: The researcher decided the database to search for article and how related they are to this present investigation. The justification for these databases is based on the premise that they are widely cited, high quality journals published and highly recognized. This study used the following database:
- JSTOR.
- Google Scholar.
- Elsevier
- Scopus.
- Emerald Insights
- Science Direct
- Web of Science.
- Francis and Taylor.
- Springer

(C) Searching Database with the use of Keywords: At this stage, the researcher searches each of the databases with keywords relating to the dynamic capabilities and

SMEs performance. The table indicates the keyword search procedures:

Studies on Dynamic Capabilities, SMEs, Small and Medium Scale, Firm, Performance, 'small' & 'enterprise 'small' & 'firm', *Resource based view*, Capability, Studies on dynamic Capabilities and SMEs performance**

(D) Adequate filtering of articles selected and determination of sample size: This stage was carried by reading the abstract of the articles selected to determine if they findings best suit the purpose of the study under investigation. Based on stage three, 132 articles were selected as the population and the sample size were determined based on inclusion and exclusion criteria alongside with those factors stated in stage one to remove any contradictory articles found in the database. Based on these filtering procedures, 65 articles were selected. These articles selected are retrieved from high-quality journals, high impact factor and address issues on theory of dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance. The flowchart below summary process the PRISMA protocol adopted for this study:



Source: *Authors' Compilation based on PRISMA Statement (2025)*

Table 1: *Overview of Journals Selected*

N	Name of the Selected Articles	Name of the Authors	Impact	Year	Database
1	African Journal of Business Management	Adeniran, T. V., & Johnston, K. A.	1.51	2012	Google Scholar
2	Business Process Management Journal.	Akenroye, *et al.,*	3.715	2020	Emerald
3	International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour &	Adomako, *et al.,*	5.995	2016	Emerald
4	Academy of Strategic Management Journal	Agwu, M. E.	7.815	2018	Google Scholar
5	Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences	Arifin, Z.	6.001	2015	Elsevier
6	IGI Global	Atiku, S. O., & Abatan, A. A.	3.474	2021	IGI-global
7	Management International Review	Augier, M., & Teece, D. J	4.492	2007	Springer
8	European Journal of Scientific Research	Augustine, *et al.,*	4.997	2012	Google Scholar
9	Journal of Management & Organization	Bala, E. P., & Ferreira, J. J.	4.139	2019	Cambridge University Press
10	Journal of Cleaner Production, 235, 1360-1370.	Eikelenboom *et al.,*	2.681	2019	Emerald
11	Cochrane Interactive Learning	Dewey, A., & Drahota, A		2016	
12	Academy of Management Perspectives	Di Stefano, et al.,	8.069	2014	Elsevier
13	Strategic Management Journal	Eisenhardt, K. M., & Martin, J. A.	7.815	2000	Wiley Online
14	Journal of Technovation	Ellonen, et al.,	11.373	2009	Elsevier
15	Journal of Decision Sciences	Ettlie, J. E., & Pavlou, P. A.	4.551	2006	Wiley Online
16	European Business Review	Ganesh, L. S., & Marathe, R. R.	1.891	2019	Emerald
17	Measuring Business Excellence, 23 (4), 472-483.	Garbellano, S., & Da Veiga, M. D.		2019	Elsevier
18	Strategic Management Journal	Girod, S. J. G., & Whittington, R.	7.815	2017	Wiley Online Library
19	Strategic Organization	Giudici, A., & Reinmoeller, P.	3.506	2012	Sage Publication
20	California Management Review	Grant, R.M.	11.678	1996	Sage Publication
21	Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration,	Martins, A	7.815	2023	Emerald
22	The Journal of Entrepreneurship	Gupta, V. K., & Wales, W. J.	2.61	2017	Sage Publication
23	Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development.	Halabí, C. E., & Lussier, R. N.	0.731	2014	Emerald
24	Strategic Management Journal	Helfat, C. E., & Winter, S. G.	7.815	2011	Wiley Online
25	Wiley Online Publication Library	Helfat, *et al.,*	6.655	(2007).	Google Scholar
26	Family Business Review,	Hernandez-Linares, R., & Lopez-	7.575	(2018).	Taylor & Francis
27	Journal of Engineering and Technology Management	Jiao, *et al.,*	4.489	2013	Elsevier
28	Cogent Business & Management	Khan, *et al.,*	0.409	2021	Taylor & Francis
29	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Khan, *et al.,*	9.470	2022	Taylor & Francis
30	Business Strategy and the Environment	Ko, W. W., & Liu, G.	10.801	2017	Wiley Online
31	Industrial and Corporate Change	Kump, *et al.,*	2.878	2019	Google Scholar
32	Journal of Management Inquiry	Kurtmollaiev, S.	3.031	2017	Sage Publication
33	International Journal of Management Reviews	Laaksonen, O., & Peltoniemi, M.	8.958	2018	Wiley Online
34	Journal of business research,	Li, D. Y., & Liu, J.	10.969	2014	Elsevier
35	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	Lichtenthaler, U., & Muethel, M.	10.075	2012	Sage Publication
36	Journal of Business Research	Lin, Y., & Wu, L. Y.	10.969	2014	Elsevier
37	International Journal of Business Environment.	Marco-Lajara, *et al.,*	1.230	2023	ScienceDirect
38	Management International Review	Matysiak, *et al.,*	4.492	2018	Springer
39	International Marketing Review	Miocevic, D., & Morgan, R. E.	5.774	2018	Emerald
40	Tourism and Hospitality Research,	Nieves, J., *et al.,*	0.776	2016	Sage Publication
41	Thunderbird International Business Review	Ochie, *et al.,*	2.390	2022	Wiley Online
42	African Journal of Economic and Management	Otache, I., & Usang, O. U. E.	0.334	2022	Emerald
43	Small Business Economics,	Palmie, *et al.,*	7.096	2016	Springer
44	Asian Journal of Technology Innovation	Park, K., & Kim, B. K.	1.769	2013	Taylor & Francis
45	Journal of Decision sciences.	Pavlou, P. A., & El Sawy, O. A.	4.551	2011	Wiley Online
46	Journal of Product Innovation Management	Piening, E.P. & Salge, T.O.	9.885	2015	Wiley Online
47	International Marketing Review, 35(1), 113-135	Radulovich, L., *et al.,*	5.774	2018	Emerald

48	Strategic Change, 23(1-2), 81-92.	Rashidirad, *et al.,*	1.30	2014	Google Scholar
49	International Small Business Journal	Rice, *et al.,*	6.413	2015	Sage Publication
50	Journal of Management, 36(5), 1192–1219.	Schilke O., & Goerzen A.	9.72	2010	Sage Publication
51	Asia Pacific Business Review, 28(3), 354-379.	Shi, *et al.,*	2.010	2022	Taylor & Francis
52	Journal of Business Ethics, 133(3), 471– 485.	Shu, *et al.,*	6.331	2016	Springer
53	International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 64(7), 908-931.	Simon, *et al.,*	0.578	2015	Emerald
54	Global Business Review, 18(4), 1–22.	Singh, B., & Rao, M. K.	0.450	2017	Sage Publication
55	Management Decision, 51(7), 1442-1461.	Singh, D., Oberoi, J. & Ahuja, I.	5.589	2013	Emerald
56	Academy of Management Proceedings (Vol. 2018, No. 1, p. 18021).	Stoyanova, V. P., & Stoyanov, S. P.	10.979	2018)	Google Scholar
57	Journal of Small Business Management, 54(1), 139-161.	Swoboda, B., & Olejnik, E	6.881	2016	Taylor & Francis
58	Strategic Management Journal, 28(13), 1319-1350.	Teece, D. J.	7.815	2007	Wiley Online
59	Long range planning, 51(1), 40-49.	Teece, D. J.	7.825	2018	Elsevier
60	Journal of organization design, 6, 1-14.	Teece, D. J., & Linden, G	3.050	2017	Springer
61	Strategic Management Journal, 18(7), 509-533.	Teece, *et al.,*	7.815	1997	Wiley Online
62	Long range planning, 52(3), 326-349.	Tseng Warner, K. S., & Wager, M.	7.825	2019	Elsevier
63	Journal of Business Research, 128, 109-123.	Weaven, *et al.,*	10.969	(2021)	Elsevier
64	Long range planning, 46(1-2), 72-96.	Wilden, *et al.,*	7.825	2013	Elsevier
65	Baltic Journal of Management, 8(4), 376-396.	Nedzinskas, e*t al.,*	2.753	2013	Emerald

Source: *Author Self-Compilation (2025)*

4. Data Analysis and Results

Based on the analyzed articles considered for this study, it was reviewed that 85% of the authors agreed that there is significant and positive relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs business performance. This based on their when firms identify new opportunities, dynamic capability not only helps them understand which technologies to explore but also enable them to identify target market segments and make reasonable profit in the market while 10% of the articles reviewed indicate negative relationship. This is based on the assumption that dynamic capabilities is considered as a second-order construct since it neglected the analysis of the behaviour and individual influence of each of its dimension. Furthermore, the systematic reviewed indicate that just 5% argued that dynamic capabilities is not part of the factor that should be considered when evaluating SMEs performance. These studies provide justification that other factors such as technology, innovation, market position, sustainability, quality services and effective customer satisfaction.

Also, the study indicates the work of Teece on dynamic capabilities such as Teece *et al., (*1997); Augier and Teece (2007); Teece, & Linden (2017) and Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997) are the prominent and well referenced work on the theory of dynamic capabilities. The work of Teece provides that dynamic capabilities are considered as an important tool that can be used to examine the impact of environmental conditions on business activities. This is based on the assumption that SMEs need to identify critical environmental conditions that may negatively influence their intended goals. However, few of the articles examined dynamic capabilities with the use of systematic literature review which are Bleady, Ali and Ibrahim (2018) and Ferasso, Takahashi and May (2017). This implies that the use of systematic literature with respect to the theory of dynamic capabilities is limited and emerging. Also, the majority of the studies are carried out using quantitative method through the use of questionnaire than qualitative but few conceptual studies exist on it but much are domiciled in developing countries but abroad.

5. Conclusions and Limitations

5.1 Summary of Findings

There is a significant and positive relationship between dynamic capability and the performance of SMEs in Edo State. This means that, in the context of this study, sensing capability is essential for influencing the performance of SMEs in Edo State.

The nature of dynamic capabilities possessed determines the ability of the SMEs to gather sufficient information about their business environment and develop appropriate frameworks to achieve their performance and remain competitive in the market.

5.2 Conclusions

This study has contributed to existing empirical findings and extant literature on the theory of dynamic capabilities and how its dimension affects SMEs performance with use of systematic Review through the application of PRISMA protocol. The critical review provided within this study indicates that relationship exist between dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance but no study have reach agreement on why dynamic capabilities have not be considered as the only factors that influence SMEs performance. Furthermore, the study was able to identify some articles that provided that other than dynamic capabilities factor such as age, size and resources may affect SMEs performance. This study challenge authors and scholars in the field of strategic management to provide further studies on the relationship between dynamic capabilities and SMEs performance by considering other dimensions other than those provided in this study and determine if the inconsistencies that exist among authors on this investigation can be model appropriately by developing new theory that update assumptions on theory of dynamic capabilities.

5.3 Recommendations

SMEs in Edo State must continuously monitor and assess the nature of dynamic capabilities they possessed, identifying areas for improvement and investing in their development as this can improve their competitiveness, sustainability and performance. This may include ways of having understanding of their agility, resilience and flexibility. SMEs can actively engage in networking and form strategic alliances with other businesses, research institutions, and industry associations to gain insights and access resources that can enhance adaptability, sensing and innovation. This can be achieved through effective collaboration on different ways to identify key environmental challenges facing SMEs to foster knowledge exchange and initiatives. SMEs can actively engage in networking and form strategic alliances with other businesses, research institutions, and industry associations to gain insights and access resources that can enhance adaptability, sensing and innovation. This can be achieved through effective collaboration on different ways to identify key environmental challenges facing SMEs to foster knowledge exchange and initiatives.

5.4 Practical implication of findings

The implication for policymakers requires stakeholders should develop policies and programs supporting SME in Edo State development of dynamic capabilities. This can be in form grants, funding, knowledge sharing and collaboration for SMEs in Edo State develop appropriate structure for their services.

5.5 Contributions to knowledge

The study highlights the importance of dynamic capabilities in enabling SMEs in Edo State to have an understanding of the numerous prevailing environmental conditions that may influence their market position and performance. This study contributes to a growing body of literature on strategic and organizational management by highlighting the importance of dynamic capabilities and how businesses can identify their dimensions

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Gender Based Verbal Abuse among Civil Servants in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examined the perception of gender-based emotional violence among civil servants in Edo state. The study also tested the hypothesis on the influence of demographic attributes on employees' perception of gender-based emotional violence in Edo State civil service. The study adopted the survey research design and employed a structured questionnaire to elicit information from respondents. The responses from the questionnaire copies were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation. Chi-Square (χ^2) was used as an inferential statistical technique for testing the research hypotheses at a 5% level of significance. All of the statistical analyses in this study were carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 24). 58.4% of the respondents investigated affirmed the occurrence of verbal abuse in Edo State civil service mainly perpetrated by supervisor/immediate boss, client/customers, and colleagues/co-workers. The study also showed that low performance and productivity, mental health issues, rage, anxiety, and sadness, as well as a decline in job satisfaction, are all effects of gender-based verbal abuse among Edo State public servants. The study recommends that the Edo State Government should set up specialized courts to handle gender-based violence-related cases swiftly.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence, Verbal Abuse, Work Performance

1. Introduction

Women play strategic roles in every society; they are primary care givers of children and elders in most countries of the world. However, women seem to have been relegated to the home over the years, and seem not to be very involved in issues of national development, especially in developing countries, such as Nigeria (Agbaje, 2019). One possible explanation is that some people think women's opinions are invariably sentimental and emotional. Because they frequently lack the physical strength of their male counterparts, women are traditionally viewed as the weaker sex and are therefore the most commonly targeted victims of gender-based violence (Iliyasu, Abubakar, Aliyu, Galadanci & Salihu, 2011; Naidoo, 2017; Wieten, Chhoun & Yi, 2020).

Violence against women (VAW) or sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) are other names for gender-based violence (GBV), which is defined as acts of violence principally committed against women and girls. These acts of violence include but are not limited to rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive-coercion female infanticile, prenatal sex selection, obstetric violence, and mob violence; as well as harmful customary or traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, marriage by abduction and forced marriage (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; Kalokhe, Del Rio, Dunkle, Stephenson, Metheny, Paranjape, & Sahay, 2017).

The workplace has become an important site of intervention to reduce GBV and its costly effects not only on productivity, but also on individuals, families, and societies. As new forms of paid labour challenge stereotypical gender norms related to "women's" versus "men's" work, new opportunities for women's economic advancement and development open up. This brings both benefits and risks, depending on the context and availability of services designed to prevent and respond to GBV. The main objective of this study is to provide empirical evidence of the prevalence and consequences of gender-based verbal violence in Edo State Civil Service. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to ascertain the frequency and repercussions of verbal abuse based on gender among Edo State civil servants.

1.1 Research Hypotheses

In line with the research objective, this study tests the following null hypotheses:

H_{01} Perception of gender-based verbal abuse is not significantly influenced by the demographic variables of civil servants in Edo State.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing Gender-Based Violence

Sexual gender-based violence (SGBV), violence against women (VAW), and gender-based violence (GBV) are all terms that can be used interchangeably to refer to the same issue. It is the term used to denote harm inflicted upon individuals and groups that is connected to normative understandings of their gender (Bloom, 2008). Cultural conceptions of gender roles, institutional and structural pressures that support gender-based violence, and societal influences that mould violent incidents along gender lines are some examples of this connection. GBV is a term that describes any harmful act that is carried out against a person's will, and the act is based on socially attributed differences between males and females within the context of a specific society (Uwameiye & Iserameiya, 2013).

Over the past two decades, there has been an increase in research documenting very high levels of violence against women from many regions of the world (Oladepo, Yusuf & Arulogun, 2011; Sikweyiya, 2014; Naidoo, 2017; Muluken, Stulz, Francis & Kingsley, 2020). The outcome of Azeez (2016) study on gender-based violence experiences and reactions in Ibadan metropolis that 80% of gender-based violence perpetrators are likely to continue with the violent acts further reiterates the worrisome and alarming dimension of the problem in Nigeria.

Gender-based violence is not only a public health problem, but also a social problem and a violation of human rights including women's reproductive health rights (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottmoeller, 2002; Harvey, Beckman, Browner & Sherman, 2002; Shamu, 2013). This violence takes different dimensions such as physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic (Shamu, 2013). They have different unpleasant health implications which are associated with a high use of health care services, long term physical and mental disabilities, poor health status and poor quality of life (Campbell 2002; WHO 2002; WHO 2005; Karamagi, Tumwine, Tylleskar, & Heggenhougen, 2007; WHO 2013; The World Bank 2019). Kaphle, Adhikari, Neupane, Yadav, Subedi, & Hamal (2014) asserts that most women are not safe in their workplace as they are the victim of many types of GBV at the workplace and they are more likely to be involved and experience violence in diverse forms such as physical, emotional, sexual etc. but due to social stigma, economic condition, illiteracy these are under-reported.

2.2 Gender-Based Verbal Abuse

One type of interpersonal violence that is used to manipulate or assert authority over victims is verbal abuse. Verbal abuse, which is intended to shame, harass, humiliate, insult, or threaten vulnerable people, causes suffering, misery, and distress through bullying or intimidation. Verbal abuse is unpredictable and manipulative. It may manifest overtly in the form of angry outbursts or covertly in the form of pretended concern that gives victims conflicting messages (Lane, 2003). As the abuser's threats increase, tension peaks, and physical or extreme emotional abuse follows. The following are examples of verbal abuse: Jokes, insults, criticism of the victim's abilities, disregard for the victim's feelings, withholding affection as a form of punishment, blaming the victim for all issues, yelling at the victim, humiliating the victim in front of others, accusing the victim of being the abusive partner, threatening to take the victim's children away, threatening physical violence, and threatening suicide as a form of punishment.

As Yamada (2000) argued, intimidating, mean-spirited, manipulative, and sometimes high-decibel behaviours are not unusual workplace occurrences, especially from supervisors and managers. Over 90% of adults experience psychological and emotional abuse at some time during the span of their work careers (Hornstein, 1996). The supervisors who inflict psychological abuse on subordinates represent one of the most frequent and serious problems confronting employees in today's workforce (Yamada, 2000). Evidence of employee abuse was found in a wide variety of organizations, including hospitals, universities, manufacturing plants, research industries and social service agencies (Ashforth, 1994; Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Back, 1994; Keashly, 2001; Meares, Oetzel, Torres, Derkacs, & Ginossar, 2004). Emotional abuse is also quite costly, in that it refocuses employee energy from productivity to self-protection (Hirigoyen, 2002; Wyatt & Hare, 1997); it results in staff turnover and burnout (Infante & Gorden, 1985; Rayner & Hoel, 1997); it intensifies the use of sick leave (Thomas-Peter, 1997); it increases medical and workers' compensation claims due to occupational stress (Bassman, 1992); it results in hiring costly consultants (author's experience); it leads

to court settlements, legal fees and litigation (Kontorovich, 2001). Additionally, communication and teamwork break down (Lockhart, 1997), and organizations lose credibility and suffer loss of good reputations (Davenport, Schwartz & Elliott, 1999).

2.3 Consequences of Gender-Based Verbal Abuse on Performance in the Workplace

Performance is a multicomponent notion and on the fundamental level one can distinguish the process aspect of performance, that is, behavioural engagements from an expected outcome (Borman, & Motowidlo, 1993; Roe, 1999). The behaviour over here denotes the action people exhibit to accomplish a work, whereas the outcome aspect states about the consequence of individual's job behaviour (Campbell, 1990).

Borman, and Motowidlo (1997) defined job performance in the context of task performance as "effectiveness with which job occupants execute their assigned tasks, that realizes the fulfilment of organization's vision while rewarding organization and individual proportionately. Task performance is a type of performance that includes specific behaviors related to the job, such as basic duties included in the job description. Task performance requires more cognitive ability and is primarily facilitated through task knowledge (requisite technical knowledge or principles to ensure job performance and having an ability to handle multiple assignments), task skill (application of technical knowledge to accomplish task without much supervision), and task habits (an innate ability to respond to assigned jobs that either facilitate or impede the performance (Conway, 1999). The term "worker performance" signifies an individual's work achievement after exerting the required effort on the job which is associated with getting meaningful work, engaged profile, and compassionate colleagues/employers around (Hellriegel et al.,1999; Karakas, 2010). According to the ILO (2007), workers who do not fit into stereotypical social norms of what a "man" or a "woman" should be or do for a living, or who engage in diverse gendered behaviors, may be the targets of stigma, harassment, exploitation, abuse, and discrimination at work. Lack of bargaining power and labour policies also leave millions of workers, especially women, vulnerable and without recourse in the face of gender-based discrimination and workplace violence. Along with the physical and emotional suffering, the economic costs of violence against women are considerable and can amount to loss of money due to medical and health care services or loss of productivity because of increased absenteeism. It affects job performance and leads to lateness, decreased job retention and career advancement. Victims of gender discrimination lose motivation and morale necessary to perform their jobs effectively (ILO, 2007).

Agbaje *et al.* (2021) asserts that GBV or violence against women in the workplace is a major public health problem globally. In Nigeria, the prevalence of GBV is high. Previous studies reported that GBV is an important public health problem in Nigeria (Umana, Fawole, & Adeoye, 2014; Aguocha, Duru, Onoh, Olose, Igwe, Amadi & Ogwunga, 2017; Okolo & Okolo, 2018; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2019). Okolo et al., (2018) reported that about 52.1% of the women indicated that domestic violence incidence is high, while 63.3% had experienced domestic violence at one time or the other. Sexual abuse was the most frequently reported form of abuse experienced (Aguocha et al., 2017). The high prevalence of GBV in Nigeria has been attributed to a culture of silence, cultural values, and practices (Okolo et al., 2018; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2019).

3. Research Methodology

Survey research design was adopted in this study. Specifically, cross-sectional survey design was used. The rationale for selecting survey research design is that it involves studying the current state of a unit or group at a particular point in time.

The population of this study consists of all staff (male and female) in Edo State civil service. According to the distribution of staff of Edo State civil service by ministries, departments and salary grade pay there are a total of 13,582 staff as at 21st February 2024, as sourced from Edo State Internal Revenue Services (EIRS), Benin City.

The sample size of this study is 400. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane (1967) formula since the population is finite.

$$n = \frac{\mathrm{N}}{1+\mathrm{N}(e^2)}$$

Where: n = sample size; N= population = 13582; e = level of significance = 0.05

$$n = \frac{\mathrm{N}}{1+\mathrm{N}(e^2)} = \frac{13582}{1+13582(0.05^2)} = 400$$

The simple random sampling technique was then used to randomly select the departments that participated in the survey. The research instrument for this study is a questionnaire designed for eliciting information on the prevalence and consequences of gender-based verbal violence in the workplace. The questionnaire was

broadly categorized into two sections. The first section consists of socio-demographic information about the respondents such as gender, age, educational attainment, marital status, staff category, work experience and religion are presented and discussed. The second section contains items on the prevalence and outcomes/consequences of gender-based verbal abuse in the workplace.

The responses from the copies of questionnaire administered were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Chi-Square (χ^2) was used as an inferential statistical technique for testing the research hypotheses. The research hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. This study used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 24) to conduct all the statistical analyses.

4. Data Presentation, Analyses and Interpretation

Table 4.1: Demographic information of respondents

S/N	Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency
1	Gender	Female	145	39.9	41.0
		Male	209	57.6	59.0
		Total	354	97.5	100.0
		Missing	9	2.5	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	
2	Age	58years and Above	22	6.1	6.2
		48-58years	34	9.4	9.6
		38-47years	77	21.2	21.8
		28-37years	131	36.1	37.0
		18-27years	90	24.8	25.4
		Total	354	97.5	100.0
		Missing	9	2.5	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	
3	Educational Attainment	Postgraduate	51	14.0	14.7
		HND/B.Sc. or Equivalent	198	54.5	56.9
		Primary School Cert. SSCE/GCE/NCE/Diploma/OND or Equivalent	92	25.3	26.4
		No formal Education	7	1.9	2.0
		Total	348	95.9	100.0
		Missing	15	4.1	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	
4	Marital Status	Widow	12	3.3	3.4
		Divorced	24	6.6	6.8
		Married	188	51.8	53.1
		Single	130	35.8	36.7
		Total	354	97.5	100.0
		Missing	9	2.5	
		Overall Total	363	100.0	
5	Staff Category	Junior Staff	167	46.0	47.4
		Senior Staff	185	51.0	52.6
		Total	352	97.0	100.0
		Missing	11	3.0	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	
6	Work Experience	<10	181	49.9	49.9
		10 – 20	143	39.4	39.4
		>20	17	4.7	4.7
		Total	341	100	100
		Missing	22	6.1	6.1
		Overall Total	**363**		
7	Religion	African Traditional Worship	14	3.9	4.0
		Islam	66	18.2	18.8
		Christianity	271	74.7	77.2
		Total	351	96.7	100.0
		Missing	12	3.3	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024.*

The Table shows that majority of the respondents are female, which are 209 accounting for 57.6% of the respondents. The male respondents were 145 representing 39.9% while 2.5% of the total respondents did not indicate their gender. The age distribution shows that majority of the respondents (131, 36.1%) were between 28 and 37years old. This is followed by 38-47 years old (77, 21.2%) and 18-27years (90, 24.8%). Finally, age groups 48years and above jointly accounted for 15.5% of the total respondents. 2.5% of the total respondents did not indicate their age category. Only 7 employees had no formal education. This category accounted for 1.9%. 92 (25.3%) of the respondents have Primary/Sch. Cert. SSCE/GCE/NCE/Diploma/OND or Equivalent while 198 (545%) of the respondents have first degree (HND/B.Sc Degree or Equivalent). Respondents with postgraduate qualifications accounted for 14% while 4.1% of the total respondents did not indicate their educational qualification. For the marital status, 130 (35.8%) of the respondents were single, while 188 (51.8%) were married. Only 24 respondents representing 6.6% were divorced while 12 (3.3%) were widow. 2.5% of the total respondents did not indicate their marital status.

The results revealed that majority of the respondents (185, 51%) fall under senior staff while 167 (46%) of the respondents were junior staff. Respondents that do not indicate their category account for only 3%. Majority of the respondents have worked for less than ten years. This category accounted for 49.9% while respondents that have spent between ten to twenty years accounted for 39.4% of the total respondents. 17 (4.7%) of the respondents have worked for more than twenty years. 6.1% of the total respondents do not indicate their work experience.

Christianity is the religion of the majority of responders (74.7%). Respondents that practice Islam accounted for 18.2% while respondents that practice African Traditional Worship accounted for 3.9%. Only 3.3% of the total respondents did not indicate their religion.

Description of the prevalence and outcomes of verbal abuse

This section contains the descriptive analysis of the prevalence and outcomes of verbal abuse. Verbal abuse as used in this study refers to the act of directing negative statements toward someone, causing emotional harm believing to gain more power and control in a relationship. Verbal abuse consists of behaviours that are non-physical, but which can still be rather damaging, such as being threatening, insulting, or humiliating toward someone. The results are presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below:

Table 4.2: Prevalence of verbal abuse

Q/N	Statement	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency
PIV_1	Do you consider Verbal Abuse a typical form of abuse in your workplace?	No	142	39.1	40.1
		Yes	212	58.4	59.9
		Total	354	97.5	100.0
		Missing	9	2.5	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	
PIV_2	How many times have you been verbally abused in your workplace?	Never	132	36.4	37.3
		More than three times	52	14.3	14.7
		Thrice	32	8.8	9.0
		Twice	80	22.0	22.6
		Once	58	16.0	16.4
		Total	354	97.5	100.0
		Missing	9	2.5	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	
PIV_3	Using the last case of verbal abuse, when did this happen?	10years above	54	14.9	19.8
		7-9years ago	25	6.9	9.2
		4 - 6years ago	80	22.0	29.3
		1 - 3years	107	29.5	39.2
		Less than one year ago	7	1.9	2.6
		Total	273	75.2	100.0
		Missing	90	24.8	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	
PIV_4	Who abused you?	Family/Spouse	12	3.3	4.6
		Stranger	25	6.9	9.5
		Colleague/Co-worker	43	11.8	16.3
		Client/Customer	88	24.2	33.5
		Supervisor/Immediate Boss	65	17.9	24.7
		Director	30	8.3	11.4
		Total	263	72.5	100.0

Q/N	Statement	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Frequency
		Missing	100	27.5	
		Overall Total	**363**	**100.0**	

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024.*

Table 4.2 shows that majority of the respondents (212, 58.4%) considered verbal abuse a typical case of violence in Edo State civil service while 142 respondents representing 39.1% did not consider verbal abuse a typical case. However, 9 (2.5%) of the respondents did not respondent to the question. Table 4.1 further shows that 132 (36.4%) of the respondents have *Never* been verbally abused in the workplace. 58 (16%), 80 (22%), 32 (8.8%) and 52 (14.3%) represent *Once, Twice, Thrice* and *More than three times* respectively the respondents have been verbally abused in the workplace. As shown in Table 4.2, 53.4% of verbal abuse that occurred in the workplace were recorded in six years and below. 21.8% of such cases occurred more than six years ago as reported by the respondents. The respondents identified 30 (8.3%), 65 (17.9%), 88 (24.2%), 43 (11.8%), 25 (6.9%), and 12 (3.3%) of the verbal abuse were carried out by Directors, supervisor/immediate boss, client/customers, colleagues/co-workers, strangers, and family/spouse respectively. This shows that verbal violence/abuse is mainly perpetrated by supervisor/immediate boss, client/customers, and colleagues/co-workers.

Table 4.3: Outcomes/Consequences of Verbal Abuse

Q/N	Statement	Yes	No	Rank
PIV_12	It decreased my job satisfaction	168 (74.3%)	58 (25.7%)	1st
PIV_2	My mental health was affected negatively	147 (53.8%)	126 (46.2%)	2nd
PIV_1	I became afraid	130 (47.1%)	146 (52.9%)	3rd
PIV_8	My performance and productivity decreased	116 (51.3%)	110 (48.7%)	4th
PIV_7	I resulted to absenteeism	85 (37.1%)	144 (62.9%)	5th
PIV_10	It damaged my image and reputation	82 (36.3%)	144 (63.7%)	6th
PIV_3	I took sick leave/Time Off work	76 (27.8%)	197 (72.2%)	7th
PIV_5	I changed department	45 (19.9%)	181 (80.1%)	8th
PIV_11	It damaged the company's image and reputation	43 (19%)	183 (81%)	9th
PIV_9	It resulted to legal action	39 (17.3%)	187 (82.7%)	10th
PIV_13	I was fatigued or lost weight	38 (16.8%)	188 (83.2%)	11th
PIV_6	I asked for a transfer	37 (16.4%)	189 (83.6%)	12th
PIV_4	I left the job	25 (11.2%)	198 (88.8%)	13th

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024.*

Table 4.3 shows that the major consequences or outcomes of verbal violence/abuse on victims as identified by the respondents are decreased job satisfaction; mental health challenges; it makes employees to be afraid; reduced performance and productivity; and absenteeism. Other consequences include damaged of image and reputation, fatigue and weight loss, damaged of image and reputation, transfer, taking legal action, change of department, and leaving the job, among others.

4.4: Influence of demographics on verbal abuse

Demographics	Category	Occurrence of Verbal Abuse			χ^2 (p-value)	Decision
		Yes [n(%)]	No [n(%)]	Total [n(%)]		
Gender	Female	44 (30.3)	101 (69.7)	145 (100)	9.755 (0.002)	Significant
	Male	98 (46.9)	111 (53.1)	209 (100)		
	Total	142 (40.1)	212 (59.9)	354 (100)		
Age	58years and Above	8 (36.4)	14 (63.6)	22 (100)	23.770 (0.000)	Significant
	48-58years	6 (17.6)	28 (82.4)	34 (100)		
	38-47years	22 (28.6)	55 (71.4)	77 (100)		
	28-37years	72 (55)	59 (45)	131 (100)		
	18-27years	34 (37.8)	56 (62.2)	90 (100)		
	Total	142 (40.1)	212 (59.9)	354 (100)		
Educational Attainment	Postgraduate	23 (45.1)	28 (54.9)	51 (100)	6.016 (0.111)	Not Significant
	HND/B.Sc. or Equivalent	70 (35.4)	128 (64.6)	198 (100)		
	PrimarySch. Cert. SSCE/GCE/NCE/Diploma/OND or Equivalent	41 (44.6)	51 (55.4)	92 (100)		
	No formal Education	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	7 (100)		
	Total	139 (39.9)	209 (60.1)	348 (100)		

Marital Status	Widow	6 (50)	6 (50)	12 (100)	16.193 (0.001)	Significant
	Divorced	14 (58.3)	10 (41.7)	24 (100)		
	Married	87 (46.3)	101 (53.7)	188 (100)		
	Single	35 (26.9)	95 (73.1)	130 (100)		
	Total	142 (40.1)	212 (59.9)	354 (100)		
Religion	African Traditional Worship	6 (42.9)	8 (57.1)	14 (100)	0.136 (0.934)	Not Significant
	Islam	27 (40.9)	39 (59.1)	66 (100)		
	Christianity	106 (39.1)	165 (60.9)	271 (100)		
	Total	139 (39.6)	212 (60.4)	351 (100)		

Table 4.4 shows that male employees were more likely to have experienced verbal abuse compared to their female counterparts (46.9% vs. 30.3%). Based on the Chi-square results (χ^2 = 9.755; P=0.002), the difference in the occurrence of verbal abuse between male and female employees is statistically significant at 5%. The results further showed that employees between 28 - 37years old experienced the highest level of verbal abuse as shown by 55% for the group compared to other age categorization. Based on the Chi-square results (χ^2 = 23.770; P=0.000), the difference in the occurrence of verbal abuse among the different categories is statistically significant at 5%. The results also revealed that 71.4% of the employees with *No Formal Education* experienced the highest level of verbal abuse as compared to others. However, the Chi-square results (χ^2 = 6.016; P=0.111) showed that the difference in the occurrence of verbal abuse is statistically significant at 5%. The results further revealed that 58.3% of the employees that were *Divorced* experienced the highest level of verbal abuse in the workplace compared to others (*Single* and *Married, Widow*). The Chi-square results (χ^2 = 16.193; P=0.001) showing the difference in the occurrence of verbal abuse among the different categories is statistically significant at 5%. Lastly, Table 4.4 reveals that, in comparison to those who practice Christianity and African Traditional Worship, 40.9% of the employees who practice Islam were more likely to have encountered the highest degree of verbal abuse. The difference in the incidence of verbal abuse among employees who practice various religions is statistically significant at 5%, according to the Chi-square values (χ2 = 0.136; P=0.934).

Hypothesis: *Demographic attributes (age, gender, education, marital status, religion) do not significantly influence employees' perception of gender-based verbal abuse in Edo State civil service.*

The result shows that the occurrence of verbal abuse is significantly influenced by gender (χ^2 = 9.755; P=0.002), age (χ^2 = 23.770; P=0.000) and marital status (χ^2 = 16.193; P=0.001). However, the occurrence of verbal abuse is not significantly influenced by educational attainment (χ^2 = 6.016; P=0.111) and religion (χ^2 = 0.136; P=0.934). We therefore conclude that the occurrence of verbal abuse is significantly influenced by gender, age and marital status while educational attainment and religion do not show any statistically significant influence.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Gender-based violence also known as violence against women (VAW) is primarily directed at women and girls. GBV can be committed against women as well as men. Whether this violence occurs within the workplace or outside or is perpetrated to a man or woman, its effect can be damaging and harmful. This study therefore examined the prevalence and consequences of gender-based verbal violence in Edo state civil service. The study also ascertained the influence of demographic attributes (age, gender, education, marital status, religion) on employees' perception of gender-based verbal violence in Edo State civil service. The findings revealed that gender-based verbal abuse is prevalent in Edo state civil service. The study further revealed that the consequences of this abuse experienced among employees in the Edo State civil service include a decrease in job satisfaction; anger, anxiety, and depression; mental health, fear; and low performance and productivity.

The following suggestions are put forth in light of the study's findings:

- Edo State Government should set up specialized courts to swiftly handle gender-based emotional-violence related cases. This would discourage potential perpetrators of gender-based violence from taking advantage of slow pace of judgement and other barriers in the formal legal system of Nigeria.
- Edo State Government should formulate laws for protecting the confidentiality of victims of gender based emotional abuse who may report incidence of assaults. This will help in reducing stigmatization of victims and increase the likelihood of formally reporting such cases.

- Unit or department should be created in all the Local Government Areas in the state for reporting incidence of gender based emotional abuse.
- Professional counsellors and legal practitioners who can counsel and fast-track access to justice should be employed to manage the unit or department;
- There should be regular orientation programmes for staff about gender-based emotional violence to create awareness, educate them on different forms of gender-based violence, the penalties that go with them and strategies for preventing possible occurrence of such cases in the workplace.

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Medical Waste Management in Public and Private Health Care Facilities in Nigeria

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Abstract. Health care facilities are established to provide treatment and safeguard the health of the people against conditions that pose risk or threat to health care providers, patients, waste handlers and the entire community. Health care activities are carried out to protect, restore health and save lives but paradoxically, they are known to generate wastes that poses obvious health risks either by direct infection or through exposure to dangerous chemicals and radiation materials. The purpose of the study was to determine the medical waste management practice in health care facilities in Edo State. Eight research questions were raised to guide the study while six hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population for the study comprised the 1,383 health care facilities in Edo State. A sample size of 276 respondents was selected using the multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used was a validated Dichotomous scale format questionnaire with 29 items. The instrument's reliability was established using the test-retest method of estimating reliability and a co-efficient value of 0.68 was obtained. Data generated from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage and inferential statistics of binomial test and chi-square. The findings revealed that some health care facilities still do not fully comply with the dictates of approved practices specifically in the areas of segregation, incineration method, use of water proof floor with good drainage, treatment modalities and that there was no absolute difference in the urban and rural settings in terms of medical waste management. It was concluded that the immense benefits of proper waste management should be fully utilized in compliance with the approved practices to avert the possibility of accidents and disease outbreak that could result in loss of life and property. It was recommended that health care facilities should improve practices at all the stages of waste management. Therefore, all health care facilities owe a duty to protect the public and the environment and should have peculiar responsibilities as regard the waste they produce in a sanitary manner to reduce infection and illness.

1. Introduction

Medical waste is an overwhelming public health problem that affects public health, social and economic well-being of the people. The management of medical waste has become a major challenge in most health care facilities all over the world especially in the developing countries and Nigeria in particular. The management of medical wastes is critically at suboptimal level reflecting especially in poor handling and ineffective disposal methods of medical wastes. These have a high propensity to expose human beings and the environment to potentially hazardous wastes. Medical waste constitute waste materials generated in health care facilities such as hospitals, clinics, health centres, blood banks, dental centres, veterinary clinics, research and laboratory facilities etc. (United States Environmental Protection Agency,2012). The contribution of medical wastes to environmental pollution and associated health risks due to their infectious nature and unpleasant sight and smell have generated increased public interest in both developed and developing nations of the world (Awodele, Adewoye and Oparah, 2016).

Generally, health care institutions and facilities are expected to take care of public health issues including medical wastes. These health facilities are considered unique environments that would provide health care to patients and ideal work environments for medical and other staff. Specifically, health care institutions apart from ensuring patient care, would also be expected to apply specific approaches to ensure clean and healthy environment for workers and the community at large. As a matter of fact, the Basel Convention Agreement reached by member states of the United Nations states that it is the responsibility of health care establishments to treat and dispose wastes generated in such a manner as to ensure that there would be no

adverse health or environmental risks (United Nations Environment Programme, 1999).

It has generally been observed that developed countries face challenges with the sheer volume of waste from the use of disposables on one hand, while on the other hand developing countries whose supplies are limited are dealing with the dilemma of sorting and disposing all types of medical wastes in sanitary manner (Globalisation), 2010. Health care activities all over the world are known to generate significant amounts of these hazardous medical wastes. It is believed that several hundreds of tons of medical wastes are deposited in open waste dumps and surrounding environments, often alongside non-hazardous solid wastes (Abah & Ohimain, (2010). Recent studies in Nigeria have estimated waste generation of between 0.562 to 0.670kg/bed/day and as high as 1.68kg/bed/day (Longe &William,2006; Olubunmi,2009).

The problem of medical waste is considered a huge one considering the fact that medical waste is the third largest source of waste in the United States of America and that in developing countries, the unsanitary disposal of medical waste has put millions of lives at risk. This is because dumping sites are often visited by scavengers for goods. In other words, these emerging countries face a myriad of health problems arising from the burning of waste as open dumping in unsanitary landfills and incinerators are still the main vehicles used to dispose medical wastes. It is paradoxical to note that health care activities that are expected to protect health, cure patients and save lives, are known to throw up wastes that pose obvious health risks either by way of direct infection or through exposure to chemical and radiation materials (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2011).

The problem associated with sanitary medical waste disposal in the developing world are also ascribed to poor funding and the lack of government regulatory laws which would serve as legal backing for proper waste management (United Nations Development Programme, 2014). The poor management of health care waste potentially exposes healthcare workers, waste handlers, patients and the community at large to infection, toxic effects, injuries and the risks associated with environmental pollution. The UNDP (2014) therefore advocated that it is essential for all medical waste materials to be segregated at the point of generation, appropriately treated and disposed off safely. The transmission of diseases and micro-organisms, defacing the aesthetics of the environment, environmental pollution, as well as contamination of soil and underground water tables by untreated medical waste are some of the negative health and environmental impacts of medical waste (Manyela and Lyasenga, 2010).

WHO, estimates that each year, there are about 8 to 16 million new cases of Hepatitis B virus (HBV), 2.3 to 4.7 million cases of Hepatitis C virus (HCV) and 80,000 to 160000 infectious cases of Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) mostly due to very poor waste management systems particularly those involving disposal of unsafe infectious materials (WHO,1999). It was also observed that in many health care facilities in the developing world, the waste is not segregated but burnt in harmful incinerators, even in the open. Unfortunately, these methods of waste disposal further pollute the environment and spread diseases as Nigeria is not paying enough attention to the problem of medical waste. In most developed countries, a holistic approach to health care waste management has been adopted as an integral part of the national health care systems. These include the establishment of regulatory framework, development of national plans and the development of innovative approaches. In many developing countries like Nigeria, many health concerns are competing for limited resources, therefore, the management of medical waste has not received the attention and priority it deserves. Medical wastes are still handled and disposed together with domestic wastes in the same collecting bins at road sides and disposed in similar fashion. This practice was observed in some hospitals in Lagos by Awodele et al (2016) where medical wastes are still mixed with municipal waste in their on-site storage facility. An initial visit to some health institutions in Benin city by the researcher also confirmed similar practices of mixing untreated medical wastes with municipal wastes in collecting bins and at dump sites and disposed of in residential waste landfills.

There may not be much difference in the way and manner medical wastes generated in various health care facilities are managed in Nigeria. Olubukola (2009) reported similarity in waste generated and health care waste management practices in two general hospitals as characterized by a lack of waste minimization or waste reduction strategies, poor waste segregation practices, lack of instructive posters on waste segregation and disposal of health care wastes with general wastes. A near total absence of institutional arrangement for health care waste in Nigeria has been reported by others (Coker, Sangodoyin and Ogunlowo,1998). WHO (2014) has always advocated that it is essential for all medical wastes materials to be segregated at the point of generation, appropriately treated and disposed off safely. It is crucial to note that as long as modern

medicine is constantly maintained and sustained to ensure quality of life and healthy well-being, the health sector is likely to generate by-products that would adversely affect people and the environment.

In Nigeria, the extent to which medical wastes are managed on the basis of government regulatory laws and policies, careful planning, sound organization, adequate financing and full participation by trained staff is not very clear. There is therefore, the urgent need to assess the medical waste management practices of health care facilities in Edo State as part of efforts to protect public health.

2. The Narrative of Medical Waste Management in Public and Private Health Care Institutions in Nigeria

Utilisation of health care is the use of health care services by the populace. The under- utilization of health care facilities in the public sector calls for critical concern in the developing countries, especially Nigeria. The continuous decrease in quality and inadequacy in health care services provided in public facilities has made the private sector an enviable and unavoidable choice for health care consumers in Nigeria. It is a difficult task to ascertain the exact size of the private health care sector in Nigeria since majority of the existing facilities are believed to be operating without appropriate licensure approved by the various State Ministries of Health (Ogunbekun and Orobaton,1999).

In recognition of this fact, various governments in Nigeria have made frantic efforts toward the provision of health care facilities to its teeming population. These efforts include improving public health care by expanding medical education and provision of primary health care centres in most rural areas (Awoyemi, 2011). Awoyemi (2011) further stated that overt concern has not been given to the need of equity in the planning and distribution of health care facilities over the years in the county. Public and private health care facilities are sparsely provided in many regions as regions with difficult terrain and physical environment are often neglected. This makes the distance between the rural dwellers and the health care facilities far apart, given the transportation problem experienced in these areas and its attendant costs.

This constitutes barriers to repeated visits that influences the utilization of health care services. Alpha Mead Facilities (2016) stipulated that approximately 60% of the country's health services are provided by the private sector and that the general state of the Nigeria health care infrastructure facilities still leaves much to be desired.

Alpha Mead Facilities (2016) further stated that so much benefits have been derived from the rapid growth of the private sector in Nigeria in that it has buffered inadequacies in the public sector provision of services at all levels of care. UNICEF (1996) asserted that only 40% of the population had access to modern health services as at 1985 but had increased to 65% by 1995. This is due partly to the expanded PHC programme and also as a result of the continued growth of the private sector. This sector is believed to have contributed to the doubling of immunistion coverage and half of all family planning acceptors also obtained their supplies from private outlets (UNICEF,1996). A lot of problems are also associated with the unplanned and uncontrolled expansion of the private market as there are inequalities in the distribution of health services as a result of the skewed distribution of private practices. Effective monitoring of private providers has also proved very difficult with increasing reports of malpractices.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used for the conduct of this study. This was considered appropriate because information about how medical waste is managed and its impact on human health and the environment were collected and described as they exist without manipulating their conditions.

3.2 Population of the Study

There are currently 1,383 (one thousand, three hundred and eighty-three) registered public and private health care facilities in Edo State (Edo State Ministry of Health, 2016). They are located in urban and rural areas of the three senatorial districts of Edo State. Specifically, there are 182, 59 and 35 health care facilities in Edo South, Edo North and Edo Central respectively (Appendix II).

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A multi-stage sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size for the study. It involved stratifying the health care facilities in the eighteen local government areas into three senatorial districts, viz Edo South, Edo Central and Edo North. The systematic random sampling technique was used to select 10% of the health care facilities within each senatorial district. This was done by arranging the health care facilities

alphabetically after which the first name and every other 10th names were selected in each Local Government Area making a total of 138 health care facilities as the target sample size. Purposive sampling technique was then used to select the officer in charge and the next ranking officer in each health care facilities to respond to the questionnaire. The purpose was to select officers who have adequate knowledge of the normative activities in the health care facilities and to help clarify where observations appear to be confounded. A total of 276 respondents were selected as sample size.

3.4 Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire developed by the researcher (Appendix VIII). The questionnaire consists of two sections (A and B). Section A elicited information about the bio-data of the respondents while section B consist of 29 items eliciting responses on medical waste management in health care facilities. The response set was patterned along Likert scale format response of Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Responses from the respondents were graduated into levels of utilization. From 90%-100% were categorized as high, 80%-89% was medium, and 79% downward was categorized as low. In the same vein, for specific levels of usage, 90% to 100% were categorized as excellent while 80% to 89% as good, 70 to 79% as average and 69% downwards was categorized as poor respectively.

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was content validated by the researcher's supervisor and other two experts in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education in the Faculty of Education, one from the Department of Nursing Services and the other from the Department of Waste Management, UBTH, Benin City, making a total of five validators. Their suggestions and corrections were effected and incorporated in the final draft of the instrument.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

The test-retest method of reliability was used in determining the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to 36 respondents across the eighteen local government areas that are not part of the study. After an interval of two weeks, the same instrument was administered to the same group of respondents. The scores obtained from the two administrations were correlated, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to establish the reliability of the instrument. A coefficient value of 0.68 was achieved which was deemed high enough for the study.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Letters of introduction were given to all the Directors/Administrators of the various selected health care facilities in Edo State. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of 5 trained research assistants who were briefed on how to be courteous and persuade the respondents to respond to the questionnaire. After completion, 276 questionnaire were retrieved.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The fully completed copies of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, and inferential statistics of t-test, binomial test and chi square. These were done using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

4. Findings

Findings revealed that despite the advantages inherent in the employment of proper medical waste management, some health care facilities in Edo State still do not fully comply with the dictates of best practices. Specifically, the findings revealed that:

- Some health care facilities still do not segregate their medical waste at the source of generation despite being a major medical waste management practice.
- Some health care facilities still employ incineration method which is now being discouraged in emerging countries in an attempt to reduce the volume of waste.
- The use of water proof floor with good drainage is low in some of the health care facilities.
- In some of the health care facilities, treatment modalities of medical waste are generally poor. It was however established that there should be regular and proper waste management practices in these health care facilities.
- There is no absolute difference between the waste management practices of the medical centres in the urban setting compared to those on the rural setting.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, it is the conclusion of the researcher that the immense gains accruable from proper waste management should be

fully utilized in compliance with the approved practices in the management of medical waste in the areas generation, collection, segregation, storage, transportation, treatment and disposal of waste thereby averting the possibility of accident and disease outbreak that could result in loss of life and property. Therefore, all health care facilities owe a duty to protect the public and the environment and should have essential responsibilities as regard the waste they produce in a sanitary manner, thereby reducing infection and illness. There should be awareness campaign for proper waste management.

6. Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- That health care facilities in Edo State should improve practices in their waste management.
- There should be efficient segregation of different categories of medical waste at the source of generation as it is the key to achieving a sound medical waste management in these health care facilities.
- Medical waste should be effectively stored in water proof floor with good drainage in these health care facilities.
- There should be strict compliance of treatment modalities of medical waste in these healthcare facilities especially disinfection of waste.
- Transportation of medical waste should be secured if the benefits of segregation are to be realized in these health care facilities.
- There should be enabling laws and strict enforcement of these laws.

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