

INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

A Book of Conference Proceedings of 2nd International Conference of the
Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

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Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

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We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to the Vice Chancellor and Management of Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria for the encouragement we have always received to conduct both the 1st International Conference on: “Identity, Social Inclusion and Sustainable Development in Nigeria” and this 2nd International Conference on: “Institutions, Governance and Social Change”. Also, our gratitude goes to our esteemed keynote speaker, the resident electoral commissioner (INEC, Taraba State, Nigeria); and our lead paper presenter, Prof. Victor Adetula (Department of Political Science, University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria). We appreciate all the Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, members of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University Wukari, plenary session Chairs and Rapporteurs, for their invaluable participation in the conference. Your commitment towards the conference was truly exemplary; and your involvement was very instrumental in ensuring the success of the conference.

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Most importantly, we recognize the significance of the contributions of all conference participants and the impacts your research would have in shaping public policies and development outcomes in Taraba State, Nigeria and the African continent in general. Always know that your contributions are deeply appreciated and will continue to be recognized and valued. We look forward to the opportunity of you participating again in our future conferences and other academic activities of the faculty.

P R E F A C E

Institutions are social constructions that define patterns or ways through which interactions occur in human society. It is widely acknowledged that institutions in human society shape incentives for national development, governance and adaptation to social change. It is institutions that enable citizens to overthrow kleptomaniac elites who selfishly control power; thereby creating a society where economic, political and social rights are broadly distributed and government becomes accountable and responsive to citizens. Characteristically, most African states tend to have exclusionary institutions that exploit majority of its citizens; preventing social change that incentivises investments in democracy and social development. As the body of knowledge that study human beings in their social contexts, disciplines of the social sciences are indispensable in producing evidence in improving understandings and modelling institutions that support good governance and transformative social change. Thus, this conference is conceived as a deliberate effort to provide clarity and answers to dominant questions such as: What is happening in Africa today? How do we devise inclusive institutions that promote ethical leadership and development? Are exclusionary institutions that characterized modern Africa rooted in the people's culture? How can Africa's institutions be structured to achieve good governance? Who are the beneficiaries of Africa's exclusionary institutions and bad governance? How independent and transparent are Africa's regulatory institutions? What relevant interpretations exist to explain social change in Africa? What role can the working class play in the emergence of inclusive institutions? These are some of the salient questions that this second international conference seeks to provide fresh global, continental and national perspectives that move away from arbitrariness to scientific previsions that direct interventions and policymaking. Hence, papers for the conference were received from academics, practitioners, development and policymakers who shared their research findings, best practices and innovative approaches.

These are well researched papers that challenge current and institutionalized attacks on good governance, critical thinking and social change as well as the need to qualify the relationship between the social sciences and the production of emancipation, development and freedom. These papers will be helpful to researchers, policy-makers, administrators, teachers, students, the business community and the general public. Papers here seek to mobilize the collective conscience of readers to reflect upon the current emptying of emancipatory possibilities that have been surviving from the prevalence of undemocratic rule in the shadow of neoliberal policies, transfiguring what liberation struggles set out to do into normative and intellectual politics in the African continent.

The Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University Wukari, Nigeria held its 2nd International Conference from Monday, 5th May to Tuesday, 6th May, 2025 on the theme: **"Institutions, Governance and Social Change in Africa"**.

During the opening plenary session on Monday 5th May, 2025, Dr. Jonathan S. Maiangwa, (the Special Adviser to the Governor of Taraba State on Political Strategies), delivered the keynote address on the topic: "State-Building, Institutions and Governance: The Nigerian Experience and the Way Forward"; and Professor Victor Adetula of the Department of Political Science, University of Jos, Plateau State Nigeria delivered the lead paper on the topic: "Building Institutions for Good Governance and Ethical Leadership in Africa".

In addition to the keynote and lead paper presentations, a total of 47 papers were presented (physically and virtually) at the conference by participants drawn across different parts of Nigeria.

The conference participants recognized that the conference was not just a gathering of scholars but a platform that can significantly impact the community of social science scholars and intellectuals engaged in studying society. Presentations culminate to show that good governance is the process by which entities exercise authority, manage resources, and uphold the rule of law in a manner that is transparent, accountable, participatory, and responsive to the populace's needs. That good governance plays a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to create a better and more sustainable future for all. It includes transparency, accountability, participation, inclusivity, and the rule of law.

The conference presentations showed abundance of evidence confirming disturbing trends of poor governance in most African countries, particularly in countries that have continued to experience “pushback” against democracy marked by several reversals, notably massive corruption, poor delivery of public goods, and incessant social and political conflicts. These disturbing trends have shown that a democratic form of government expected to breed fairness, justice, transparency, and accountability in many African regimes labelled democracies has failed to do so. Instead, “incomplete democratization,” a term used to describe the situation where the formal structures of democracy exist but are not fully functional or effective, has put in place incentives for corruption while lacking those elements of democracy that might enable new democracies to fight corruption.

Beyond the rhetoric of liberal democracy, the environment in many African countries is characterized by underdeveloped structures and institutions, which present extraordinarily high opportunities for corruption. However, the media and civil society, when functioning effectively, can act as powerful watchdogs, exposing corruption and holding leaders accountable. Unfortunately, in many African countries, these institutions are often as weak, if not more, as before under authoritarian regimes.

The conference papers acknowledged that Africa's development problem is a fundamental crisis of governance, even though Africans have always appreciated the importance of good governance. However, long authoritarian rule has distorted democratic social values and undermined democratic institutions. Regrettably, underdeveloped institutions of democratic accountability characterize the weak governance environment in Africa. This has slowed the development of a democratic culture characterized by transparency and accountability

The conference papers were presented in three plenary sessions which consisted of nine panels with the following titles: theoretical and conceptual issues on institutions, governance and social change; big data, insecurity, governance and public policies; liberty, justice, rural development and social change; financial institutions, economic cooperation and sustainable development; governance, public institutions, capacity building, media and digital transformations; culture, religious institutions, food security, child protection and social change; education, waste,

corruption and poor institutions; public health, poverty reduction, democracy and participatory governance; gender, labour relations and social change.

These presentations at the conference provided fresh global and national perspectives that move away from already held positions that have not yielded good dividends in institution-building, governance, sustainable development, political and social engineering in post-colonial Africa. Consequently, participants at the conference identified the following as crucial challenges that undermine institutions, governance and social change in Africa, and Nigeria in particular:

- 1) Judicial corruption, apathy, ignorance and cynicism are core factors in the Judiciary's failure to meet the citizens' expectations in most African countries.
- 2) Despite regulatory reforms aimed at enhancing financial stability, Nigeria still experience economic volatility, noticed in the instability of exchange rate, inflationary burdens, and trade imbalances in ways that Nigeria's financial regulatory framework is more effective in fostering long-run stability than delivering short-term solutions.
- 3) The economic cooperation goals of ECOWAS have been hampered by institutional challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, underdeveloped trade mechanisms, and inconsistent policies across member states.
- 4) There is a downturn in foreign direct investment (FDI) into Nigeria during the past years, coupled with a drop in oil prices on the global market, and this has slowed Nigeria's oil exports and adversely impacted economic growth in Nigeria. This decline in FDI influx into Nigeria particularly impacts on employment possibilities, consumption levels, investment levels, and employment growth
- 5) Despite Nigeria's formal democratic structures, the pervasive dominance of elite interests continues to undermine the essence of popular rule. Elections remain largely transactional, institutions are systematically weakened, and governance is orchestrated to serve a privileged few rather than the broader citizenry. This persistent elite capture has led to widespread political apathy, deepening inequality, and an erosion of public trust in state institutions, ultimately stunting national development.
- 6) Africa struggles with gender inequality, economic challenges, and religious intolerance; thus, the conversation between culture and religion is not just a backdrop but a vital force behind social tension in Africa.

In view of the above observations, participants at the conference proffered practical solutions which include:

- 1) In order to strengthen institutions and good governance in Africa, there is need to establish a robust framework for advancing good governance and ethical leadership, thus enhancing overall societal resilience and promoting citizen participation. The Judiciary, in principle, is generally regarded as the bastion of constitutional democracy. Against this backdrop, it is plausible to argue that the success or failure of Africa's new democracies largely depends on its judicial system. However, the risk factor is that the excesses of the Executive have been extended to the Judiciary in most African countries, as witnessed in the appointment of judges. Also, The Judiciary has come under frequent attack and

embarrassment by the executive arm of government, constantly intimidating the judges. The poor working conditions of judicial officers have made them more vulnerable. Also, there have been numerous instances of disciplinary actions against judicial officers. An independent and transparent judiciary is essential for upholding the rule of law, ensuring justice, maintaining public trust, and achieving good governance and ethical leadership in Africa.

- 2) While acknowledging the legacy of colonialism and subsequent struggles for independence, it is imperative that African nations chart a path toward governance that prioritizes the well-being of their citizens and fosters inclusive development. Key components of this framework should include accountability, transparency, and participatory decision-making, which are fundamental to establishing trust between governments and their citizens. Ethical leadership must be woven into the fabric of governance, ensuring that leaders prioritize the common good over personal or political gain.
- 3) There is need for collaboration across sectors—between governments, civil society, private sectors, and international partners— in addressing the African continent’s multifaceted challenges. This collaborative approach holds the potential to create innovative solutions to poverty, corruption, and environmental degradation, instilling a sense of hope and optimism for the future of African governance.
- 4) Ultimately, the future of governance and leadership in Africa must be characterized by a commitment to sustainable development. By embracing good governance and ethical leadership, African nations can unlock their full potential and pave the way for a prosperous future where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to their communities. This collective vision is an aspiration and a vital roadmap toward achieving a brighter, more equitable future for all Africans.
- 5) Given the sensibility of modern African governments to the issue of sovereignty, there is need for collaboration and partnership with umbrella intellectual communities such as the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) to work with transnational civil society to promote transparency and accountability in the affairs of national governments in Africa.
- 6) There is need for further research to identify and define African challenges more precisely. The urgency and importance of this task cannot be overstated. Therefore, efforts at promoting transparency, accountability and good governance in the new and transitional democracies should consider the importance of scientific research, which entails data and information gathering, analysis and re-analysis.
- 7) Educational institutions should be led by competent, visionary leaders who prioritize stakeholder engagement, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes.
- 8) Non-formal and informal education channels, such as radio and online learning platforms, should be supported to reach out-of-school children and adults in rural communities.
- 9) National Assemblies budget in Africa should be kept as low as 0.5 percent of the total budget and federal law makers should not be given constituency allowance; instead, all constituency allowances should be capture in capital expenditure budgets.

There is an urgent need for comprehensive institutional reform to enhance rural development outcomes in Africa. Such reform must address structural issues such as the autonomy and funding of local governments, anti-corruption enforcement, decentralization of service delivery, capacity building, especially in data management, planning, and community engagement.

Happy reading!

Prof. Johnson Uchechukwu Agbo
Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences
Federal University Wukari, Nigeria

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PART I:
INSTITUTIONS

FINANCIAL INNOVATION TRADEOFFS, REGULATORY OVERSIGHTS AND ECONOMIC STABILITY IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

Financial regulation plays a vital role in ensuring economic stability by enhancing the efficiency and resilience of the banking sector. This study examines the impact of financial regulation on economic stability in Nigeria using a Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model and a Vector Error Correction Model (VECM). Data for the study emerged from time-series data from 2000 to 2024. Findings reveal that economic stability, proxied by the net current account per GDP (NCAG), exhibits a strong degree of persistence, with its first lag showing a statistically significant positive effect. The liquidity liabilities per GDP (LLPG) demonstrate a significant negative impact on NCAG, indicating that excessive liquidity liabilities contribute to financial vulnerabilities. However, bank regulatory capital requirements (BRCR) and banking sector concentration (BSCN) show no significant short-term impact on NCAG. The VECM results further indicate that the error correction term is statistically significant with a negative coefficient (-0.744), which confirms that economic imbalances are corrected over time, with an adjustment speed of approximately 74.4% per year. The study concludes that VAR results reinforce long-run relationship, demonstrating that liquidity liabilities remain a key determinant of economic stability in Nigeria. Thus, there is need for resilient liquidity risk supervision and adaptive regulatory policies to mitigate systemic risks in Nigeria. Policymakers in Nigeria should therefore strengthen liquidity monitoring frameworks, reassess capital requirements and promote financial sector competition to enhance economic stability in the country.

Keywords: Financial regulation, Economic stability, capital, liability, banking sector

Introduction

The relationship between banking regulation and economic stability has been a central concern for policymakers and researchers, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria (CBN, 2023; IMF, 2023). Economic stability, characterized by low inflation, steady growth, and balanced trade accounts, is crucial

for fostering sustainable development. Given Nigeria's continuing financial crises, fluctuating exchange rates, and external shocks, understanding the role of banking regulation in stabilizing the economy is imperative. This study examines how liquidity liabilities per GDP (LLPG), bank regulatory

capital requirements (BRCR), and banking sector concentration (BSCN) influence Nigeria's economic stability, using net current account per GDP (NCAG) as a proxy for stability over the period 2000–2024.

Banking regulation plays a critical role in mitigating financial risks and ensuring economic resilience. For example, liquidity liabilities per GDP (LLPG) measure banks' ability to meet short-term obligations, as a crucial factor in preventing systemic failures (Borio et al., 2022). Similarly, bank regulatory capital requirements (BRCR) are a design to strengthen banking institutions, ensuring that they maintain adequate capital buffers and reducing the likelihood of insolvency (Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, 2019). Furthermore, the banking sector concentration (BSCN), which is regarded as the structure of Nigeria's banking sector, is known to affect market competitiveness and systemic risk exposure (Demirgüç-Kunt & Martínez Pería, 2021). It is however imperative to note, that even when a concentrated banking sector improves and promotes stronger institutions for stability, its excessiveness diminishes competitiveness, there by escalating the risk of financial shocks.

The Nigerian banking sector has undergone significant reforms since the early 2000s, including the **2005 banking consolidation** and **post-2009 financial crisis interventions**, which aimed to strengthen regulatory frameworks (CBN, 2021). Despite these measures, economic instability persists, as evidenced by recurring currency devaluations, inflationary pressures, and external account imbalances (World Bank, 2023). The 2023 banking liquidity crisis further highlighted vulnerabilities within Nigeria's financial system, raising concerns about the adequacy of current regulations.

It is therefore obvious that despite regulatory reforms aimed at enhancing

financial stability, Nigeria still endures economic volatility, noticed in the instability of exchange rate, inflationary burdens, and trade imbalances (CBN, 2023). Previous studies have largely focused on the impact of monetary policy on macroeconomic stability, with limited empirical evidence on how banking regulatory measures influence economic stability in Nigeria. Additionally, while global regulatory frameworks like Basel III provide guidelines, their applicability to Nigeria's unique economic structure remains underexplored. This study seeks to fill this gap by empirically analyzing how liquidity liabilities, capital requirements, and banking sector concentration affect Nigeria's economic stability.

Conceptual Clarifications

Economic Stability: Economic stability refers to the condition in which an economy experiences minimal fluctuations in growth, inflation, and employment while maintaining a sustainable balance of trade. According to Blanchard (2020), economic stability is essential for fostering long-term development, considering that it reduces not just uncertainty, but boosts investment. Mankiw (2019) emphasizes that when over a long time, some key macroeconomic variables (inflation and interest rates) remain predictable, stability is then achievable. Similarly, Dornbusch and Fischer (2021) argued that economic stability is characterized by the ability of a country to withstand external shocks without experiencing severe disruptions in its financial system. In the Nigerian context, economic stability remains a challenge due to recurrent exchange rate volatility and fiscal imbalances (CBN, 2023).

Liquidity Liabilities and Economic Stability: Liquidity liabilities per GDP (LLPG) serve as a measure of a banking system's capacity to meet short-term obligations. According to Diamond and Dybvig (1983), banks must

maintain adequate liquidity to prevent bank runs, and to ensure economic stability. Holmstrom and Tirole (2011) highlighted that; illiquidity in the banking sector is a major cause of financial crises, which consequently leads to economic instability. In the Nigeria situation, Mishkin (2022) remarked that liquidity constraints has severally amplified financial crisis, particularly in periods of recessions. Managing liquidity effectively is therefore critical for sustaining economic stability and preventing financial contagion.

Bank Regulatory Capital Requirements and Economic Stability: Bank regulatory capital requirements (BRCR) necessitate financial institutions maintaining appropriate capital in order to absorb losses. Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (2019) argues that systemic banking failures can be avoided when banks maintain strong capital as required of them. Berger, Herring, and Szegö (1995) further state when banks maintain adequate capital, it improves their chances of solvency and overall system stability. In the Nigerian banking sector, Adegbite (2021) found that reforms of the 2005 consolidation improved their resilience, but does not totally prevent their vulnerabilities.

Banking Sector Concentration and Economic Stability: Banking sector concentration (BSCN) mean the extent of control or market share a few large banks could have within a country's financial system. It indicates the dominance of banking industry by a minority big banks or their spread out among many smaller ones. Claessens and Laeven (2004) argue that when banks are concentrated financial competition may become less, which can consequently lead to inefficiencies and consumers paying more. Beck, Demirgüç-Kunt, and Levine (2006) suggest that when concentration becomes excessive, it paves way for systemic risk that leads to vulnerability crises for financial

systems. However, Allen and Gale (2000) posit that nevertheless, concentration can be allowed at certain level in enhancing stability, but only when stronger and well-regulated institutions are created.

Theoretical Framework

A strong theoretical foundation is essential for understanding the relationship between economic stability and banking regulation. This section presents three key theories relevant to the study: *the Financial Intermediation Theory, the Regulation Theory, and the Financial Fragility Hypothesis.*

Financial Intermediation Theory, developed by Gurley and Shaw (1960) and later expanded by Diamond and Dybvig (1983), explains how financial institutions facilitate economic stability by channeling funds from surplus units (savers) to deficit units (borrowers). Banks, as financial intermediaries, play a crucial role in ensuring efficient capital allocation, risk management, and liquidity provision. Mishkin (2022) argues that a well-regulated banking sector enhances financial intermediation, reducing economic volatility and fostering sustainable growth. In the Nigerian context, effective financial intermediation is necessary for stabilizing capital flows, improving credit accessibility, and mitigating the risks of liquidity crises.

Regulation Theory, rooted in the works of Stigler (1971) and further developed by Peltzman (1976), emphasizes the role of government intervention in ensuring market stability. According to this theory, banking regulations—such as capital requirements, liquidity rules, and market concentration policies—are essential for preventing financial instability and systemic crises. Barth, Caprio, and Levine (2006) argue that strong regulatory frameworks improve banking resilience by reducing excessive risk-taking. In Nigeria, where financial instability has been driven by

weak regulatory enforcement, robust banking regulations can serve as a stabilizing mechanism.

The **Financial Fragility Hypothesis**, proposed by Minsky (1977), suggests that financial systems inherently become unstable due to excessive risk-taking during periods of economic growth. According to this theory, banks expand credit excessively during economic booms, leading to financial bubbles that eventually collapse, triggering crises. Bernanke and Gertler (1989) extend this view by linking financial fragility to macroeconomic instability, emphasizing the need for proactive banking regulations. In Nigeria, recurrent financial crises—such as the 2009 banking sector crisis and the recent liquidity challenges—align with this hypothesis, demonstrating how weak regulatory oversight contributes to systemic instability.

This study adopts the **financial intermediation theory** as its underpinning framework. The justification for this choice lies in the critical role of banking institutions in promoting economic stability. In Nigeria, financial intermediation remains a primary mechanism through which capital is allocated, investments are financed, and economic activities are sustained (CBN, 2023). Weak financial intermediation due to regulatory lapses can lead to credit shortages, liquidity crises, and economic instability. By analyzing banking regulations in relation to economic stability, this study aligns with the core principles of financial intermediation, reinforcing the need for sound regulatory frameworks to enhance the efficiency and resilience of Nigeria's financial system.

Empirical Review

This section presents a summary of 15 recent empirical studies (from 2021 onward) that examine the relationship between banking regulation and economic stability, with a focus on Nigeria and comparable

emerging economies. **Alley, Hassan, Wali and Suleiman (2023)** evaluate the effectiveness of Nigeria's 2004 and 2009 banking sector reforms. Using regression analysis with regime shifts, the authors found that these reforms enhanced the prudential performance of the banking industry and contributed to financial system stability. Notably, capital-to-assets ratios improved, and non-performing loan ratios declined post-reform. **Alley and Adebayo (2022)** reviewed the Banking and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020 in Nigeria. The authors conclude that the new law clarifies banking regulations, strengthens compliance incentives, broadens regulatory coverage, and imposes stricter penalties for breaches, all of which are expected to enhance financial system stability. **Didigu et al. (2022)** in a study investigate the impact of monetary policy instruments on banking sector stability in Nigeria. The findings suggest that effective use of open market operations and appropriate liquidity ratios significantly contribute to banking stability by influencing liquidity levels and credit creation.

Kayode, et al. (2021) examined the effectiveness of foreign exchange market interventions in stabilizing Nigeria's exchange rate. The results indicate that strategic interventions by the Central Bank of Nigeria have a significant impact on exchange rate stability, which is crucial for overall economic stability. **Central Bank of Nigeria (2023) in an annual** report provided an analysis of the Nigerian banking sector's performance and its implications for economic stability. It highlights improvements in capital adequacy and reductions in non-performing loans, attributing these positive trends to recent regulatory measures. **World Bank (2023) in an update** highlighted Nigeria's financial resilience and the role of banking regulations. It emphasized that recent reforms have

enhanced the stability of the financial system, but efforts continuity still required to curb any emerging challenges.

International Monetary Fund (2023) in their report commended Nigeria's economic performance in relation to banking reforms. It finds that regulatory enhancements have positively influenced economic stability, but underscores the need for continuous caution and strategy for overcoming any emergent financial risks. **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (2023)** while focusing on the U.S., in their report's findings found to be relevant to Nigeria illustrated how capital requirements increase helps in bolstering bank effectiveness which can ultimately lead to lasting economic stability. **Borio, et al. (2022)** explored the connection between monetary policy frameworks and financial stability. Their result suggested that nation's central banks, Nigeria's inclusive, in their monetary policy approaches integrates financial stability considerations to enhance economic effectiveness. **Demirgüç-Kunt and Martínez Pería, (2021)** did a cross-country analysis by examining how banking market structures affect economic outcomes. Their findings indicated that a balanced approach to banking sector concentration can promote stability without compromising competition, and offered an insight that is relevant to the Nigeria's banking sector.

Beck, et al. (2021) investigated the effects of bank concentration and competition on financial crises. It concludes that while concentration can enhance stability, excessive concentration may increase systemic risk. They thus suggested the necessity for CBN to exercise utmost care in their oversight function. **Mishkin, (2022)** studied the Role of Liquidity Regulation in Preventing Financial Crises. The study explored the way forward in preventing financial crises exploiting liquidity regulations by the central banks. The study

underscores the need for adequate liquidity requirements, as an essential tool for sustaining banking sector stability. It was recommended that such principle of adequate liquidity is appropriate for Nigerian regulatory practices.

Allen and Gale, (2021) examined the relationship between financial fragility, liquidity, and economic stability. The study suggested that financial instability can be restricted through a healthy liquidity management, and proffered such policy recommendation for Nigeria's financial system. **Adegbite, (2021)** assessed the impact of capital adequacy reforms on Nigeria's financial stability. The study found that reforms did well to enhance capital cushioning, but without necessitating constant monitoring, sustaining financial resilience becomes an uphill task. **Olayemi and Adebayo (2023)** used Granger causality tests to identify a significant relationship between liquidity management policies and economic stability in Nigeria. The study underscores how critical policies on liquidity management can be, if sustaining financial stability is a goal. These empirical studies collectively highlight the critical role of banking regulations; particularly, in areas of capital adequacy, liquidity management, and market structure, in promoting economic stability. Each of the findings underscores the reliability of continuous regulatory reforms and oversight in adapting to evolving financial landscapes, especially in developing economies like Nigeria.

Methodology

This section outlines the data sources, variables, and research methods used to analyze the relationship between financial regulation and economic stability in Nigeria. It explains how the data was collected, processed, and the techniques employed to

ensure accurate and reliable results. This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between financial regulation and economic stability. Specifically, time-series research design, allowing for an in-depth analysis of trends, dependencies, and causal relationships over time is employed. Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model and Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) are utilized to capture both short-term and long-term dynamics between financial regulation variables and economic stability. Secondary data spanning from 2000 to 2024 obtained from reliable sources such as: The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and World Bank Database (Federal Reserve Economic Data – FRED). The dataset includes annual observations on economic stability, proxied by net current account per GDP (NCAG), and financial regulation indicators such as: Liquidity liabilities per GDP (LLPG), Bank regulatory capital requirements (BRCR) and Banking sector concentration (BSCN)

Model Specification

This study employs both the Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model and the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) to examine the relationship between financial regulation and economic stability. The VAR model is used to analyze the dynamic interactions among the selected variables over time. It is specified as follows:

In this model, $Y_t, Y_{t-1}, Y_{t-2}, \dots, Y_{t-p}$ denotes a vector of endogenous variables, which

$$Y_t = \alpha_1 Y_{t-1} + \alpha_2 Y_{t-2} + \dots + \alpha_p Y_{t-p} + \epsilon_t$$

includes Net Current Account to GDP (NCAG), Liquidity Liabilities to GDP (LLPG), Bank Regulatory Capital Requirements (BRCR), and Banking Sector Concentration (BSCN). The

terms $\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3, \dots, \alpha_p$ are the coefficients corresponding to the lagged values of the endogenous variables, while ϵ_t represents the vector of error terms.

The VECM model is employed when cointegration is detected among variables, ensuring that short-term deviations adjust toward long-run equilibrium. The error correction term is expected to be statistically significant and negative, indicating a corrective mechanism toward stability. The analysis in this study follows a systematic econometric approach, beginning with descriptive statistics to summarize key trends, means, and standard deviations of the variables. Stationarity of the data is then tested using the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) tests to check for unit roots. Lag selection for the VAR model is guided by the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Schwarz Bayesian Criterion (SBC). The Johansen cointegration test is employed to determine whether long-run relationships exist among the variables. Based on these results, the Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model is estimated to capture short-run dynamics, while the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) is used, to examine long-run adjustments. Finally, Impulse Response Functions (IRFs) are utilized to evaluate how shocks to financial regulation variables affect economic stability over time.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the model, several diagnostic tests are conducted. The Breusch-Godfrey LM test is used to detect any serial correlation in the residuals, while White's Test or the Breusch-Pagan Test checks for heteroscedasticity or variance instability. The Jarque-Bera Test assesses whether the residuals follow a normal distribution, and the CUSUM and CUSUMSQ tests are applied to confirm the stability of the VAR or VECM models over time. These diagnostics help validate the robustness and accuracy of the model's estimates.

The time-series approach is appropriate since financial regulation and economic stability dynamically interact in a given period. The VAR model is thus effective for examining the interconnectedness among financial indicators without imposing restrictive assumptions on causal direction. The VECM model further refines the analysis by correcting disequilibrium conditions, making it a robust method for analyzing financial-

economic relationships in Nigeria. This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected and the results obtained from applying various econometric techniques. It begins with descriptive statistics, stationarity tests, lag selection criteria, cointegration tests, model estimations using VAR and VECM frameworks and finally, impulse response functions. In all, the results of these various analysis are summarize accordingly

Table 4.1.1: Descriptive Statistics

	BRCR	BSCN	LLPG	NCAG
Mean	14.84280	49.69758	21.09199	9.195314
Median	15.35000	42.81000	23.01000	8.293915
Maximum	17.50000	86.33000	28.05000	26.53268
Minimum	12.00000	24.94000	11.97000	1.305674
Std. Dev.	1.68952	18.81430	5.498888	6.170431
Skewness	-0.16897	0.476552	-0.50417	1.206716
Kurtosis	1.62789	2.086022	1.63431	3.999053
Jarque-Bera	2.080107	1.816419	3.001932	7.107037
Probability	0.353436	0.403246	0.222915	0.058623
Sum	371.07	1242.44	527.2996	229.8828
Sum Sq. Dev.	68.5071	8495.473	725.7064	913.7814
Observations	25	25	25	25

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.1 provides a summary of the key descriptive statistics for the variables under study. The mean, median, and standard deviation values show moderate dispersion

across observations. The Jarque-Bera test results suggest that most variables approximate normal distribution, with slight deviations observed in NCAG.

Table 4.1.2: Stationarity Test

Method	Statistic	Prob.**
ADF - Fisher Chi-square	41.2016	0.0000
ADF - Choi Z-stat	-4.95611	0.0000

Series	Prob.	Lag	Max Lag	Obs
D(BRCR)	0.0439	0	4	23
D(BSCN)	0.0115	0	4	23
D(LLPG)	0.0024	0	4	23
D(NCAG)	0.001	1	4	22

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.2 presents the results of the panel unit root test conducted using the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Fisher and Choi Z-stat methods. Both tests reject the null hypothesis of a unit root at the 1% significance level,

indicating that all variables; BRCR, BSCN, LLPG, and NCAG, are stationary after first differencing, confirming that the series are integrated of order one, I(1).

Table 4.1.3: Lag Length Criteria

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-237.4217	NA	113700.7	22.99254	23.1915	23.03572
1	-181.8079	84.74489	2712.319	19.2198	20.21458	19.43569
2	-107.9881	98.65119*	6.5326*	7.52268*	9.31329*	7.91128*
3	-125.9239	16.81084	619.5026	16.94513	19.53157	17.50645
4	79.79752	78.37005	14.79311	12.31357	21.25869	13.08954

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.3 shows the lag length selection results using criteria such as LogL, LR, FPE, AIC, SC, and HQ. Based on the lowest AIC, SC, HQ,

and FPE values and the highest LR statistic, lag 2 becomes the optimal lag length for estimating the VAR model.

Table 4.1.4: VAR Estimation

Equation: NCAG = C(1)*NCAG(-1) + C(2)*NCAG(-2) + C(3)*LLPG(-1) + C(4)*LLPG(-2) + C(5)*BSCN(-1) + C(6)*BSCN(-2) + C(7)*BRCR(-1) + C(8)*BRCR(-2) + C(9)				
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
(1)	0.779356	0.153911	5.063682	0.0002
C(2)	-0.79596	0.15053	-5.28774	0.0001
C(3)	-0.77606	0.289406	-2.68156	0.0179
C(4)	-0.0817	0.251741	-0.32454	0.7503
C(5)	0.053423	0.056735	0.941613	0.3624
C(6)	-0.02649	0.060986	-0.43436	0.6706
C(7)	0.126497	0.777495	0.162699	0.8731
C(8)	-0.52821	0.568946	-0.92841	0.3689
C(9)	32.03097	9.450624	3.389297	0.0044
R-squared	0.920085	Mean dependent var		8.936698
Adj. R-squared	0.87442	S.D. dependent var		6.273894
F-statistic	20.14839	Durbin-Watson stat		2.377892
Prob(F-stat)	2.00E-06			

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.4 is the estimated equation models showing NCAG as a function of its own past values and the lagged values of LLPG, BSCN, and BRCR. The high R-squared (0.92) and

adjusted R-squared (0.87) indicate a strong fit, suggesting that the model explains a large portion of the variation in economic stability. The F-statistic is significant ($p < 0.01$),

confirming the joint significance of the explanatory variables. The Durbin-Watson

statistic (2.38) shows no serious autocorrelation in the residuals.

Table 4.1.5: Cointegration Test

Hypothesized No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Trace Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.901298	94.78357	47.85613	0.0000
At most 1 *	0.656381	41.52368	29.79707	0.0015
At most 2 *	0.391406	16.95455	15.49471	0.0299
At most 3 *	0.213805	5.532659	3.841466	0.0187

Trace test indicates 4 cointegrating eqn(s) at the 0.05 level

* denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level

**MacKinnon-Haug-Michelis (1999) p-values

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.5 is the Johansen Trace test, indicating presence of four cointegrating equations at the 5% significance level. This is confirming a long-run equilibrium relationship

among the variables. All hypotheses were rejected based on the MacKinnon-Haug-Michelis (1999) critical values.

Table 4.1.6: ECM Estimation

$D(NCAG) = C(1) * (NCAG(-1) - 9.48052341302 * LLPG(-1) + 2.56811317931$ $* BSCN(-1) + 33.2135133229 * BRCR(-1) - 423.275893995) + C(2)$ $* D(NCAG(-1)) + C(3) * D(NCAG(-2)) + C(4) * D(LLPG(-1)) + C(5) * D(LLPG(-2)) + C(6) * D(BSCN(-1)) + C(7) * D(BSCN(-2)) + C(8) * D(BRCR(-1)) + C(9) * D(BRCR(-2)) + C(10)$				
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C(1)	-0.74414	0.031817	-0.42745	0.0166
C(2)	0.63088	0.227369	2.774693	0.0168
C(3)	-0.70163	0.213596	-3.28485	0.0065
C(4)	-0.45522	0.34475	-1.32043	0.2113
C(5)	0.208996	0.399839	0.522701	0.6107
C(6)	0.092635	0.107958	0.858058	0.4077
C(7)	0.00079	0.11191	0.007061	0.9945
C(8)	1.173338	1.085506	1.080913	0.301
C(9)	-1.57179	1.076653	-1.45989	0.17
C(10)	-0.49329	0.873214	-0.56492	0.5825
R-squared		0.636382		

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.6 is the Error Correction Model showing a valid long-run relationship between economic stability (NCAG) and banking

regulation indicators (LLPG, BSCN, BRCR). The error correction term is negative and significant, indicating that about 74.4% of any

previous year's imbalance is corrected in the current year. This also confirms a strong adjustment toward long-run equilibrium. The

model explains about 64% of the variation in NCAG, and the overall model is moderately significant at the 10% level.

Table 4.1.7: Multicollinearity Test

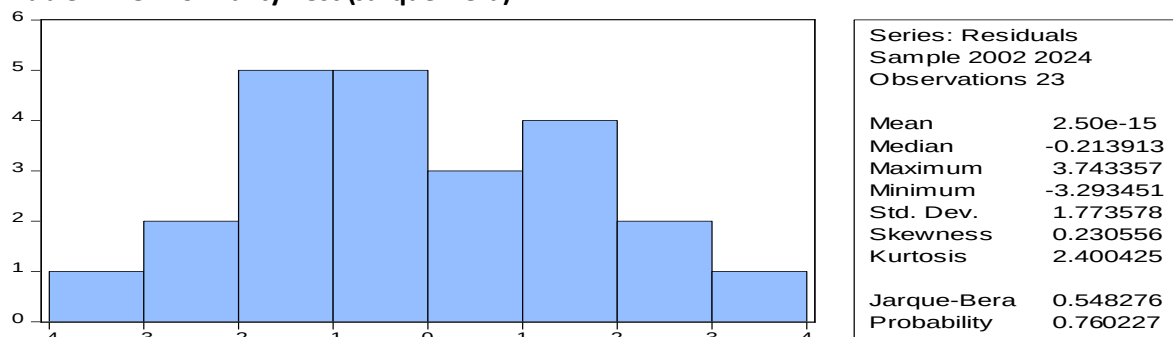
Variable	Coefficient Variance	Uncentered VIF	Centered VIF
C(1)	0.023689	13.1949	4.051917
C(2)	0.022659	13.58477	4.04571
C(3)	0.083756	184.8381	3.02571
C(4)	0.063374	133.8029	8.467832
C(5)	0.003219	42.56813	5.071603
C(6)	0.003719	46.80851	6.085575
C(7)	0.604499	613.9888	6.335646
C(8)	0.3237	332.2189	4.338308
C(9)	89.31429	415.5792	NA

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.7 shows the results of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test, for multicollinearity check among the explanatory variables. The centered VIF values are majorly below the critical threshold of 10, suggesting a generally low multicollinearity. However, C(4), C(5), C(6),

and C(7) exhibit a relatively higher VIFs, showing some moderate multicollinearity. Overall, its an indication that multicollinearity is not severe enough to distort the model's reliability.

Table 4.1.8: Normality Test (Jarque-Bera)



Source: E-views12 Computation

The histogram and Jarque-Bera test presented in Table 4.1.8 is to check the normality of the model residuals. With a Jarque-Bera statistic of 0.548276 and a corresponding probability of 0.780227 (well above the 0.05 threshold), the null hypothesis of normality cannot be

rejected. Additionally, the residuals exhibit near-zero skewness (0.230556) and moderate kurtosis (2.404425), further indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed. This supports the reliability of the regression model's estimates.

Table 4.1.9a & b: Serial Correlation LM and Heteroskedasticity Tests

Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:

F-statistic	3.484571	Prob. F(2,12)	0.0641
Obs*R-squared	8.450054	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.0746

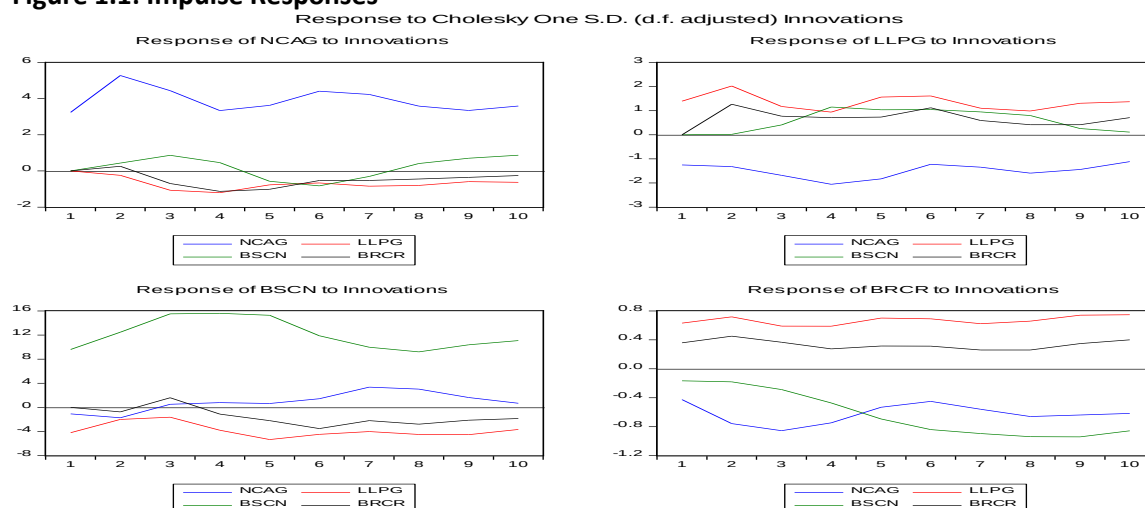
Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey

F-statistic	3.008005	Prob. F(8,14)	0.0844
Obs*R-squared	14.54057	Prob. Chi-Square(8)	0.0687
Scaled explained SS	3.772347	Prob. Chi-Square(8)	0.8771

Source: E-views12 Computation

Table 4.1.9 presents the results of the Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM test and the Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey Heteroskedasticity test. The serial correlation test shows that the p-values (0.0641 and 0.0746) are slightly above the 5% significance level, suggesting no strong evidence of autocorrelation in the residuals. Similarly, the heteroskedasticity test results indicate that the model does not suffer from significant variance instability, as the p-values (0.0844 and 0.0687) also exceed the 5% threshold.

Figure 1.1: Impulse Responses



Source: E-views12 Computation

The impulse response functions in Table 4.1.10 reveal important dynamic relationships between economic stability (NCAG) and key banking regulatory indicators (LLPG, BSCN, BRCR). Economic stability shows strong persistence to its own shocks, while responses to regulatory variables are modest in the short run. Liquidity liabilities (LLPG) decline in response to improved economic stability, suggesting a stabilizing effect. Banking sector concentration (BSCN) demonstrates strong self-response and mild sensitivity to liquidity

shifts. Bank regulatory capital requirement (BRCR) reacts negatively to sector concentration but positively to liquidity pressures. Overall, the analysis confirms that while immediate effects may be limited, regulatory variables exert significant influence on economic stability over time, reinforcing the importance of sound financial regulation in macroeconomic management.

Discussions of Results

Preliminary results from the VAR indicate significant lag effects, particularly for the

dependent variable NCAG, suggesting that past values of the current account balance strongly influence its present behavior. This persistence sets the stage for exploring both short-run and long-run causality through the more refined Error Correction Model (ECM). In the **Error Correction Model (ECM)**, both the short-run dynamics and the long-run equilibrium relationship are explicitly examined. The error correction term ($C(1)$) is negative (-0.7440) and statistically significant ($p = 0.0166$), confirming the existence of a long-run equilibrium relationship among NCAG, LLPG, BSCN, and BRCR. The speed of adjustment of 74.4% indicates that deviations from the long-run path are corrected relatively quickly within a year, underscoring a strong corrective mechanism in the Nigerian economy.

In the short run, the model shows that the first lag of NCAG is positively significant ($p = 0.0168$), indicating momentum in the current account, while the second lag is negatively significant ($p = 0.0065$), suggesting a correction or reversal behavior over time. However, the short-run coefficients of the banking regulatory variables (LLPG, BSCN, BRCR) are not statistically significant, implying that their effects on economic stability take longer to manifest. Overall, the ECM demonstrates a moderate explanatory power, with an R -squared of 0.636 and no major autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson = 2.55). Although the model is only marginally significant at the 10% level (F -statistic $p = 0.0863$), it still provides meaningful insights into how Nigeria's banking regulation interacts with macroeconomic stability.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: The first objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of Liquidity Liabilities per GDP (LLPG) on economic stability, specifically examining its role in enhancing financial resilience. The Johansen Cointegration Test results

provide evidence of a long-run equilibrium relationship between LLPG and Net Current Account to GDP (NCAG), suggesting that LLPG plays a meaningful role in the structural behavior of the economy over time. However, the VECM estimates show that both the first and second lagged differences of LLPG are statistically insignificant in the short run (p -values > 0.05), meaning that fluctuations in LLPG do not cause immediate changes in economic stability. This result implies that while LLPG may not have an instant or direct impact on macroeconomic indicators like the current account balance, it still contributes meaningfully to the economy's long-term equilibrium. High levels of liquidity liabilities often reflect the financial system's capacity to mobilize savings and meet payment obligations, which supports long-run financial resilience. Therefore, policymakers should focus on maintaining liquidity buffers and robust liability structures not necessarily for immediate effects, but for ensuring long-term economic stability.

Hypothesis 2: The second objective was to analyze the impact of Bank Regulatory Capital Requirements (BRCR) on economic stability, with an emphasis on their role in preventing financial crises. The cointegration result shows that BRCR is part of the long-run relationship among the variables, which indicates that over time, regulatory capital requirements are essential for maintaining economic stability. This reflects the critical role of regulatory buffers in absorbing financial shocks, enhancing depositor confidence, and preserving systemic stability. Despite this long-run importance, the VECM results show that the short-run coefficients of BRCR are not statistically

significant (p -values > 0.05). This implies that changes in capital requirements do not produce immediate or short-term changes in NCAG, which is reasonable given that regulatory adjustments typically take time to affect credit availability, investment behavior, and macroeconomic performance. In sum, while BRRCR may not yield instant economic responses, they are crucial for the gradual buildup of a stable financial system, especially in a developing economy like Nigeria where financial vulnerabilities and external shocks are common.

Hypothesis 3: The third objective was to investigate the influence of Banking Sector Concentration (BSCN) on economic stability, particularly focusing on systemic risks and market competitiveness. The Johansen Cointegration analysis confirms a significant long-term relationship between BSCN and economic stability, indicating that the structure and distribution of market power within the banking sector affect the economy's foundational balance. This could be through the efficiency of credit allocation, the risk profile of lending institutions, or the potential exposure to systemic failures. However, the VECM results indicate that both the first and second lagged differences of BSCN are statistically insignificant in the short run (p -values > 0.05), suggesting that changes in banking concentration do not have a quick or direct effect on current account performance. This reflects the nature of structural financial indicators, which tend to influence macroeconomic outcomes slowly, through cumulative changes in behavior, investment, and competition. In Nigeria's case, banking sector consolidation or expansion may not immediately impact external balances but

has strong implications for long-term economic efficiency and resilience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the Johansen Cointegration Test and Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) jointly highlight the critical role of banking regulation in promoting Nigeria's long-term economic stability. All three hypotheses confirm the existence of strong long-run cointegrating relationships between economic stability, proxied by the net current account to GDP (NCAG), and key banking regulatory indicators, such as liquidity liabilities per GDP (LLPG), banking sector concentration (BSCN), and bank regulatory capital requirements (BRRCR). The statistically significant and negative error correction term (-0.746 , $p = 0.0166$) indicates a high speed of adjustment, with about 74.4% of deviations from equilibrium corrected within one period. This is suggesting that the system is inherently stable and responsive to shocks. This reflects the effectiveness of regulatory reforms initiated by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), such as strengthened prudential standards, tighter liquidity oversight, and improved supervisory frameworks. However, in the short-run, limited influence from LLPG, BSCN, and BRRCR are observed, with only the lagged values of NCAG itself having a significant effect, showing that change in regulation takes time and consistent application to manifest in macroeconomic outcomes. These results, further supported by a moderate model fit ($R^2 = 0.636$) and no significant autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson = 2.55), suggest that Nigeria's financial regulatory framework is more effective in fostering long-run stability than delivering short-term solutions. Therefore, policymakers should focus on sustaining reforms that enhance liquidity management, ensure capital adequacy, and manage sector

concentration. While these tools may not yield immediate impacts, they are indispensable for achieving resilient and sustainable economic development. Complementary structural

reforms and sound macroeconomic management will be necessary to amplify these gains and secure Nigeria's broader financial and economic future.

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2

ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN WEST AFRICA AND NIGER'S INSTITUTIONAL EXIT FROM ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)



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Abstract

Economic cooperation remains a cornerstone for regional integration and development in West Africa, with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) serving as a pivotal platform for fostering economic, political and social collaboration among its member states. This paper explores the implications of Niger's institutional exit from ECOWAS, a move that marks a significant turning point in regional diplomacy and economic solidarity. The paper critically examines the historical foundations and objectives of ECOWAS, the role of economic cooperation in promoting intra-regional trade, and the strategic importance of Niger within the bloc. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the immediate and long-term economic and political consequences of Niger's withdrawal on both the country and the sub-region, considering trade disruptions, investment flows, security cooperation and diplomatic relations. The paper concludes by evaluating the broader impact of such exits on regional integration efforts and proposing pathways for strengthening ECOWAS to withstand future political and institutional shocks.

Keywords: ECOWAS, Niger, trade, regional integration, political stability

Introduction

Regional economic cooperation has long been viewed as a critical pathway for accelerating growth, ensuring political stability, and strengthening the global competitiveness of West African nations. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), founded in 1975 through the Treaty of Lagos, was envisioned as a means to promote economic integration, foster collective self-reliance, and encourage socio-political collaboration among its 15 member states. With core objectives such as the creation of a common market, the free movement of people and goods, and the harmonization of economic and monetary policies, ECOWAS has played a vital role in shaping the political economy of West Africa for nearly five decades.

In recent years, however, the organization has faced a series of internal crises that have tested its cohesion and relevance. Among the most significant of these is the institutional withdrawal of Niger, along with Mali and Burkina Faso, from ECOWAS in January 2024. These countries, all governed by military juntas, justified their exit by alleging that ECOWAS no longer serves the collective interest of its members but rather acts under the influence of foreign powers and neo-colonial structures. They criticized the organization's response to military takeovers, particularly its imposition of economic sanctions and threats of military intervention, viewing such measures as disproportionate and counterproductive to national sovereignty and security priorities (Vanguard, 2024).

Niger's exit, especially, is symbolically and strategically significant. As a landlocked

country with vital geopolitical importance—sharing borders with several ECOWAS states and serving as a key transit route for trade and migration—Niger has historically contributed to the economic and security architecture of the region. Its withdrawal, therefore, is not just a political maneuver but a decision with far-reaching implications for economic cooperation, trade logistics, and diplomatic relations across West Africa. The situation is further complicated by the emergence of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), a new regional bloc formed by Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso in 2023, aiming to promote alternative security and economic cooperation frameworks. The AES has not only rejected ECOWAS mechanisms but has also sought closer ties with non-Western powers, particularly Russia, in the wake of deteriorating relations with France and other traditional partners (AP News, 2024). This realignment suggests a major shift in the regional balance of power and questions the sustainability of ECOWAS's integration model, especially in the face of rising populism, insecurity, and dissatisfaction with democratic governance standards.

Economically, the withdrawal of Niger and its counterparts represents a setback for ECOWAS's goal of regional integration. Although the departing countries represent a smaller share of the bloc's GDP (collectively around 7%), they make up nearly 17% of its population and occupy a significant portion of its geographical area (Reuters, 2025). The disruption of trade routes, increased border controls, suspension of free movement agreements, and the uncertain legal status of existing trade deals are all likely consequences that could hinder intra-regional commerce and economic cooperation.

This paper seeks to explore the historical context, political dynamics, and economic ramifications of Niger's institutional exit from ECOWAS. It will assess the foundational goals of ECOWAS, the evolving nature of regional cooperation, and the specific factors that led to the exit. Furthermore, it will analyze the potential outcomes of this event, both for

Niger and for ECOWAS as a whole, considering broader regional integration efforts, diplomatic relations, and the prospects for peace and development in West Africa. Ultimately, the seminar aims to provide informed recommendations for how ECOWAS can reform and reposition itself to remain relevant and resilient in an era of shifting political landscapes and rising regional fragmentation.

Niger's Membership and Role in ECOWAS

Niger has been a key member of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** since its establishment in 1975. As a landlocked country in the Sahel region, Niger has relied on ECOWAS for economic integration, trade facilitation, and security cooperation (ECOWAS, 2021). The country shares strong political, economic, and cultural ties with other West African states, particularly Nigeria, which serves as its largest trading partner and a crucial supplier of goods, energy, and financial assistance (Adebayo, 2022).

Economically, Niger has benefited from ECOWAS' **Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS)**, which allows the free movement of goods and services across member states (Eze, 2020). Its agricultural sector, particularly livestock trade, depends on cross-border access to markets in Nigeria, Benin, and other ECOWAS nations (Ogundele, 2021). Niger has also participated in regional infrastructure projects such as the **West African Power Pool (WAPP)**, which aims to improve energy security and facilitate electricity trade across the region (Ajayi, 2023).

In addition to economic ties, Niger has played an active role in **regional security and peacekeeping operations**. As part of ECOWAS' efforts to combat terrorism and transnational crime, Niger has cooperated with Nigeria, Mali, Chad, and Burkina Faso in joint military operations against extremist groups such as **Boko Haram and ISIS in the Sahel** (Osaghae & Adekunle, 2023). The country has also contributed troops to **ECOMOG (ECOWAS Monitoring Group)** peacekeeping missions,

demonstrating its commitment to regional stability (Babatunde, 2023).

Despite these contributions, political instability in Niger has led to tensions with ECOWAS. The **July 26, 2023, military coup**, which overthrew President Mohamed Bazoum, marked a turning point in Niger's relationship with the regional bloc (Olufemi, 2023). ECOWAS, committed to upholding democratic governance, imposed **harsh economic sanctions**, closed borders, and even threatened military intervention to restore constitutional rule (World Bank, 2023). These punitive measures strained Niger's economy and fueled anti-ECOWAS sentiments among the ruling military junta.

Reasons Behind Niger's Decision to Exit ECOWAS

Niger's decision to **withdraw from ECOWAS** was driven by several key factors, primarily linked to political tensions, economic consequences of sanctions, and shifting regional alliances, these include:

Political Discontent and Sovereignty Concerns

The military junta, led by **General Abdourahamane Tchiani**, viewed ECOWAS' response to the coup as an infringement on Niger's sovereignty. The **threat of military intervention**, led by Nigeria under President Bola Tinubu, was perceived as an act of external aggression rather than regional diplomacy (Akinyemi, 2024). The junta rejected ECOWAS' demand for a swift return to civilian rule, arguing that the new government was necessary to address corruption, insecurity, and economic mismanagement (Babatunde, 2023).

Economic Sanctions and Trade Disruptions

Following the coup, ECOWAS imposed **severe economic sanctions**, including:

- **Border closures**, affecting trade routes with Nigeria, Benin, and other neighbors.
- **Electricity cut-off from Nigeria**, which supplies **70% of Niger's power** through the West African Power Pool (Ajayi, 2023).

- **Frozen assets and financial restrictions**, crippling Niger's banking sector and reducing access to regional financial markets (Olufemi, 2023).

These sanctions had devastating economic consequences, leading to inflation, fuel shortages, and disrupted supply chains. The junta blamed ECOWAS for worsening Niger's economic hardships, reinforcing its decision to exit the bloc in search of alternative economic partnerships (World Bank, 2023).

Strengthening Ties with Alternative Alliances

Rather than seeking reconciliation with ECOWAS, Niger aligned itself with **Mali and Burkina Faso**, two other Sahelian nations that also experienced military takeovers and faced ECOWAS sanctions. The three countries formed the **Alliance of Sahel States (AES)**, aiming to strengthen military and economic cooperation independently of ECOWAS (Osaghae & Adekunle, 2023). This shift reflects a broader realignment away from traditional regional institutions toward a more autonomous governance model.

Security Challenges and Anti-Western Sentiment

Niger has been battling terrorist insurgencies in the **Sahel region**, with jihadist groups destabilizing the country's borders. The junta accused ECOWAS of failing to provide adequate security support against terrorism, arguing that external partners such as **Russia's Wagner Group** and other non-Western allies could offer better security solutions (Adebayo, 2023). Additionally, growing anti-French and anti-Western sentiments led to the rejection of ECOWAS policies, as Niger sought to reduce its dependency on **former colonial powers** (Eze, 2023).

Niger's exit from ECOWAS signals a **significant geopolitical shift** with far-reaching consequences for regional cooperation, trade, and security. The country's economic and political disengagement from ECOWAS will have **direct implications for Nigeria**, particularly in trade relations, border security,

and diplomatic influence. As Niger pivots toward new alliances, the future of ECOWAS as a unified regional bloc faces considerable challenges.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established with the fundamental aim of fostering economic integration, regional solidarity, and collective development among its member nations. Over the years, the organization has made significant strides in promoting trade liberalization, regional infrastructure development, and political stability. However, the recent withdrawal of Niger from ECOWAS, alongside Mali and Burkina Faso, presents a serious challenge to the continuity, effectiveness, and credibility of the regional bloc.

Niger's institutional exit has raised urgent concerns about the fragility of regional cooperation mechanisms in the face of political instability and divergent national interests. This development has disrupted existing frameworks for economic collaboration, including free trade arrangements, customs unions, and cross-border infrastructure projects. It has also strained diplomatic relations among member states, particularly with Nigeria, which plays a leading role within ECOWAS and shares deep economic and security ties with Niger.

Furthermore, Niger's departure brings into sharp focus the growing dissatisfaction with ECOWAS's approach to governance crises, especially its handling of military coups in the Sahel region. The imposition of sanctions, threats of military intervention, and perceived alignment with Western powers have been criticized as heavy-handed and disconnected from the socio-political realities of member states. Such tensions have not only led to institutional exits but also created an environment of distrust that threatens future collaboration.

The problem is compounded by the emergence of alternative regional alliances like the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), which

challenge ECOWAS's centrality in West African affairs. This fragmentation risks undermining decades of progress made in regional integration, trade harmonization, and peacebuilding. Additionally, the exit of key member states like Niger raises questions about the sustainability of ECOWAS's current structure, decision-making processes, and capacity to accommodate political diversity while maintaining cohesion.

This study is significant as it contributes to the understanding of the evolving nature of regional cooperation and political dynamics within West Africa. The withdrawal of Niger from ECOWAS marks a critical juncture in the history of regional integration, and its implications deserve thorough academic and policy-oriented examination.

Firstly, the study provides insights into the challenges facing regional economic organizations in Africa, particularly when political instability intersects with economic cooperation. By analyzing the causes and consequences of Niger's institutional exit, the study enhances understanding of how political decisions can affect regional economic frameworks, trade systems, and integration agendas.

Secondly, the findings of this seminar will be valuable to policymakers and regional leaders as they seek to navigate the growing tensions within ECOWAS. It will offer practical recommendations on how to strengthen the institution's resilience, promote inclusivity, and build trust among member states to prevent further fragmentation.

Thirdly, the study is relevant to scholars and students in international relations, peace and conflict studies, and regional integration, providing a case study on the intersection of politics, economics, and regionalism in Africa. It adds to the body of literature on the role of supranational organizations in managing state behavior and promoting collective development.

Finally, the study is significant to the general public, particularly citizens within ECOWAS member states, as it raises

awareness about how national and regional decisions impact daily life through trade, migration, security, and diplomacy.

This study focuses on the impact of Niger's institutional exit from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on economic cooperation and regional integration in West Africa. It examines the historical background and objectives of ECOWAS, the political and economic context of Niger's withdrawal, and the consequences of this decision for intra-regional trade, diplomatic relations, and collective security.

The study covers:

- The role of ECOWAS in fostering economic cooperation among member states.
- The political developments that led to Niger's withdrawal alongside Mali and Burkina Faso.
- The economic and political implications of the exit on both Niger and the remaining ECOWAS member states.
- The emergence of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) and its potential to reshape regional alliances.
- Recommendations for reforming ECOWAS to enhance institutional resilience and prevent future disintegration.

The geographic focus of the study is primarily on West Africa, with particular emphasis on Niger, Nigeria, and other key ECOWAS member states affected by this development. The study relies heavily on secondary data such as news articles, policy reports, and academic publications. Limited access to official ECOWAS or Nigerien government documents may affect the depth of institutional analysis. Due to the recent nature of Niger's exit (January 2024), long-term consequences are still unfolding and may not be fully measurable at the time of writing. Although Mali and Burkina Faso also withdrew from ECOWAS, this study primarily centers on Niger as a case study. Broader implications involving the other countries are mentioned but not exhaustively analyzed. Given the political and security sensitivities involved in military-led governments and foreign

alliances, some perspectives—especially official statements—may reflect national bias and not objective realities.

Research Methodology

The study used ex-post facto research design and documentary method of data collection. The sources of data included journals, textbooks, newspapers, conference papers, and official documents from ECOWAS, the Nigerien government, and relevant international organizations. These sources provided valuable insights into the political and economic factors that led to Niger's exit from ECOWAS, including the 2023 coup d'état in Niger, the subsequent sanctions imposed by ECOWAS, and Niger's desire to exit the sub-regional body.

The study employed qualitative data and analyzed it using deductive-inductive logical reasoning and qualitative descriptive methods of content analysis. The research examined the motivations behind Niger's withdrawal from ECOWAS, the economic and diplomatic consequences of this move, and its implications for regional integration in West Africa. The four research questions guiding this study were evaluated descriptively and qualitatively, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Niger's exit on economic cooperation within the region.

Regional Integration and ECOWAS: A Historical Overview

The literature on regional cooperation and integration in West Africa is vast, with significant attention given to the role of ECOWAS in fostering political stability, economic growth, and regional peace. However, the issue of institutional exits, particularly Niger's withdrawal from ECOWAS, has not been extensively studied, making this review essential to contextualize the problem. This literature review focuses on the theoretical frameworks surrounding regional integration, the economic goals of ECOWAS, and the political context that has led to Niger's exit from the organization.

Regional integration in Africa has been a central goal since the decolonization era, with ECOWAS established in 1975 to promote economic cooperation, trade liberalization, and regional peace (Adeoye, 2020). ECOWAS has been at the forefront of this effort, acting as a critical instrument for regional diplomacy, conflict resolution, and socio-economic development. Its foundational aim was to reduce trade barriers and facilitate the free movement of people and goods within West Africa, making it a pillar of economic cooperation (Jibril & Sule, 2018). However, recent literature has highlighted the challenges ECOWAS faces in realizing its integration goals, especially in light of political instability and the rise of military coups in the Sahel region. Scholars like Fayemi & Ojo (2022) have argued that ECOWAS's failure to manage military interventions has raised questions about its ability to achieve its original objectives. The organization's sanctions on military juntas, like those in Mali and Burkina Faso, have led to criticisms of ECOWAS's undemocratic responses to governance crises (Fayemi & Ojo, 2022).

The Political Economy of Niger's Withdrawal

The political landscape in Niger has evolved significantly in the last decade, with a shift toward military rule following the 2023 coup. Scholars have linked the decision to withdraw from ECOWAS to growing discontent with the regional body's handling of military governments and its perceived alignment with Western interests. According to N'dour (2024), Niger's exit is rooted in a combination of political and economic dissatisfaction, where the government feels marginalized by ECOWAS's diplomatic stance and economic sanctions (N'dour, 2024). Additionally, Bakary (2023) suggests that the military government in Niger views ECOWAS's economic and political policies as unsympathetic to the region's developmental needs, particularly when compared to other African or international alliances (Bakary, 2023).

Economic Cooperation and Its Disruptions

The economic cooperation goals of ECOWAS have been hampered by institutional challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, underdeveloped trade mechanisms, and inconsistent policies across member states (Adebayo & Ogunleye, 2021). The free movement of goods and people remains a cornerstone of the ECOWAS agenda, but the recent exit of Niger—and the broader disintegration of regional unity—has disrupted these plans. According to Amadu & Kone (2023), the withdrawal of Niger from ECOWAS undermines the organization's regional economic framework, especially concerning trade agreements and border policies. Niger's exit, coupled with the political and economic ramifications of such a move, poses a serious threat to trade facilitation and the implementation of common market policies that ECOWAS has been striving to establish (Amadu & Kone, 2023).

Alternative Regional Alliances: The Case of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES)

The formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), comprising Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso, introduces a new dynamic in regional politics and economics. While the AES is still in its infancy, Bamba (2024) argues that the alliance offers an alternative model for cooperation, focusing on security and regional autonomy in the face of ECOWAS's perceived failure to address local concerns. The AES also seeks closer ties with countries like Russia, signaling a shift away from Western-led initiatives (Bamba, 2024). This shift challenges the foundational premise of ECOWAS, which has largely operated under the influence of European and American powers. Scholars like Niger & Toure (2024) believe that the AES's approach could have significant implications for future economic partnerships and security frameworks in West Africa, potentially leading to a fragmentation of regional unity (Niger & Toure, 2024).

The Future of ECOWAS: Challenges and Prospects

The literature also suggests that ECOWAS faces significant challenges in adapting to the changing political landscape in West Africa. As Akinyemi (2023) observes, ECOWAS must balance the interests of democratic governance with the political realities of military regimes, ensuring that regional integration remains a viable goal despite these tensions. Furthermore, Tella (2022) calls for deeper institutional reforms within ECOWAS to ensure that it can better address the needs of its diverse member states while maintaining a commitment to regional peace and economic cooperation (Akinyemi, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two key theoretical frameworks: Regional Integration Theory and Institutionalism, both of which provide useful perspectives for understanding the dynamics of Niger's exit from ECOWAS and the broader implications for regional cooperation in West Africa.

Regional Integration Theory

Regional Integration Theory, particularly Neo-functionalism and Intergovernmentalism, offers insights into the process and challenges of regional cooperation in West Africa. Neo-functionalism, as proposed by Ernst Haas (1958), argues that regional integration occurs when states pool their sovereignty in specific areas to achieve mutual benefits, especially economic ones. This theory suggests that economic cooperation, such as that promoted by ECOWAS, leads to spillover effects that encourage deeper integration. According to this framework, regional institutions like ECOWAS should ideally evolve from initial economic agreements to greater political and security cooperation, promoting long-term peace and prosperity.

However, intergovernmentalism, as discussed by Andrew Moravcsik (1998), counters this idea by emphasizing the role of state sovereignty and national interests in the

integration process. It argues that states enter regional agreements based on their strategic calculations, which are shaped by their internal preferences and power dynamics. The rise of military regimes in countries like Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso highlights this intergovernmental perspective, where state autonomy and political control have become central to the decision-making process. The decision by Niger to exit ECOWAS reflects a challenge to the supranational authority of the organization, reinforcing the idea that integration is contingent upon the interests and agreements of the member states.

In the context of Niger's exit, Regional Integration Theory helps explain how political and security concerns can disrupt economic cooperation. It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding why countries in West Africa may choose to withdraw from regional organizations if they believe their national sovereignty is threatened or if their political objectives are not aligned with the broader integration goals.

Institutionalism and Institutional Change

Institutionalism, particularly Sociological Institutionalism and Historical Institutionalism, is another key theoretical approach that informs this study. This perspective focuses on the role of institutions in shaping the behavior of states and actors within a particular setting. Institutions, in this case, ECOWAS, are seen as mechanisms that structure interactions and provide the rules of cooperation among member states.

Sociological Institutionalism, as articulated by Powell and DiMaggio (1991), suggests that institutions play a key role in shaping actors' identities, values, and behaviors. Institutions are not merely structures for cooperation but are also socialized environments that influence how member states interact. In the case of ECOWAS, the organization has been central in promoting a shared West African identity and values centered on democracy, economic cooperation, and collective security. Niger's exit challenges this shared identity and signals

a breakdown in the socialization process that ECOWAS has worked towards, especially regarding military coups and undemocratic governance.

Historical Institutionalism, as developed by Thelen (1999), emphasizes the importance of past decisions and institutional arrangements in shaping the future trajectory of organizations. Historical institutionalists argue that once institutions are established, they tend to follow a path of institutional inertia, meaning they are resistant to change and only adapt gradually. Niger's exit can be viewed as a disruption of this inertia, where long-standing practices of cooperation within ECOWAS are challenged by political shifts. The study of institutional change through this lens helps explain how crises, such as Niger's withdrawal, can lead to rethinking the role and effectiveness of regional organizations. In this study, Institutionalism provides the theoretical lens for analyzing how ECOWAS has evolved over time and why its institutional responses to political crises, such as Niger's withdrawal, might be seen as insufficient or inadequate by member states. It also allows for the exploration of how regional institutions can adapt or fail to adapt to changing political realities.

Geo-economics and Regional Security

A third theoretical approach that is relevant to this study is Geo-economics, which blends economic principles with geopolitical considerations. Geo-economics looks at how states use economic tools to achieve geopolitical objectives. In the case of Niger's withdrawal from ECOWAS, the geopolitical motives behind the move, such as aligning with Russia and distancing from Western influence, reflect the strategic calculations of the country's new military leadership.

In addition, the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) by Barry Buzan (1991) provides an understanding of how security dynamics in one country can impact its neighbors, particularly in a region like the Sahel. Niger's exit from ECOWAS can be viewed through the

RSCT lens as part of the broader regional security complex, where the instability in one country leads to security concerns in others. The political and security ramifications of Niger's exit extend beyond trade and diplomacy, influencing the security architecture of West Africa as a whole.

Political Economy of Regionalism

Finally, Political Economy of Regionalism theories focus on the interplay between economic cooperation and political power in regional settings. The work of Hettne & Söderbaum (2000) highlights how regionalism is not just about economic integration but also about power dynamics and hegemonic stability. Niger's exit could be viewed as an attempt to reassert national sovereignty and challenge the hegemonic influence of ECOWAS's larger members, such as Nigeria. The political economy perspective enables the exploration of the economic costs and benefits that Niger and other states experience as a result of regional cooperation or fragmentation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The decision by Niger to exit **ECOWAS** marks a significant shift in the dynamics of **economic cooperation** and **regional integration** in West Africa. This study has explored the political, economic, and institutional factors behind Niger's decision, contextualizing it within the broader frameworks of **regional integration theory** and **institutionalism**. Theories like **Neo-functionalism** and **Intergovernmentalism** highlight the tension between **regional cooperation** and **national sovereignty**, illustrating that Niger's exit is rooted in the belief that ECOWAS's objectives and actions no longer align with its national interests.

From an institutional perspective, **Sociological Institutionalism** and **Historical Institutionalism** reveal how ECOWAS's institutional practices, along with the organization's handling of political crises and military governance, have been perceived as

inadequate by some member states, contributing to a breakdown in trust and cooperation. Niger's withdrawal thus underscores the challenges of **institutional inertia** within ECOWAS, suggesting the need for reforms to adapt to the evolving political landscape in the region.

Moreover, **Geoeconomics** and **Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)** provide a valuable understanding of the **geopolitical motivations** behind Niger's exit, particularly in light of its pivot toward alternative alliances and security frameworks. Niger's decision reflects a broader regional trend where political instability and shifting alliances challenge the stability of economic and security frameworks within West Africa.

Ultimately, Niger's exit raises critical questions about the future of ECOWAS and its role in fostering economic cooperation across West Africa. The region's ability to maintain and strengthen integration efforts will depend on how ECOWAS addresses the concerns of its member states, particularly in relation to governance, sovereignty, and the changing global order. This study suggests that for ECOWAS to remain a central actor in West Africa, it must adapt its strategies to the new political realities, ensuring that its objectives align with the diverse interests of its members while addressing security and economic concerns in a manner that encourages cooperation rather than fragmentation.

In conclusion, Niger's institutional exit from ECOWAS is not just a political act but a challenge to the very principles of regional integration in West Africa. This event, while a setback for ECOWAS, presents an opportunity for the organization to rethink its approach to regional governance and economic cooperation, and to explore new pathways for regional solidarity that better reflect the complex political realities of the contemporary West African state.

Based on the analysis of Niger's exit from **ECOWAS** and its implications for regional economic cooperation, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen

ECOWAS and improve regional integration efforts in West Africa:

Reform ECOWAS's Institutional Framework

ECOWAS should undergo comprehensive institutional reforms to better respond to the evolving political landscape in West Africa, particularly in light of the increasing number of military coups. This includes updating mechanisms for **democratic transitions** and developing clearer guidelines on the engagement of military governments within the organization. ECOWAS should focus on enhancing its diplomatic strategies to address the concerns of states experiencing political upheaval. A more flexible, region-specific approach to conflict resolution and governance issues will help reduce tensions between the organization and its member states.

Strengthen Economic Cooperation through Inclusive Policies

ECOWAS must prioritize policies that promote **economic diversification** and sustainable development within its member states. By focusing on economic growth that benefits all members equally, ECOWAS can reduce the economic disparities that fuel discontent among member states and encourage stronger political and economic integration.

ECOWAS should invest in improving infrastructure and removing **trade barriers** to enhance regional trade. Increased focus on the **common market** and the free movement of goods and services would make the region more economically resilient and integrated, particularly in the face of external geopolitical pressures.

Promote Political Dialogue and Conflict Prevention

ECOWAS should develop a more robust **regional security framework** that can respond to security challenges and the rise of military juntas in a way that balances state sovereignty with collective security goals. This could include mechanisms for **preventative**

diplomacy, early conflict resolution, and peacebuilding initiatives that are more inclusive of all political actors in member states. Efforts should be made to ensure that **political transitions** in member states are **inclusive**, transparent, and democratic. ECOWAS can work to provide technical and diplomatic support to countries undergoing transitions, focusing on strengthening democratic institutions and promoting **good governance**.

Strengthen External Relations and Regional Alliances

In response to Niger's pivot toward alternative alliances, ECOWAS should expand its diplomatic and trade relationships with other regions and countries. This will help to reduce the influence of external actors who may seek to divide the region and challenge ECOWAS's goals. Forming strategic partnerships with global powers, while remaining neutral in the face of political and military influences, is essential for long-term stability.

ECOWAS should prioritize strengthening **regional solidarity** among its member states by focusing on common goals, such as **security**, **economic development**, and **social progress**. Building a sense of collective identity can encourage countries to prioritize the region's long-term goals over short-term national interests.

Foster Public and Civil Society Engagement

ECOWAS should engage the general public and **civil society** more actively in discussions around regional cooperation. Educating citizens about the benefits of ECOWAS membership and the organization's goals can foster greater public support and participation in regional initiatives. Given the increasing role of youth in shaping political outcomes, particularly in West Africa, ECOWAS should invest in **youth development programmes** that focus on leadership, civic education, and regional cooperation. Empowering young people to actively participate in regional governance will help secure a more stable and unified future for the region.

Addressing the Root Causes of Dissatisfaction

ECOWAS must play a proactive role in addressing governance issues within member states. By encouraging good governance, the organization can help mitigate the political instability that drives countries to withdraw from regional cooperation. A more transparent, accountable, and effective governance system would reduce the frustration that leads to actions like Niger's exit. ECOWAS must prioritize efforts to support the restoration of **civilian rule** in countries like Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. The organization should provide both diplomatic and practical support for peaceful transitions back to civilian-led governments, ensuring that military regimes do not permanently undermine the region's democratic aspirations.

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INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of government educational policies on youth employment opportunities in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study explores the extent to which vocational education influences job creation, the challenges of implementing educational policies, and strategies for improving the effectiveness of education in tackling youth unemployment. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 392 respondents through structured questionnaires, and the results were analyzed using statistical techniques, including mean and standard deviation. Findings reveal that while government educational policies aim to enhance youth employment, their effectiveness is hindered by inadequate funding, policy inconsistency, weak industry collaboration, and poor vocational training infrastructure. The study further highlights that vocational education plays a significant role in equipping youths with practical skills for employment; however, its implementation remains limited due to a lack of government commitment and insufficient resources. Additionally, policy instability and weak linkages between education and the labor market have contributed to rising unemployment among graduates. Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthening of vocational and entrepreneurship education, enhancing policy implementation, fostering public-private partnerships, and integrating digital skills into educational curricula. These measures will bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that youths acquire market-relevant skills to reduce unemployment in Taraba State.

Keywords: Education, youth unemployment, vocational training, labor market integration

Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping the economic and social development of any nation. It serves as a key driver of human capital development, equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies required for participation in the labor market (Agbedahin, 2019). In developing countries like Nigeria, education is often regarded as a means of reducing poverty, fostering economic growth, and improving overall social well-being (Ayoo, 2022). However, despite various educational policies and programs implemented by the Nigerian government, the problem of youth unemployment remains a pressing challenge, particularly in states like Taraba, where

economic opportunities are limited (Isa & Inuwa 2024).

Youth unemployment in Nigeria has been a persistent socio-economic problem, with statistics indicating that a significant proportion of graduates remain jobless despite having formal education (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020). One of the major factors contributing to this challenge is the gap between educational curricula and labor market demands. Many young graduates possess theoretical knowledge but lack the practical skills required for employment (Teichler, 2019). In response to this issue, the Nigerian government has introduced various educational policies, such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, the National Policy on Education (NPE), and vocational and

technical education initiatives, all aimed at equipping students with employable skills (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). Despite these efforts, youth unemployment rates continue to rise, suggesting a possible mismatch between policy implementation and labor market realities (Ayoo, 2022).

Taraba State, like many other states in Nigeria, faces unique educational and economic challenges that impact youth employability. The state's economy is largely agrarian, with limited industrialization and formal employment opportunities (World Bank, 2019). As a result, many young people struggle to transition from school to work, leading to frustration, social unrest, and increased involvement in criminal activities (Shimfe & Wajim, 2020). Furthermore, inadequate funding, poor policy implementation, and lack of vocational training centers exacerbate the situation, making it difficult for educational reforms to yield the desired impact (Onah, 2015).

Theoretical perspectives, such as **Human Capital Theory**, emphasize that investments in education should lead to improved economic outcomes by enhancing skills and productivity (Becker, 1964). However, when educational systems fail to align with labor market needs, graduates become unemployable, leading to high unemployment rates (Todaro & Smith, 2015). This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of Nigeria's educational policies in addressing youth unemployment, particularly in Taraba State.

Given these challenges, this study seeks to examine the influence of educational policies on youth unemployment in Taraba State, analyzing how government interventions in education impact job opportunities for young people. By identifying gaps in policy implementation and labor market demands, the research aims to provide recommendations for improving educational strategies to enhance youth employability in Taraba State.

Educational Policies in Developing Countries

Educational policies refer to the principles, laws, and guidelines formulated by governments and educational authorities to shape the structure, content, and administration of education systems. These policies are designed to ensure that education meets the socio-economic and developmental needs of a nation (Okebukola, 2015). In many countries, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria, educational policies are expected to serve as a tool for human capital development, economic growth, and employment generation (Odukoya, 2009).

Nigeria's educational policies have evolved over the years, with several reforms aimed at improving access to education, enhancing the quality of learning, and aligning educational curricula with labor market demands (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). One of the most significant policies is the National Policy on Education (NPE), which emphasizes functional education through the promotion of vocational and technical training to equip students with practical skills for employment (NERDC, 2014). Additionally, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004 was implemented to provide free and compulsory primary and junior secondary education as a means of reducing illiteracy and improving employment prospects among Nigerian youths (UNESCO, 2018).

Despite these policies, the challenge of youth unemployment persists, raising concerns about the effectiveness of educational reforms in bridging the gap between education and the labor market (Adebayo, 2013). Scholars argue that while educational policies emphasize theoretical knowledge, they often fail to incorporate practical and entrepreneurial training that aligns with industry demands (Babalola, 2017). This mismatch contributes to the high number of graduates who are unable to secure employment due to a lack of relevant skills (Oladokun, 2020).

In Taraba State, the implementation of national educational policies has faced several

obstacles, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and limited vocational training centers (World Bank, 2019). As a result, many young people remain unemployed despite having formal education. This highlights the need for a critical examination of existing educational policies to determine their impact on youth employment and to identify areas requiring reform.

Concept of Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is a global socio-economic challenge that refers to the inability of young people within the working-age population to secure gainful employment despite their willingness and ability to work (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021). It is a critical issue in developing countries, particularly in Africa, where rapid population growth, economic instability, and skills mismatches contribute to high unemployment rates among graduates (World Bank, 2020).

In Nigeria, youth unemployment has reached alarming levels, with statistics indicating that over 33.3% of youths aged 15-34 years were unemployed as of 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2021). The causes of youth unemployment are multifaceted, including poor educational quality, lack of vocational training, inadequate job opportunities, and economic instability (Emeh, 2012). Many Nigerian graduates enter the labor market with theoretical knowledge but lack the technical and entrepreneurial skills required for employment or self-employment (Oye, Ibrahim, & Ahmad, 2011). This skills gap is further exacerbated by outdated curricula that do not reflect current labor market demands (Okafor, 2011).

The situation in Taraba State reflects these national trends, as many young people struggle to find employment despite completing their education. The state's economy is predominantly agrarian, with limited industrial and formal sector job opportunities (Adejumobi & Ojikutu, 2013). Furthermore, weak policy implementation,

corruption, and poor infrastructure have contributed to a lack of viable employment opportunities for young graduates (Onah, 2015). As a result, many unemployed youths resort to informal sector jobs, migration, or, in some cases, criminal activities as a means of survival (Adebayo, 2013). The high rate of youth unemployment in Taraba State highlights the need for policy interventions that focus on aligning education with the labor market, promoting skill acquisition, and fostering entrepreneurship among young people. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the extent to which educational policies in Taraba State influence youth unemployment and how reforms can be implemented to enhance youth employability.

Impact of Government Educational Policies on Youth Employment Opportunities in Taraba State

Government educational policies play a crucial role in shaping youth employment opportunities by influencing curriculum design, skill acquisition, and labor market integration (Odukoya, 2019). In Nigeria, educational policies such as the National Policy on Education (NPE) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act aim to equip young people with the necessary skills for economic productivity and self-reliance (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). However, despite these policies, youth unemployment remains a significant issue, particularly in states like Taraba, where economic diversification and industrialization are limited (Adebayo, 2020).

In Taraba State, government educational policies have focused on expanding access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education, yet the mismatch between graduates' skills and labor market demands has resulted in high unemployment rates (NBS, 2021). Studies suggest that while policies emphasize academic excellence, they often neglect vocational and technical education, which is essential for job creation and entrepreneurship (Okafor, 2018). Moreover, inadequate policy implementation, coupled

with poor funding and infrastructural deficits, has hindered the effectiveness of these policies in reducing youth unemployment (World Bank, 2019).

Furthermore, the absence of strong industry-academic linkages has contributed to the employment crisis in the state. Employers often complain about the lack of practical skills among graduates, pointing to weaknesses in policy formulation and implementation (Oladokun, 2021). Therefore, for government educational policies to effectively address youth unemployment in Taraba State, there is a need for reforms that prioritize skill acquisition, entrepreneurial education, and industry partnerships.

Role of Vocational Training in Youth Employment

Vocational training is widely recognized as a critical tool for reducing youth unemployment by equipping young people with marketable skills and enhancing their employability (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021). Unlike conventional academic education, vocational training emphasizes practical knowledge, technical skills, and entrepreneurship, enabling youths to secure jobs or start their own businesses (UNESCO, 2019).

In Nigeria, vocational education is integrated into government policies such as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Program, which aims to provide skill-based training to youths (Federal Ministry of Education, 2018). However, the implementation of vocational training programs in Taraba State has been limited due to factors such as poor funding, lack of modern training facilities, and inadequate collaboration between educational institutions and industries (Onah, 2020). Many vocational centers in the state lack the necessary infrastructure and experienced instructors, making it difficult for youths to acquire relevant skills (Adejumobi & Ojikutu, 2017).

Despite these challenges, vocational training has shown significant potential in improving youth employment in Taraba State. Studies indicate that graduates of vocational programs are more likely to secure employment compared to those with only academic qualifications (Babalola, 2019). Furthermore, vocational education fosters entrepreneurship, reducing dependence on formal employment and creating job opportunities within local communities (Oye, Ibrahim, & Ahmad, 2018). Strengthening vocational training institutions and aligning their curricula with labor market needs can significantly enhance youth employability in Taraba State.

Challenges of Implementing Educational Policies in Reducing Youth Unemployment

Despite the existence of several educational policies aimed at addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria, various challenges hinder their successful implementation. One major issue is inadequate funding, as many educational institutions and vocational training centers lack the necessary resources to provide quality education and skill-based training (World Bank, 2019). In Taraba State, limited budgetary allocations to the education sector have resulted in poor infrastructure, inadequate learning materials, and underqualified teachers, all of which negatively impact the effectiveness of educational policies (Odukoya, 2019).

Another significant challenge is the disconnect between education and the labor market. Many graduates in Nigeria, including those from Taraba State, struggle to find employment because their skills do not match industry demands (NBS, 2021). This is partly due to outdated curricula that emphasize theoretical knowledge rather than practical, job-ready skills (Okafor, 2018). Furthermore, policy inconsistency and poor implementation strategies have weakened the impact of educational reforms. Changes in government administration often result in shifts in policy direction, leading to incomplete or abandoned

initiatives (Adebayo, 2020). Additionally, corruption and mismanagement of educational funds further undermine policy effectiveness, as resources meant for educational development are often diverted (Oladokun, 2021). Another critical barrier is limited access to vocational and technical education. While government policies recognize the importance of vocational training, the number of vocational centers remains insufficient, and many lack modern equipment and skilled trainers (Onah, 2020). The stigma associated with vocational education also discourages many youths from enrolling in technical training programs, as university degrees are often perceived as more prestigious (Babalola, 2019).

To overcome these challenges, there is a need for increased investment in education, stronger public-private partnerships, and reforms that align educational curricula with labor market needs. Enhancing the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation can also ensure that educational policies achieve their intended goals of reducing youth unemployment in Taraba State.

Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness of Education in Tackling Youth Unemployment

To enhance the role of education in reducing youth unemployment in Taraba State, several strategic measures can be adopted. First, aligning educational curricula with labor market demands is crucial. By integrating practical skills training, entrepreneurship education, and digital literacy into school programs, graduates can become more employable and self-sufficient (Oye, Ibrahim, & Ahmad, 2018).

Second, expanding vocational and technical education can significantly improve youth employment outcomes. The government should invest in modernizing vocational training centers, equipping them with up-to-date technology, and hiring qualified instructors (World Bank, 2019). Additionally, promoting vocational education as a viable career path through awareness

campaigns can help reduce the stigma associated with technical skills training (Babalola, 2019).

Third, enhancing public-private partnerships can improve job opportunities for young people. Collaboration between the government, private sector, and educational institutions can lead to the development of internship programs, job placements, and entrepreneurship support initiatives (Oladokun, 2021). Industries should also be encouraged to participate in curriculum development to ensure that graduates acquire relevant skills (Federal Ministry of Education, 2018).

Furthermore, strengthening policy implementation and monitoring is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of educational reforms. Establishing independent bodies to oversee policy execution and allocate resources transparently can help address corruption and inefficiencies (Adebayo, 2020). Additionally, providing incentives for youth entrepreneurship, such as grants, mentorship programs, and business incubation centers, can help reduce dependency on formal employment (Onah, 2020).

Lastly, increasing government funding for education is essential. Adequate financial support can improve infrastructure, enhance teacher training, and expand access to quality education and vocational training programs (Okafor, 2018). By adopting these strategies, the educational sector in Taraba State can play a more effective role in reducing youth unemployment and promoting sustainable economic development.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies have extensively examined the relationship between government educational policies and youth employment. Various researchers have analyzed the effectiveness of vocational training, policy implementation challenges, and strategies for reducing youth unemployment through education. Oladokun (2021) conducted a study on the impact of

educational policy reforms on youth unemployment in Nigeria, using survey data from three states, including Taraba. The findings revealed that while Nigeria's National Policy on Education aims to equip students with skills for self-reliance, poor funding and implementation gaps hinder its effectiveness. The study emphasized that vocational education programs remain underdeveloped, leading to a weak transition from school to employment. The author recommended increased private sector involvement to bridge the gap between education and job opportunities.

Similarly, Onah (2020) assessed the challenges of implementing vocational education policies in Nigeria, using a qualitative approach to analyze government reports and educational frameworks. The study found that vocational training institutions in states like Taraba suffer from inadequate infrastructure, outdated curricula, and limited industry partnerships. Onah concluded that improving the quality of technical education through public-private collaboration would enhance employment prospects for young people.

Adebayo (2020) examined the role of education in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria, employing a mixed-method approach that combined survey responses from 500 unemployed graduates with secondary data from labor force statistics. The study discovered a significant mismatch between university curricula and labor market demands. It highlighted that Nigerian graduates, including those from Taraba State, lack practical skills required for available job opportunities. Adebayo suggested reforming the education system to integrate more skill-based and entrepreneurship training.

In another study, Babalola (2019) explored the effectiveness of vocational training in fostering youth employment in Nigeria, focusing on government-run vocational centers. The research utilized a longitudinal study to track the employment outcomes of vocational graduates over five years. Findings

indicated that 65% of those who completed vocational training secured employment or started their own businesses within two years, compared to 35% of university graduates. The study emphasized the importance of expanding vocational education to improve youth employability.

Furthermore, Odukoya (2019) investigated the influence of government educational policies on job creation, using a comparative analysis of states with strong and weak policy implementation. The study found that states with well-funded and efficiently managed educational policies, such as Lagos and Kaduna, had lower youth unemployment rates compared to states with weak policy enforcement, including Taraba. The author stressed that policy implementation, rather than policy formulation, determines the success of educational initiatives in addressing youth unemployment.

These empirical studies collectively highlight that while educational policies and vocational training are crucial in tackling youth unemployment, challenges such as poor funding, curriculum gaps, and weak policy execution hinder their effectiveness. Addressing these issues through policy reforms, public-private partnerships, and skill-based education will significantly enhance employment opportunities for youths in Taraba State and Nigeria at large.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory and Structural Unemployment Theory, both of which provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between government educational policies and youth employment in Taraba State. The Human Capital Theory, developed by Becker (1964) and Schultz (1961), posits that investment in education and skill acquisition enhances individuals' productivity, leading to better employment opportunities and economic growth. The theory assumes that education equips individuals with knowledge and competencies that increase their labor market

value. It also suggests that countries that invest in human capital through quality education and vocational training experience lower unemployment rates. Applying this theory to the study, government educational policies in Taraba State should be designed to equip youths with employable skills to enhance their productivity and job prospects. The lack of alignment between educational curricula and labor market needs can be seen as a failure to develop human capital, thereby contributing to youth unemployment.

The Structural Unemployment Theory, attributed to Keynesian economists and later expanded by Doeringer and Piore (1971), argues that unemployment arises due to a mismatch between workers' skills and the demands of the labor market. The theory assumes that rapid economic and technological changes can make certain skills obsolete, leading to persistent unemployment despite available job vacancies. This theory is relevant to the study as it explains the challenges of implementing educational policies that fail to address the realities of the job market in Taraba State. Many youths graduate with theoretical knowledge but lack practical skills required by industries, thereby exacerbating unemployment. The application of this theory suggests that vocational and technical education must be prioritized in government policies to address skill mismatches and enhance youth employment opportunities.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the impact of government educational policies on youth employment opportunities in Taraba State. A descriptive survey was suitable as it allowed for the collection of data from a large population, enabling a comprehensive analysis of trends, challenges, and perceptions regarding educational policies and their role in reducing youth unemployment. This design also facilitated both qualitative and quantitative data collection, providing a more

holistic understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014).

The study population consisted of youths, educators, government officials, and vocational training center administrators in Taraba State. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2021), the estimated youth population (ages 18–35) in Taraba State was approximately 1.2 million. The study also targeted government policymakers from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth Development, as well as vocational training center administrators and secondary school educators, who were responsible for policy implementation and skills development in the state.

A sample size of 400 respondents was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, Taraba State was divided into three senatorial districts (Northern, Central, and Southern), and three local government areas (LGAs) were selected from each district using stratified sampling. In the second stage, respondents were drawn from youths (both employed and unemployed), educators, vocational trainers, and government officials using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The choice of 400 respondents aligned with Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, ensuring the sample was representative of the population.

Primary data were collected through structured and semi-structured questionnaires. The structured questionnaire contained closed-ended questions to gather quantitative data on respondents' perceptions of educational policies and youth employment. The semi-structured questionnaire included open-ended questions to allow respondents to elaborate on challenges and provide recommendations. The questionnaires were administered physically and electronically (Google Forms) to ensure broad participation.

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies,

percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' views. Inferential statistics, particularly chi-square tests and regression analysis, were employed to examine the relationship between

educational policies and youth employment. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis to ensure accuracy and efficiency.

Results and Discussions

Table 21: Influence of Educational Policies on Youth Employment

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Government educational policies have reduced youth unemployment.	78	110	67	85	52	3.25	1.28	Moderate Agreement
The education curriculum aligns with labor market demands.	65	98	82	87	60	3.10	1.29	Mixed Opinion
Policies provide adequate funding for skills acquisition programs.	71	103	75	83	60	3.15	1.27	Moderate Agreement
Government policies have improved access to quality education for job readiness.	89	115	69	75	44	3.38	1.26	Moderate Agreement
Education policies effectively support entrepreneurship among youths.	72	107	80	82	51	3.20	1.30	Mixed Opinion

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 above revealed that government educational policies moderately influence youth employment in Taraba State. The mean scores range between 3.10 and 3.38, suggesting that while policies have had some positive impact, they are not entirely effective in addressing youth unemployment. A notable area of concern is the alignment between education curricula and labor market demands, which had one of the lowest mean values (3.10) with a relatively high standard deviation (1.29), signifying diverse opinions among respondents. Similarly, policy support for entrepreneurship recorded a mean of 3.20, reflecting a mixed level of agreement. The moderate standard deviations (1.26–1.30) across the statements suggest variability in respondents' experiences and perceptions, possibly due to differing access to government programs and educational initiatives across the state.

Table 2: Role of Vocational Training in Youth Employment

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Vocational training centers are well-funded and effective.	61	95	80	88	68	2.95	1.34	Slight Disagreement
Youths with vocational training have better job opportunities.	92	117	64	73	46	3.37	1.29	Moderate Agreement
Vocational education enhances youth entrepreneurship.	105	124	58	66	39	3.55	1.25	Strong Agreement
More vocational training centers should be established in Taraba State.	122	130	51	49	40	3.65	1.22	Strong Agreement
Lack of awareness about vocational training affects youth participation.	85	110	75	72	50	3.30	1.29	Moderate Agreement

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results in table 2 shows that vocational training plays a critical role in enhancing youth employment opportunities, but its effectiveness remains inconsistent due to structural challenges. The statement that "more vocational training centers should be established" recorded the highest mean (3.65), with a relatively lower standard deviation (1.22), indicating a strong consensus among respondents. Likewise, the belief that "vocational education enhances youth

entrepreneurship" had a high mean (3.55) with a standard deviation of 1.25, reflecting general agreement on its importance. However, the poor funding of vocational training programs was a significant concern, as indicated by the mean score of 2.95, the lowest in this section. The high standard deviation (1.34) suggests that perceptions vary significantly, possibly due to unequal access to vocational training opportunities across different localities.

Table 3: Challenges in Implementing Educational Policies

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Poor funding is a major challenge.	115	134	52	49	42	3.58	1.27	Strong Agreement
Lack of infrastructure affects policy implementation.	98	122	65	61	46	3.40	1.28	Moderate Agreement
Corruption hinders the implementation of educational policies.	125	120	55	50	42	3.63	1.25	Strong Agreement
Political instability affects the sustainability of education reforms.	110	128	60	55	39	3.55	1.26	Strong Agreement
Government inconsistency in policy execution weakens effectiveness.	120	130	48	52	42	3.63	1.23	Strong Agreement

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table 3 above revealed that several challenges hinder the successful implementation of educational policies in reducing youth unemployment. Among these, corruption in policy implementation was a dominant issue, with a mean score of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 1.25, suggesting strong agreement but with slight variability in responses. Similarly, political instability and inconsistent government policies were identified as key obstacles, with mean values

of 3.55 and 3.63, respectively. These findings indicate that policy discontinuity due to political transitions significantly weakens the impact of educational reforms. Furthermore, lack of infrastructure and poor funding were major setbacks, with mean values of 3.40 and 3.58, respectively. The standard deviation across the challenges (1.23–1.28) reflects a general consensus among respondents on the existence of these obstacles.

Table 4. Strategies for Improving Education to Reduce Youth Unemployment

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Government should increase investment in technical and vocational education.	110	130	52	55	45	3.56	1.26	Strong Agreement
Collaboration between educational institutions and industries will improve youth employment.	120	127	50	52	43	3.60	1.25	Strong Agreement
Entrepreneurship training should be made compulsory in schools.	102	118	61	64	47	3.40	1.28	Moderate Agreement
More practical-oriented education is needed to bridge the employment gap.	130	125	48	45	44	3.68	1.23	Strong Agreement
Policies should focus on digital skills development for youth employment.	115	120	55	57	45	3.55	1.26	Strong Agreement

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 above shows the respondents strong support for strategic interventions to enhance the effectiveness of education in addressing youth unemployment. The highest level of agreement was recorded for the statement that "more practical-oriented education is needed to bridge the employment gap", with a mean of 3.68 and a relatively low standard deviation of 1.23, reflecting a strong consensus on the need for skill-based education. Similarly, collaboration between educational institutions and industries was viewed as a crucial step, with a mean score of 3.60, indicating broad agreement on its necessity. Additionally, entrepreneurship training as a compulsory subject received mixed opinions, with a mean of 3.40, suggesting moderate support but with some reservations. The responses indicate that digital skills development is essential for youth employment, as reflected in a mean score of 3.55. The relatively stable standard deviations across all five statements (1.22–1.28) suggest a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the proposed strategies.

The study found that government educational policies have had a moderate influence on youth employment in Taraba State. Respondents expressed mixed opinions on the effectiveness of these policies in addressing unemployment, particularly regarding the alignment of educational

curricula with labor market demands. This finding is consistent with the work of Okafor (2011), who argues that Nigeria's education system largely emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical and vocational skills, thereby reducing graduates' employability. Similarly, Emeh et al. (2012) highlight that poor implementation of education policies contributes significantly to youth unemployment in Nigeria. This suggests that while educational policies exist, their execution and relevance to current job market demands remain inadequate. Additionally, the study supports the findings of Umar and Umeh (2020), who noted that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has not effectively translated into job creation due to inadequate policy implementation and limited practical exposure. The moderate mean scores recorded in this study indicate that while some initiatives exist to support youth employment, they are not sufficiently robust or widespread to create a significant impact.

The findings indicate that vocational education plays a crucial role in job creation, but its impact is constrained by funding limitations and inadequate infrastructure. Respondents strongly agreed that expanding vocational training centers and integrating practical skills into education could enhance employment opportunities. This aligns with the study of Oviawe (2018), who argues that

vocational training is a key strategy for reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria. According to Fasanya and Onakoya (2012), vocational training equips youths with hands-on skills, improving their employability in both formal and informal sectors. However, the study also revealed that vocational training programs are underfunded and inconsistently implemented, a finding consistent with Adebisi and Oni (2020), who state that Nigeria's vocational education system suffers from weak government commitment, insufficient funding, and a lack of industry partnerships. This underscores the need for stronger investments in vocational education, particularly in Taraba State, to ensure that youths acquire relevant skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The study highlighted several challenges hindering the implementation of educational policies, including corruption, political instability, lack of infrastructure, and inconsistent policies. The high level of agreement among respondents regarding these challenges aligns with the findings of Akanbi (2017), who identifies policy inconsistency and corruption as major obstacles to effective educational reforms in Nigeria. Similarly, Olajide (2015) asserts that political instability leads to frequent changes in education policies, preventing long-term implementation and sustainability. Furthermore, the study corroborates the work of Aina (2016), who argues that funding constraints have negatively impacted Nigeria's education sector, particularly in rural areas such as Taraba State. The respondents' concerns about inadequate infrastructure and learning facilities further support the literature, as Madu (2019) emphasizes that poor infrastructure limits the effectiveness of educational programs, reducing their impact on youth employability.

Respondents strongly supported practical-oriented education, stronger industry-academic collaborations, and entrepreneurship training as key strategies for addressing youth unemployment. These recommendations align with the Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961), which suggests that investments in education and skills training enhance individuals' productivity and employment prospects. This study's findings also reinforce the arguments of Adebayo (2013), who advocates for increased public-private partnerships in education to enhance skill acquisition and job creation. The importance of digital skills training, which received strong support from respondents, is further validated by Ogunyomi and Olamide (2021), who argue that technology-driven education is essential for addressing unemployment in the digital era. Furthermore, the need for entrepreneurial education as a solution to unemployment has been emphasized in previous studies. Nwokolo (2018) found that integrating entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian curriculum can help youths develop self-sustaining businesses, reducing reliance on formal employment. The findings of this study align with this perspective, as respondents strongly advocated for entrepreneurship training as a compulsory part of the education system.

The findings of this study are consistent with existing literature, confirming that educational policies and vocational training influence youth employment in Nigeria, but their effectiveness is limited by poor implementation, inadequate funding, and weak policy continuity. The study also underscores the critical role of vocational education in enhancing employability, yet challenges such as corruption, policy instability, and lack of industry partnerships hinder its success. To address these issues, the

study advocates for a stronger integration of vocational and entrepreneurship training into educational policies, increased funding for vocational programs, and greater collaboration between government, industries, and educational institutions. By implementing these strategies, youth unemployment in Taraba State can be significantly reduced, creating a more inclusive and productive labor market.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the impact of government educational policies on youth employment opportunities in Taraba State, with a focus on vocational training, policy implementation challenges, and strategies for improving the effectiveness of education in reducing youth unemployment. The findings revealed that while educational policies exist to promote youth employment, their effectiveness is limited by poor implementation, inadequate funding, and weak alignment with labor market demands. Vocational training was identified as a crucial factor in enhancing employability, yet its success is constrained by inadequate infrastructure, limited government support, and insufficient industry collaboration. These challenges highlight the need for a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to policy formulation and execution in the education sector.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of educational policies in reducing youth unemployment in Taraba State:

The government should integrate vocational training and entrepreneurship education into the mainstream curriculum at all levels of education. This will equip youths with practical skills needed for self-employment and job creation. Additionally,

vocational training centers should be expanded and adequately funded to ensure accessibility and effectiveness.

There is a need for better monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of educational policies. The government should address policy inconsistency by establishing long-term frameworks that prioritize skills development and employment generation. Transparent governance and reduced bureaucratic inefficiencies will enhance policy effectiveness.

Collaboration between government, private sector organizations, and industries should be strengthened to align educational training with labor market needs. Industries should play an active role in curriculum design, internships, and apprenticeship programs to ensure that graduates acquire relevant, employable skills.

Given the increasing digitalization of the global economy, the government should invest in ICT-based vocational training programs. Digital literacy, coding, and technology-driven skill development should be integrated into educational policies to enhance youth competitiveness in both local and international job markets.

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SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON INSTITUTIONS AS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

It is institutions that define and give direction to human society. Development as a state of being in society is equated with economic growth, industrialization, advance technology, rationalization and quality of institutions. But it is the quality of institutions within the context of the social dynamics of certain environment that produces certain material and immaterial conditions that give rise to industrialization, economic growth and development. The importance of institutions to economic growth and development have been articulated and stressed in development theories, such as: modernization, dependency and neo-liberalism theories. These theories emphasized transformation or reformations of institutions in human society as it is institutions that enable human society to derive benefits for improved quality of life. Reflecting on perspectives of sociology in development, this paper examines development approaches with attempts to explain how institutions are central in the development process. The paper concludes that institutions matter for economic growth and development, but sociology has been missing in development discourse and practice. Thus, sociologists need to return to the mainstream discourse of development and bring insights from other areas of sociology into development studies and focus on institutions which were once its core point of analysis.

Keywords: Development, Marxism, dependency, sociology in development, institutions

Introduction

In this paper, institutionalism which is considered as another direction in development discourse and practice but missing in contemporary development sociology is the central point of analysis. The paper attempts to evaluate the functions of institutions and the consequences of these functions to development outcomes. Theories of modernization speak of the type and quality of western institutions which had led and advanced western societies to achieve modernization, modernity and development. In this way, undeveloped societies are blamed for lacking certain institutions; hence, for these undeveloped societies to develop like their western societies' counterparts, these

undeveloped societies must adopt similar institutions as found in western societies. Thus, development in this light means the adoption of certain western institutions and the abandoning of certain non-western or pre-modern institutions.

While dealing with the concern of how modern institutions are inadequately driving development, the basic needs approach and later human resources approach were at different times introduced in the 1980s to explain institutional or structural imbalances in the development process. Whereas dependency theory emerged to speak of the form or pattern of functioning of such type of western modern institutions that were

entrenched through Western European colonization on developing societies and States, dependency theory stressed on the exploitative nature of these western institutions as they have overtime proven to create institutional dependency for developing societies or states. To ease out of such institutional dependency which advances unequal economic relations that put developed societies on an advantage position, the import substitution industrialization (ISI) was a kind of institutional reforms that was crafted to transform the social structure of developing societies or states to get rid of institutional dependency that also creates a cultural life of economic dependency. This involved state protection of industries and interventions in the market which is considered by capitalist corporations and states, as state manipulation or market manipulation, which is seen as corrupting the market's natural ability to exploit its comparative advantage. As reported, this created economic failures which in turn created inefficient market and growing debts and debt crisis in the 1980s (Viterna & Robertson, 2015; Babb, 2005).

On the contrary, neoliberalism emerged to speak of modern institutions especially the economic institution in terms of its functionality in accordance to the free market economy doctrine, and this was critical for institutional reforms to get rid of institutional distortions that accounted for inefficient markets through liberalization and deregulation of the economy and to instill fiscal discipline with the support of policies and legislation within the space of political and legal institutions to foster efficient institutions or state-public bureaucracies. The argument was that economic growth will be faster if developing societies or states; as their developed societies or states, counterparts opened up their markets to foreign direct investment and increased participation of the global economy. As this opening up creates attraction for foreign trade, investment of global capital, technology and enables the

economy to expand. Thus, neoliberalists advocate that national economies will grow fastest if the market is free from state manipulation; consequently, one of the primary duties of the state is to ensure the free rein of the market.

These theoretical perspectives on how institutions function are important in understanding the history and nature of institutions and how they can be made to function. They are also insightful to why institutions in developed societies continue to advance their development agenda whereas institutions in developing societies continue to generate development crises; as the latter continue to lean on the former for their hoped advancement and development. In this way, both modernization and dependency theories see institutions or institutional outcomes as the basis to explain social change and development but fail to successfully explain why institutions in both developed and developing societies have not advance at relatively equal levels of development.

In response to these inadequacies, the institutional approach emerged as a unique perspective that combines theoretical and empirical insights to the issues of economic growth and development. Hence, in this paper, institutionalism which is considered as another direction in development discourse and practice but missing in contemporary development sociology is the central point of analysis. The paper basically examines how institutions function and how this has consequences for institutional outcomes which in turn affect development outcomes. The paper also provided the historicity of institutions formation and how state actors, particularly political leaders, largely shape the way institutions function. The paper is structured under the following themes: contexts for emergence of institutional approach; forms and quality of development institutions; and political leadership for development.

Emergence of Institutional Approach: A Theoretical Description

According to Isamah (2002); Olutayo and Bankole (2002) and Firebaugh (1992), the emergence of institutional approach or state approach was to reintroduce the importance of institutions in development discourse and process in the 2000s which sociology and particularly development sociology once accentuated but later neglected. But since development sociology waned and was already missing in the 1990s in development discourse and in development institutions, not even as advisors, especially with the emergence and dominance of economic neo-liberalism discourse, as the new prescriptive path to and practice in development, development sociology thus continue to neglect to stress on the significance of institutional performance to societal and state development.

This was partly because of the failure of the old development theories and their prescribed institutions to advance development for all developed and developing societies and states and to consequently introduce innovative ways on how to approach development (Isamah, 2002; Olutayo & Bankola, 2002; Firebaugh, 1992). Prevailing arguments showed that countries that achieved development were those with superior economic performance which aligns with market economies. Interestingly, at this time, especially in the 1980s, development discourse and policies of national governments were dominated exclusively by economists (Woolcock & Kim, 2000).

Also, at the time and context in shift in development discourse and practice, sociology became less relevant as it abandoned mainstream development discourse and became more involved at margin of mainstream issues or micro issues of development theory and practices and dispersed to other sub-disciplines of sociology. What was responsible for this? Beside lack of innovative perspectives from the old paradigms of development theories, Kiely

(1995) attributed the crisis to why sociology of development is missing to: its inability to move beyond Marxism and Dependency theory and inability to come to terms with changes in the global order in the 1970s and 1980s. For Leys (1996), the crisis is the result of politically motivated policy decisions rationalized by a particular brand of development theory being neo-liberalism which emerged to become the sole and ruling global economic ideology, which assigns all initiative to the market which is capital, in defining and driving development.

For Isamah (2002), the dismal human situation in developing countries after much of development theories and practices accounted for the disappearance of robust development theoretical debates among social scientists and practitioners on issues of development as it relate to modernization, dependency and economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s as they instead search for more rewarding or personal fulfilling subject of research. Consequently, the more rewarding and personal fulfilling interest of sociologists can be associated with shift to address issues at margin which Viterna and Robertson (2015) referred to as context specific issues, that affect groups and community development, with the broad participation of development theorists and practitioners from diverse disciplines, professions and organizations. At this level, the concern was on societal or community development issues and impact of their institutions on lived experiences, not at the national or state levels.

While the valuable lens of sociology in development discourse was lost, the economist, Sen's (1999, 1985) capabilities approach which stressed on sustainable human development was cleverly argued and prescribed without opposition of neoliberalists and without regarding the latter's restructuring as stagnating development (Hart, 2001) but Sen asserted that the ultimate test of any development policy should be that it improved people's lives. Sen (1999, 1985) argued against top-down approach that centred on improving macroeconomic growth

for bottom-up approach that lay emphasis on poverty alleviation and development. However, this suggested a combination of macro and micro levels economic approach, such that 'by 1999, even the World Bank (1999) reported that good macroeconomic policies needed to also protect the 'worst off' populations in developing nations (Viterna & Robertson, 2015).

But from this context where free market economy of neoliberalists was performing dismally emerged political scientist (Johnson, 1982) and economist (Amsden, 1989) showing how East Asia (Japan) and South Asia (South Korea), had systematically violated neoliberal doctrine orthodoxy to achieve their impressive economic growth and developmental gains. However, in 1997, the crash of these economies resulted to the persisting call from scholars in the Global South to prioritize strategic state integration (ECLAC 1990, ESCAP 1990). This was also evident from Communist China where State control over significant areas of the market showed exceptional sustained economic growth with corresponding social development thus indicating both as not been antithetical to economic development as argued by neoliberalists (Whyle, 2009)

But sociology transformed into analysis of globalization in the 1990s in the modern global space in which neoliberalists economic policies prevailed, and sociologists centred theoretical analysis on globalization of the economy, politics and cultures in attempt to understand the asymmetric power relations or the distribution of power, resources and dominance of certain culture across the increasing global political and economic systems. And to understand why some States have the rights in the global production and distribution chains specially over specific products while others do not in the supposedly equal benefiting world of globalization.

However, sociologists have shown interest in globalization. Development sociologists are increasingly analyzing directions in development by examining consequences of

capitalist production within the world capitalist system (Brady, 2007). On the contrary, Viterna and Robertson (2015) argued that sociology still lacks the intellectual space required for and to pull development scholars to examine how the impact of 'multiple social institutions and processes including politics, markets, states, migration, families, poverty, civil society, globalization, and the massive development sector itself-operate and intersect to shape the direction and intensity of social change both within and across nations.'

With this, sociology made argument for the return to state analysis in the study of development. Evans (1995) reiterated this position by arguing that state's actions always play a role in economic and social transformations. This is a position which both capitalists and neoliberalists agree to. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that state actions would always play a role in economic and social transformations when such state is a developmental state and not a predatory or extractive state. At this time, in the 1990s, political sociology rather than development sociology were also concern with the questions of form, causes and consequences of political and economic inequality cross nations. Meanwhile, development was considered as one of the many causal factors of changing political regimes and social institutions in Latin America and in Asia. (Rueschemeyer et al., 1992; Walder 1994).

Still with much absence in mainstream development in the 1990s, sociology continued to engaged on issues of women in development, then women and development in the 1970s (Boserup, 1970), and then a shift to gender and development in the 1980s (Moser 1989) with the theorization, design, and implementation of development projects, policies and institutional arrangements of states and development organizations (Jaquette & Staudt 2006) to address conditions that adversely affect the capabilities of women in different economic, political and cultural contexts for their economic, political and social

advancement and for economic growth. Since then, there is shift to states and gender, where there is emphasis on the state, institutional histories and social inequalities as key components to development; even with this, sociology remained at the margin (Viterna & Robertson, 2015).

The institutional approach to development has emerged to embrace and focus on institutions, thereby denouncing the ahistorical and one-size-fits-all approach of neoliberalists. The institutional approach involves historical and national based level analyses that account for the lived experiences of communities. Overall, the analyses of institutions have been missing in development sociology even though institutions as an aggregation of the social structure of the society or State were at the mainstream of sociological analysis. Consequently, development sociology is now entrapped in emphases on economic and political goals of growing the economy, with a shift to how institutions function as undertaken largely in development economics and development political science.

More significantly, the institutional approach re-emerged because of the continuous disastrous role of old development theories particularly market theory of neo-liberalism in the 1970s, 1980s and the 1990s to address the crisis of development. In particular, it emerged because of enduring failure of the dominance of the market to provide solutions to development impasse in developing States. While dependency development is perpetuated, neo-liberalism which has been particularly the dominant development theory at this time failed to resolve the market crisis which was undermining growth and sustain economic growth since the 1990s especially in developing States.

The failure of the market to drive development suggest there was a problem of theoretical and empirical institutional crisis, thus the need to focus on institutional analysis, with which to induce the right institutional

arrangements or structure and the right institutional outcomes for the right developmental outcomes. Thus, the institutionalists offered different perspective and approach to facilitating development (Viterna & Robertson, 2015).

The institutional approach gave theoretical and empirical perspectives on the history and nature of institutions and how understanding institutional contexts shape the path to facilitating development. Though, as reality, the existing development theoretical approaches intersects with institutional approach in development process but this has been in the midst of the dominance of neoliberalists' ideals in the development process which has been shaping the functioning of institutions in the development process in many parts of the world (Swidler, 2013; Portes & Smelt, 2012; Mahoney, 2010; Engerman & Sokoloff, 2008; Portes, 2006; Furubotn & Richter, 2005; Evans, 2004; Acemoglu et al., 2002, 2001).

Scholars argued that all economic activities are enacted through systems of social and legal norms, or institutions (Furubotn & Richter, 2005, 1997) for which Acemoglu et al. (2001, 2002) also argued that economic development requires inclusive political institutions to stimulate innovative economic activities that promote economic growth. Also, institutions are determinants of innovation, ideas and capability; thus, understanding and promoting economic growth requires understanding the evolution of institutions as well as the engagement of institutional actors (Helpman, 2004).

The place of institutions in economics and political science was to provide an important correction to the ahistoricism and market fundamentalism of the previous decades. Thus, the development scholarship in political science and economics reached the consensus that institutions (and their historical constructions) matter, especially as they relate to social divisions and the development of human capital. And for Cohn (2012), investment in people is much more effective

and less conflict prone to affect economic development. Such investment is a function of institutions.

Similarly, Engerman and Sokoloff (2008) assert that institutions matter but that institutions are dynamic products of changing political, economic, and geographic environments. In other words, institutions matter, but institutional variations in terms of performance; and they are shaped by particular political, cultural, geographical and economic arrangements. Meanwhile, microeconomics perspective on institutional economics or microeconomics with its dimension to economic development focused on context specificities of sites in attempts brought to light how understanding the specific barriers that lead to specific problems can intelligently and economically tackle development, with one intervention at a time.

Meanwhile, in the mainstream sociology, Viterna and Robertson state that sociology of development avoided institutional perspective which was once central to its explanation of social change and development process. The question is, was this in order to avoid suggesting a particular kind of institution or institutional functions and practices that will serve better and result to the most development outcomes? What is however noted was the shift and preferences of sociology of development to focus on only analyzing and explaining complex, context-specific paths in which institutional development occur (Viterna & Robertson, 2015). Could this avoidance be a way of evading from making value judgement about any institutions in development process, with which sociology of development may be labelled with ideological prejudices as in the past and less of academic social science?

Though development sociologists as key proponents of analyzing old paradigms of development theories especially mainstream theories of modernization and later neoliberalism were linked to capitalist orientation, on the basis of that they employed and express their capitalist notions in analysis

of societal/state progress. From this, they gave credits to a form, functions and practices of western States' institutions particularly capitalistic institutions of developed States as explaining and driving the best development, but not socialists/communists States' institutions. But as Mahoney (2010) and Whyte (2009) argued, capitalism or private property as the key institution for economic development is doubtful and debatable. Ideologically, this explains why development sociologists in socialists/communists States argued against the capitalist States' institutions but asserted collective property as one of the key and best institutions and as the best for driving development.

Whereas, pre-capitalist or pre-socialist institutions in developing societies/States were seen as averse to the kind of development evident in developed societies/States, in which development sociologists in developing States' jurisdiction argued that since developing societies/States do not seek to take the same development trajectory of developed societies/States, the state of institutional performance in developing societies/States were a function of historical asymmetric power relations in which the developed societies/States dominant the former and dictates largely their institutional outcomes thus their consequences for developmental outcomes.

This has become the reality of interactions of inter-State institutions in the contemporary global world, where institutions in every States in the world are functioning in capitalistic pattern to the extent that the institutions in socialist/communists States have been reformed to function to produce similar institutional outcomes and development outcomes as those in capitalist States' institutions since the late 1980s (Whyte, 2009; Kornai, 1990). Thus, the institutions of the States as societal institutions remains crucial to development process but also account for the variations in crises of or levels of development. But again, the variations of institutional functioning raised questions

about the real nature of societal and State institutions which would be addressed in this paper.

What are Institutions?

It must be stated that institutions are human agency which are socially constructed and established, which according to structural functionalist are to serve what is assumed as the common interests of a society or the State. However, within the functioning space of every societal institution or State institutions (whether economic, political, legal, education, religion, health or family) there are different groups that interact and affect how the institutions function, and as oriented towards conflict theorists, the interests of the most powerful group or certain overwhelming interests of (un)organized groups affect the direction which institutions functions, and is intended to serve such interests which are often assumed or masked as serving society or the State. It is important to note that all ideologies always promote positive aspects of the institutions while shading or masking their negatives. This is why determining which ideology is good or bad is dependent on which ideological leaning one holds or geographical politics of ideological space one is.

Besides the economic institution, other types of institutions (family, education, health, religion, education, political and legal institutions) are argued to be also vital not only in shaping economic institutional outcomes but also vital in the broader development process and in giving meaning to development. Thus, these societal institutions and more significantly the institutions of the States remains crucial and instrumental to development process. And because of the central importance of institutions in development processes, and in order to avoid any obscurity on what institutions are, it equally important to delineate what institution are or what institution is.

Patterson (2013) defines institutions are durable structures of knowledge that defines rules and expectations of recurrent behaviour.

In relation to development context, Evans (2004) and Chibber (2003) converging conceptualization of institution depicts that, institutions are responsive to power with which their development effectiveness increases when power is dispersed. This is intended to be an inclusive development process with participation of diverse groups of people according to agreed institutional arrangements. But as conceptually preferred and utilized used in this paper, institutions are defined as forms of patterned network of recurrent relationship with specific expected behaviours, roles, legitimate authority and rules of designated groups of people with the expectations from society or state to fulfilling the roles and enforcing rules for sustainability and progress of development of a society or the State.

Similarly, Lewis (2013) specific definition of institutions which relate more to institutional economics (North, 1990; Eggertsson, 1990) is that institutions are relatively settled sets of norms, rules, and enforcement of mechanisms that fundamentally shape economic behaviour. Insights from these definitions indicate that institutions structure expectations and set boundaries for behavior (North, 1990). With this, institutions shows an abstract durable structure of relationships, knowledge, legitimate authority and expected functional outcomes which is often mistaken as having a concrete form.

But as human institutions, human deviation tendencies of individuals and varying groups to satisfy self-gratification or interests has consequent for unexpected variations in functional outcomes which undermines regular expected functional outcomes of institutions. This is why the institutional environment is exposed as influencing time horizon and characters of institutional actors, such as economic actors, political or policy actors, legal actors, educational actors or religious actors and fundamentally affecting their scale and scope of relationships and behaviour or responsiveness in development

processes. Societal institutions operates at the local level while modern institutions of the State penetrate and operate at both the local and national levels where society is or societies are subjected to.

Every institution has its function and structure and the interconnection of institutions defines the structure of society or the State and this define the pattern of integrative structural function and the performances of the institutions with their resultant consequences for institutional outcomes which is linked to developmental outcomes. Therefore, meeting the desired development outcomes are a function of effective institutional outcomes and the latter is also a function of largely the effectiveness of institutional actors or institutional actors of the State or State actors. Whereas variations occur outside of the desired or intended institutional outcomes and developmental outcomes such occurrence is a function of largely ineffective institutional actors or State institutional actors. This indicate that the effects of development policy depends on institutional context. In the context of the modern State, societal institutions are dominated and regulated largely by institutions of the State.

Meanwhile institutions matters in and for development, but again, how institutions are defined or shaped depend on how institutions interact with each other. For development sociologists, their analyses have to focus on how institutions transform society or the State and drive development. This is in relation to examining changes in institutional functions. Viterna and Robertson (2015) noted that development sociologists need to go inside developing nations' institutions to map and understand their knowledge structures and internal workings. In this respect, it is important to state that development sociologists need refocus more on and not shy from understandable solution analysis to address macro and micro issues of development. This means in development theorizing and practice, emphases should be

laid on the most effective types and functions of institutions, particularly institutions of the state that delivers or will deliver on the most developmental outcomes. Such re-engagement will enable sociology of development to also suggest and advance what in Merton insight is a successful transformation for development which requires changes in existing institutional forms, functions or both or replacement with new institutions (Portes & Smith, 2012; Campbell, 2004).

Determinant of Forms and Quality of Institutions for Development

Tipps (1973) and Labinjoh (2002) argued that institutions of western societies which transformed into modern institutions of the Western States and shaped their development trajectory were a function of the economic, sociocultural and political institutional reforms based on reasoned social, economic and political philosophy, thoughts and actions that partly began from the 14th, 17th and peaking in 19th centuries. Through colonization, these capitalist modern institutions of the Western European State were exported from Europe to North America, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

To stress similar point, Acemoglu et al. (2001, 2002) traced institutional quality back to the time of European colonization, in which institutional quality was measured with the instrumentality of favourable or unfavourable circumstances. In favorable circumstances, colonial institutions enabled the colonialists to settle in the colonies over a long term to create inclusive institutions. But where unfavourable circumstances existed, the colonialists could not settled thus they extracted maximum resources to Europe thus incentivizing the creation of extractive institutions. On basis of this Acemoglu et al. conclude that economic development requires inclusive political institutions that protect individual rights, secure property, and encourage entrepreneurship, thus promoting growth. Instead of the extractive institutions which lacks the ingredients of inclusive institutions.

Thus, they when further to contrast inclusive states with those historically governed by extractive institutions, which concentrate power in the hands of a few. Bates (1981) has shown how extractive states often develop out of societal divisions.

For example, evidence from extractive states are that, ethnic group or racial groups or some other unique interest groups as economic or political interest groups often act as significant interest groups with a distinct advantage in influencing policy and determining the allocation of public goods along ethnic, racial, political and economic class lines (Alesina et al. 1999, Habyarimana et al. 2007). This for Viterna and Robertson (2015) complicates opportunities for collective action, increases rationale for ethnic conflict, and promotes the development of predatory institutions. This is typical of institutions of Nigerian State. As Singh (2011) argues that ethnic polarization occurs only when groups lack common engagement in a social contract. Such that when there is common beneficial interest, no group assert it interest over others or the majority, and the institutions of the States tend to function effectively but when there are divergence interest, ethnic polarization is employed as an instrument of negotiation of ethnic group interests within institutions, but often for the interest of the political class, whether the local or national political class or an ethnic group political class referred herein as ethno-political class.

Chibber (2003) had in the past similarly reported how even a relatively prosperous state such as India, whose institutions are populated by politicians and technocrats specifically committed to the promotion of industrial development, can fail to industrialize when challenged by powerful class interests. The form of institutions that are inclusive institutions are define by quality of effectiveness with which they are referred to as effective institutions, while the extractive institutions which are also referred to as predatory institutions or exclusive institutions

or rent-seeking institutions are defined as ineffective institutions.

These historical context of the past sound contradictory, as independence states that were once colonized societies/states tend to see the modern institutions or states as been predatory and extractive whether the colonizers settled or not. A measure of the extent of the functions of inclusive institutions at the time had no much significant to the locals. Yet, in the historical context of the present, the arguments which relate to the consequences of social divisions, concentration of power in hands of few over majority and resource struggles of few groups or elites which are common in states with predatory and extractive institutions referred to earlier are apt on how they negatively impact on development. It is in this sense that institutions can be understood as dynamic products of changing political, economic, and geographic environments (Engerman & Sokoloff, 2008). This explains why the understanding of how institutions affect development requires a shift from one-size-fits-all explanations in terms of cause and solution to analyses of the different functions, forms, and practices of institutions as they vary over time and across nations.

The transnational interactions of institutions (particularly political, economic, legal, education and health) as it was in colonial era continued in post-colonial era in which institutions in developed States are considerably shaping the pattern of functioning of institutions in developing states in contemporary national contexts and global context, even though there are exception to this historical approach. But as Evans (1995) argued, the kinds of actions states can take are limited by the historically produced institutions already in place. This explains why sociologists should be interested for a return to state analysis in development studies. Under the contemporary context of transnational interactions of institutions, institutions in the developed states often puts heavy political and economic pressures on

institutions in developing states in development processes and practices for the economic development advantages of the former. This is why Evans (2004) and Portes (2006) have argued that because of the realization that institutions matter, this has resulted in the export of organizational blueprints of development from the Global North to the Global South, without sufficient rationale for why what works in one location might also work in another (Viterna & Robertson, 2015).

As result of this transnational institutional interactions, the conditions of modernization, dependency and neoliberalism are evidently intersecting in the global space of institutional interactions of states of the world in shaping contemporary development processes and practices in developing States. Though it is usually glossed-over, the situation has entrenched and perpetuated institutional dependency which appears as a global interdependence of institutions, with dependent relationships with the promises of mutual derivable benefits yet this is perpetuated to influence or dictate institutional outcomes in the process of development in developing states. As Johari (2013) observed, economic interdependence which is driven by forces of economic globalization is enhancing and benefiting development even though it tends to produce different development effects for peoples of countries.

But institutional approach is situated in this global world of institutional interdependence where there is dependency between developed states and developing states, dependency among the developed states especially on those with more stable or sustained positive economic growth, and dependency among developing states especially on those with productive and reliable economic capital. The states depended on internally operate inclusive states with effective institutions but externally operate as predatory and extractive states whose institutions can be seen as ineffective,

as they undermine policy actions of reaching the goals of development of other states. These are the situations of states within the context of economic, political and cultural globalization. In other words, the institutional outcomes and developmental outcomes in developing states are often influenced by their interactions with institutions in developed states.

What is vital is that institutions matter, and more-so, effective institutions, which are also inclusive institutions especially institutions of the state that are crucial for development. To describe the effective of institutions of an inclusive state, Chibber (2003) explained that some states are able to promote and industrialize their economy based on the states' institutional capability of harnessing and distributing social, legal and economic resources requisite to and in development process. Whereas ineffective institutions defined by extractive state are defined by Chibber as states that lack institutional capability. Institutional capability is a function of human capability including institutional memories. This is why development scholarship in political science and economics have reached a conclusion that institutions (and their historical constructions) matter, particularly as they relate to not just social divisions and common interests of engagements but in the development of human capital.

As other scholars observed (Alesina et al. 1999; Habyarimana et al. 2007), a state failure which arises from ineffective institutions is also because of the extent of power relations of external powerful states or internal powerful group interests or social divisions that increases social and ethnic violence even when such institutions are dominated by politicians and technocrats who are key contributors to driving industrialization and economic development (Lange, 2012). As their actions undermine effective institutional performance towards addressing those internal and external factors to better advance development process. This institutional

performance indicate the forms of institutions as being inclusive institutions or extractive institutions in which the quality of the former is define as effective institution and the latter ineffective institutions.

This suggest that the effectiveness of institutions of a state is not completely determined by it historical context but by institutional capability which relates to policy choices. The argument is that the explanation of development impasse based on the nature of institutions or structural constraints rooted in culture, history or geography are not sufficient with out the consideration of policy choices (Easterly, 1997; Chabal, 2009). As Henley and van Donge (2013) asserted, the historical determinism which account for path-dependency cannot always account for divergence in development except the different path, as some States for example in developing States of South East Asia such as Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia took a different policy path to economic development. But it is argued here that while cultural, history, geography and structural factors impact on the path to development, such path to development depends on policy choices arising from effective institutions, defined by institutional actors of the State including political leadership as evident with the East and South Asia States.

Effective institutions also manifest when institutional state actors can overcome the resistances of powerful economic and political elites, ethnic or religious groups or pressures of external powerful States which they are associated with or are part of, by partly given more decision making powers to the majority of the people to politically organize pressure to neutralize or moderate these elites, ethnic, or religious interests or external State interests and to disperse political power, safeguard against corruption and co-optation, [ethnic, religious and political domination, patron-clientelism or neutralize harmful monopoly over trade or one political party monopoly over institutions of the State to aid], and to

promote development policies and facilitate development- If not, the best-laid development plans of the state actors will fail (Chibber, 2003; Evans, 2004).

While some institutions tend to be more effective than others, effective institutions of the states are the very kind needed and this same effective institutions are the very kind of inclusive states with also 'stable' and well 'enforced rules', based on rule of law which declares everyone and entity as being equal before the law (Evans, 2004); whereas ineffective institutions lack these and indicate predatory states. This is a reminder that variations in the design and quality of institutions; particularly institutional actors, of the state decisively influence the course of institutional outcomes and development over time and within and across nations.

Based on the ideological dominance in development discourse, the socialist/communist and capitalist institutions are the two predominant oriented and adopted institutions that define and drive the status of economic growth and directions of development in the modern world. Interestingly, in the midst of the capitalist economic dominance, both capitalist' and socialist/communists states' institutions, in their ideological and theoretical arguments and projections all claimed to be governed by effective states' institutions with the most public and national interests on development. However, in reality, under certain circumstances, these institutions or states function in either ineffective or effective ways and operate as either inclusive institutions or extractive institutions, and the ways they function at any particular time or context is a function of whose interest the institution(s) is/are serving. The question to ask is, are there other forms of institutions besides the capitalist and socialist/communist institutions that can serve more effectively the purpose of development?

While the capitalist developed states argues and present the communist Chinese state's institutional model of industrialized

development as based on market manipulations or state manipulations, Lee and Schrank (2010) have made the point that state innovation policies of Asia are intersecting with the importation of a particular cultural model of science to generate growing rates of scientific misconduct. But perhaps for the Chinese state, the claim of misconduct are part of the attempts to perpetuate western states' capitalist economic, political and cultural institutional dominance globally, but for her, it is her innovative way to navigate and negotiate through the established dominance of capitalist institutional and organizational barriers and pave her way to her path of sustain economic growth and development which will benefit the people and not just the private interests of power group and multinational corporations and local companies.

The innovation was is with a mix of communistic and capitalistic institutional functions but deviates slightly from capitalism thus transforming capitalism to serve communist envisaged development. The innovative ways appear to be how the Chinese state is increasingly achieving it remarkable sustained economic growth and independent development after its gradual and controlled dismantling of her centrally planned economy, and this is giving her the recognition of operating inclusive institutions and being a developmental state. For the developing states, who are expected to take lessons from institutional reforms of China and other East and South Asia development, in which the states have shown evidence of exceptional economic growth and development, the form and functions of institutions or institutions of the state regularly advocated and prescribed to the developing states to adopt through institutional reforms to address their crises of (exclusive) economic growth and support their development are the effective institutions, which will define them as inclusive state and developmental state. Generally, it is vital to note that, institutions of the state or the state as an institution in development theories,

policy making and implementation is given a prominent role in the transformative process of economic growth and development (Babb, 2005).

Since the state is the most profound institution in the modern world, as it is the rallying point for political and social actions for social change and development; hence, the continuous relevance of sociology, particularly development sociology will be defined on how it engages theoretical analysis and advocacy in development studies in manners that seek to shape institutional effectiveness of the state to deliver on the most developmental outcomes. In this regard, the state being also a political agency should be assigned the theoretical and pragmatic responsible to address and integrate the macro and micro issues of development. Like the 1990s advocacy for return to state analysis, this restates the significance of sociology in state analysis in development studies in the 2000s for economic, political and social transformations.

The Role of the State and Political Leadership in Development

Practically, the state as a human agency is also a social system. It is also a political agency and a political system defined by political institutions for analysis and transformative interventions. The state is also a major political agency that has the potency to facilitate the right development policies and practices for economic growth and development through harnessing material and non-material resources including power, human capital and values to drive development as well as to neutralize and reconcile social, economic, cultural and political divisive interests or conflicts that undermine development. Since the state is defined by the values or ideologies that structure the state, the functions of the state can be seen and known from the characters of the state as defined by the different models or theories of the state, such as liberal-pluralism, classical Marxism and organic statism.

With insights from Stepan (1978), the normative theories/models of the state emerged from the capitalist societies to explain the role of the state in capitalist societies and how they differ in their political philosophy, in terms of the role of the individual, the nature of the political community, the common good and most significantly the state (Onyeoziri, 2005). But the reality of the characters of the states in different geo-political space like the socialist state have since raised criticism of the capitalist state and asserted empirical oriented models/theories of the state in contrast to the normative models/theories. The concern of empirical oriented theories of the state is the issue of the capacity of the state (Watts, 1999; Wang, 1999; Mann, 1984; Grindle, 1996; Poldano, 2001). The discussion of capacity of the state is similar to the discussion on institutional capability.

Therefore, empirically, the state capacity is the measure of a state's ability to do the major things expected of it in its society (Onyeoziri, 2005). From this, it is defined that effective states or developmental states are those with high institutional capacity, as an indication of the ability of state to design and implement policies, by means of internal cohesiveness and bureaucratic rationality (Chibber, 2002) as well as by the ability of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm (Mann, 1984). Such institutional capacity also translate to capacity building which involves the process of transforming a nation's ability to effectively implement policies and programmes for sustainable development, even though institutional and policy factors as well as scarce resources would affect the effort to build capacity (Wubneh, 2003) thus requiring the prioritization of use of resources for policies of development.

These models/theories which defined the roles of state delineates the distinct forms of the state derive from capitalist formation or socialist formation, what functions are or

should be performed by the capitalist state or the socialist state, and which apparatus are used for the execution of these functions. Why these models/theories of the state helps with the understanding of whether the state is an effective or ineffective institution or when it is effective or ineffective, the seeming generic meanings of it is that 'the state is a public power above both the ruler and the ruled which provides order and continuity to the polity' (Vincent, 1987). In similar sense, the state is noted to be concern with the framework of values within which public life should be conducted and with effective exercise of public authority in the pursuit of those values (Dyson, 1980). The overall significance of such values and how such values are achieve is central to development, but what kind or brand of development, socialist or capitalist? This is the task which institutional capacity or state capacity facilitates to achieve, which is an inclusive economic growth and development.

With the reformation of ideology of socialist institutions of the state to function in the image of ideology of capitalist institutions of the state, the task of state capacity to achieving development from an empirical point of view is what Kaufman (1999) described as being throughout the post socialist and development world a central challenge in the consolidation of democracy and market reforms is the construction of state bureaucracies capable of implementing economic policies, providing social services and maintaining public order. As a solution to such notion, Englebert (2002) define state capacity as being the ability of government to design and implement economic policies for growth and to provide good governance to their societies and the market.

Many dimensions of the concept of the state capacity are explored in volumes of literature, which are all relevant in this paper, however, the paper employs the World Development Report (1997) on state capacity, which refers to state capacity as the ability of the state to undertake collective actions at

least costs to society. This notion of capacity encompasses the administrative or technical capacity of the state officials, but is much broader than that, and include the deeper institutional mechanisms that give politicians and civil servants the flexibility, rules and restraints to enable them to act in the collective interests. Broader elements of operationalizing state capacity which reflect the capacities of the state include: autonomy, extractive capacity, rule of law/law enforcement capacity, political capacity, technical capacity, administrative capacity and monopoly of coercion (Onyeoziri, 2005).

The high effectiveness of these dimensions of state capacity (as against the low state capacity) is essential for the institutions of state to define and enable planned institutional outcomes and developmental outcomes. In this wise, the state becomes a developmental state. Thus why the state capacity is in the ability of the state to governed effectively (Onyeoziri, 2005), but as mentioned earlier, such a state must have certain kinds of capacities if they are to be effective in undertaking the tasks of economic, social and political development (Grindle, 1996).

Another issue which relates to the high state capacity as in effective institutions of the state is the quality of political leadership. It is required to successfully negotiate and enable political, economic, social and cultural transformations from which to understand relationships between institutions and the people and institutional outcomes and developmental outcome with which to enable sustained transformation and progress of the society/ the state. In other words, political leadership has to do with institutional state actors who influence the functions and characters of institutions of the state. The political context where political capacity is observable as expected is to be driven by political leadership, and this reveal the political capacity as the ability of the state to respond to societal demands, allow for channels to represent societal interests, and incorporate

societal participation in decision making and conflict resolution- In other words, it is the effectiveness of everyday interactions between the government and citizen, how effective are governments in daily responding to conflict, demand making and opposition, and overall how good governments are at problem solving (Onyeoziri, 2005).

This also extend to state capacity on monopoly of coercion where the political leadership ensure the state's fundamental obligation of physical security, of the protection of life and property, governed by rules and commitment to rule of law as requisite of the legal institutions of state, and this is to protect also the individuals from the worst excesses of state power and manipulation thus limiting the power of the state over the individual but place ultimate value on the individual so that the power and responsibilities of the institutions is to protect the right of the people and for the people to bind their obligations to these institutions, and yet because of it autonomy, it is for the state to 'define and act independently based on it define and independent preferences and interests as oppose to those non-state actors or other various societal interests of variety of unique interest groups and guided by the rule of law and the best interest of the people. With this, through the state technical capacity, the state harnesses intellectual and organizational resources owned by the state such as external and internal expertise and experience to bear on policy making process in order to design a coherent, viable and politically feasible policies. And with an enabled high administrative capacity, the state delivers on goods and services including social services through engaging in normal state administrative bureaucracy of government, and the extractive capacity of the state is in it ability to or enable the extraction from their societies the resources from which to raise revenue through taxation with which to perform their obligations, including that of undertaking and facilitating economic development (Onyeoziri, 2005). These are only

possible with effective political leadership of the state which give directions to other institutional actors.

As similar to Evans (1995) conclusive assertion, which is that states have the best development outcomes when they balance autonomy which is the ability of states to pursue national goals independently of private interests, and embeddedness which is the ability of states to maintain social ties with constituent groups, a balance of the state capacities and constituent groups' interests will produce the best achievable national goals of development. Even at this feat, the state must further continue to deal with emerging interests of unique interest groups and new claims against the state. The role of effective political leaderships is key to every point of political change, in pursuit of the set goals of development and for transforming a state into developmental state. And developmental state is defined by an effective political leadership of the state.

But to be able to address emergent issues of development means the developmental state must develop and sustain its social ties and continually reinvent itself as an inclusive state, whereas predatory and extractive state tend to lose collective ties and produces personal ties with historical elites who pursue their private interests. However, a complementary position to the former is that, developmental states are most successful when they gain the necessary support of powerful private actors while remaining sufficiently autonomous from any one social group so as to avoid co-optation or corruption (Chibber 2003, Evans 1995, Lange & Rueschemeyer 2005).

The kinds of tensions arising from the divergent interests of unique interest groups can be negotiated but how well the tensions can be negotiated will depend on the historical development of state institutions and on the political and cultural environment in which they are operating. And how these tensions may be consistently negotiated across different situations provide

opportunities for theorizing and facilitating development across states. For example, the aim maybe strengthening a nation's opportunities for widespread deliberative democracy (Evans 2004).

As an alternative path way, is for states to effectively and creatively bypass the tensions altogether by implementing development strategies that are relatively cheap, are remarkably uncontroversial, and require almost no institutional transformation or basic administrative capacity, yet are successful in reducing social inequality and relieving poverty (Cohn, 2012). The concern of development sociology with institutions of the state or the state places it in a vital position to approach macro and micro institutional issues of societies and the State to give directions to the transformation vision and actions of political leadership, citizens and institutional actors to achieve development. And with the complexity of transformation of an entire state, and with insights on capacities of the state, the state appears to be the only powerful institution and agency to transform every circumstances and to make or undermine economic growth and development.

In Pritchett et al.'s (2013) vision of development in the global context, Pritchett and his associates delineates development as a transformational vision of entire countries, where transformation is sought across the four dimensions of polity, economy, social relations and public administration.' With respect to the polity as political system, the ideal societies would have the political systems that represent the aggregate preferences of citizens, the economic systems that grow through enhanced productivity, the social relations that fairly extend rights and opportunities to all individuals, and a public organization that functions and is administered according to meritocratic standards and professional norms.

By extension, such ideal societies provide at least total security of life including the minimum necessary social protections such as

health care, education, public infrastructures, food security, employment support and opportunities, and legal and judicial protections from discrimination and abuse as well as considerable reduction in inequalities and poverty which are required of the developed societies' population

to maximize their capabilities. Again, while achieving these roles demand high state capacity, these are images or visions of state of development which many developing countries are struggling to attain but are still far from them.

While the state which is an institution is a human political agency that can only function as it is designed, operated or governed by institutional state actors who are members of society and led by political leadership to facilitate transformation vision of development, the state is presented as having an existence of its own. This mask the state from not been a human political agency made by human beings, and this becomes more worrying when the problems of development impasse caused by actions of the state actors are perceived as inevitable structural, institutional and social conditions and arrangements in human existence which the state cannot effectively address.

Therefore, the thinking that institutions work automatically on it own is false rather humans are the drivers of institutions and determine the effectiveness of institutions or the ineffectiveness of institutions or the state. But to also think that every individual would wholly confirm to institutional norms and rules or laws to achieved the societal and national goals of harmony and progress is intuitive, for every human has the tendency to want to act and prioritize his/her interests (even if ideological interests) over others or a collectivity, and on the basis of that they drive how institutions function to serve such interests. This explains why change in leadership of a state or organization influences the direction of functions of institutions of the state or the state as in institution or organization. And by extension shaping how

the people will and are expected to think and act or response to achieving the goals of every institution and the overall goal of the state. This is typical of how institutional change or a state behavior is, as triggered by capitalist/transactional and welfarist leaderships between democrats and conservatives in USA and the leaderships in communist China and socialist Russia, democratic Japan, Nigeria, South Africa and Democratic Republic Congo, or theocratic state of Iran and monarchical state of Saudi Arabia.

The perception that the state has an existence of its own undermines the transformative power of the state which is base on the human capability especially the rationality for and innovations to recreate. As every institution, the state is a creation of members of society, thus making it a human political agency. So, the operators and coordinators that administers how the state functions are political leaders irrespective of whether the state is governed with democratic/capitalistic or socialistic/communistic value system or some other ideologies. What then is required of political leadership is to lead and govern the state with the value orientation that will rightly serve society with the most development outcomes. This has been proven with Chinese communistic/socialistic political system and leadership in contrast to capitalist democratic political system and leadership in the Western Europe and USA as being the only desirable and effective political system and leadership. Similar example is from the South East Asia political leadership which eliminated possible distortions from its institutions as oppose to institution distortions in Sub Sahara Africa (Tirtosudarmo, 2013; Berendsen, 2013).

Such value oriented system defines the form, function and practices of the State. Though institutions of the state are dynamic products of changing political, economic, cultural, religious and geographical environment, the national interests and goals of the state which its institutions needs to be

shape to function towards is to always serve the good needs of people and societies of a state. With the strategic aim of economic transformation which is key to development, as was done by East and South Asia States as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea, the state is required to regulate economic transformation to achieve economic development.

With insights from institutional economics, since institutions matter for economic outcomes, and as a show of state capacity, such economic transformation for growth require effective institutions of the state/governments as done in East and South Asia States to induce and convey credible long term commitment to investors and producers, of capital formation and with assurances of investment, production and business through commitment to implementation of policy reforms- as this condition the general investment climate (Lewis, 2013).

Further, such commitments include the establishment of institutional arrangements through reforms that assures that successive political leadership can foster continuity of favourable investment climate. Some indicators to this is when there is lock-in measures as penalties for policy deviation as well as assurances of capital mobility via exit option for holders of capital which provide assurances about the safety of assets as against expropriation or arbitrary loss of assets, and the assurances of workable production and property right systems backed by law to ensure certainty in sustains investment and productivity. These reinforce public sense including investors, producers and entrepreneurs on government commitment. With this, when the market participants are more certain of sustained control of those, they work towards increases in production and capital.

In specific term, from such economic climate, where economic actors can rely upon access to specific factors and appropriation of gains from which the are likely to commit to investment in fixed productive assets, it

indicate that effective economic institutions encourages the spread of impersonal exchanges and increases in density of economic activity. This happens under circumstance where there is high and effective institutional capacity but not when there is low, weak and ineffective institutional capacity of the state. In such economic climate, beyond the old basis for achieving economic growth through more factors of production (land/natural resources, labour, capital, and technology), which continues to be critical to increase and expand economic production to drive economic development, the focus of the state should extend to and emphasis on the quality of economic growth that is oriented to the new growth theory, which stresses on developing and upgrading individuals' and people's capabilities and creating opportunities that empowers the people to utilize productively their capabilities for personal, group and national development.

The new growth theorists argument which the state must deed to is that smart growth will requires investments in ideas, innovations and abilities of workers and to add, the generality of the people (Ruttan, 1998). This means that quality economic growth is not only about generation of and attracting heavy investments (whether of foreign direct investments and diasporan or local investments) and rich capital availability for businesses of corporations and companies to expand economic production for higher profits and for the regulation of the political system for it sake but such growth must also create and open opportunities for investments in ideas, innovation and abilities of individuals as a people across gender, race and ethnic groups who are vital human capital of a country/state. Such innovations contributes to create and expand market economic opportunities and investments and earned reward/income. These will in turn enable in harnessing the factors of production with which to increase economic activities in the formal and informal economy for increase economic growth and achieve development. As result, with

economic and innovative opportunities opening up in the informal and formal economies, investments in individuals' capabilities enable and allow individuals in some instance to not only complement their formal and informal economic activities but earn complementary wages from these distinct economies, particularly from other innovative forms of subsistence production (Evans, 2010; Helpman, 2004; Ruttman, 1998).

This will spur and create high-need achievement motivation, mentality, rationality and skills needed for and to create productive economic enterprises across mass of people so as to efficiently participate in and increase economic activities that drive sustain inclusive economic growth in the process of development. For short, innovations and functional capabilities are attributes of high need achievement personality. To reiterate, these are also crucial for strengthening the capacity of institutions of the state to engage in economic transformation. The transformative power of institutions of the state which are defined by human capabilities which is also vital in industrialization and development process has been evident in the local and transnational networks for institutional innovations and entrepreneurship in the rapidly developing Asia countries like China and India (Nee & Oppen, 2012; Saxenian, 2007). And because institution matters in economic development process, Helpman (2004) argued, institutions are the key determinants of innovation and accumulation of human capital, and that promoting economic growth requires the engagement of institutional actors. On the contrary, the argument here is that institutions rather than embrace and support innovations of institutional actors all the time, entrepreneurs or of generality of the people are part of the determinants of innovations which become protected by institutional actors with which economic growth and development is fostered and promoted.

In other words, within a cultural, economic, political and geographical context,

institutions tend to harness ideas, enhance innovations and capabilities that contributes to driving economic growth if these are backed by effective political system and political leadership, and all of these facilitate development processes. As the political leadership, other institutional actors they are not only expected but required to effectively operate the institutions of the state, particularly the economic, legal, education and political institutions in the direction that spurs ideas, innovations and enhance abilities and generates opportunities for individuals and the people to utilize their capabilities. And not spur to operate institutions in ways that undermines new idea, innovations and values for progressive social change and development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Institutions matter for economic growth and development, but sociology is missing in development discourse and practice. Consequently, sociologists need to return to the mainstream discourse of development and bring insights from other areas of sociology into development studies and focus on institutions which were once its core point of analysis. Particularly, mainstream sociology should reinvigorate interests in analyzing institutions of the state with the focus of explaining how institutions in human society cause social and economic transformation. The state is no doubt the primary shere of social organization in modern society and it is a key institution which if led by an effective political leadership, can mobilize the people for social and economic transformation and overall development. This defines the state as inclusive or developmental state.

On the other hand, when the state exclude the divergence interests of the majority of people for a few others, the state becomes a predatory and extractive state, functioning only for the interests of a few others. The conclusion is that institutions matter in development. However, institutions must be shaped to be effective in driving economic

transformation, growth, improve quality of living and overall development. The effectiveness of institutions in human society is largely dependednt on the interests of institutional actors, especially political political leaders.

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5

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION AND STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS OF DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

Nigeria's integration into the global economy has been characterized by both opportunities and challenges, revealing deep-seated contradictions and structural weaknesses. This study examines the impact of economic globalization on Nigeria's economic growth and development. The study utilized secondary data from reports by the World Bank, IMF, AfDB, and UNCTAD. Liberalist theory was used as the theoretical underpinning of the study. The study revealed that while globalization has facilitated trade expansion, foreign investment, and financial sector growth, it has also exposed Nigeria to external economic shocks, capital flight, and a widening income gap. The research further reveals that globalization-induced trade liberalization has contributed to the decline of Nigeria's manufacturing sector, leading to increased unemployment and economic dependency. Additionally, financial globalization has exacerbated Nigeria's external debt burden, raising concerns about economic sovereignty and long-term sustainability. The study recommends two key policy measures. First, the government should implement a comprehensive economic diversification strategy that prioritizes industrial development, agricultural transformation, and technological innovation to reduce dependency on oil exports and enhance national economic resilience. Second, strengthening economic governance through transparent policies, regulatory frameworks, and institutional reforms is essential to ensuring policy consistency, curbing corruption, and fostering a stable investment climate.

Keywords: Globalization, Economic growth, trade, liberalization, financial instability

Introduction

Economic globalization has emerged as a defining force shaping the development trajectory of nations worldwide, including Nigeria. It entails the increasing interconnection and interdependence of economies through trade, investment, finance, technology, and the movement of people (Stiglitz, 2017). The forces of globalization have intensified since the late 20th century, largely driven by neoliberal economic policies promoted by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These institutions advocate for market liberalization, deregulation, privatization, and the reduction of trade barriers to enhance global economic

integration (Rodrik, 2018). Nigeria, as Africa's largest economy, has experienced both the benefits and drawbacks of economic globalization, leading to a complex dialectical relationship between integration into the global economy and sustainable development.

Historically, Nigeria's integration into the global economy can be traced back to the colonial period when it was incorporated into the international capitalist system as a primary producer of raw materials. The post-independence era saw efforts to diversify the economy through industrialization, but by the 1980s, economic downturns led to the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) under the dictates of the

IMF and World Bank (Iyoha & Oriakhi, 2008). These policies aimed at economic liberalization, privatization, and trade openness, yet they resulted in significant socio-economic challenges, including deindustrialization, rising unemployment, and increased poverty levels.

While globalization has contributed to economic growth in Nigeria, particularly in sectors such as telecommunications, banking, and oil and gas, it has also exacerbated economic inequality and structural dependencies (Okereke, 2020). The influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) has enhanced capital accumulation and technology transfer, yet much of the investment remains concentrated in extractive industries, reinforcing Nigeria's dependency on oil exports. Furthermore, local industries struggle to compete with foreign multinational corporations due to weak infrastructural support and inadequate industrial policies (Amin, 2019). Consequently, globalization has deepened economic vulnerabilities, exposing Nigeria to external shocks such as fluctuations in global oil prices and financial crises. This is also in line with the submission of Nosiri, U. D & Ibekwe, E. O. (2017) that globalization has made interconnectedness, communication, trade etc between states, groups and individuals across borders very easy and has consequently transformed the world into a global village.

The dialectics of Nigeria's development under globalization reveal a paradox: while economic liberalization has facilitated certain economic gains, it has also widened socio-economic disparities. The informal sector, which employs a large percentage of Nigeria's labor force, remains largely marginalized in the globalization discourse. Similarly, while trade liberalization has opened Nigeria's markets to global goods and services, it has also undermined local production due to the influx of cheaper

foreign products, leading to the decline of domestic manufacturing industries (Rodrik, 2018). These contradictions highlight the need for a critical assessment of globalization's impact on Nigeria's development and the formulation of policies that ensure a more equitable and sustainable integration into the global economy.

Against the above backdrop this study examined the impact of economic globalization on Nigeria's economic growth and development and the contradictions and structural challenges arising from Nigeria's integration into the global economy.

Concept of Globalization

The concept of globalization is devoid of a generally accepted definition and as such, there exist numerous definitions of globalization which are more or less based on the number of authors on the subject. In the words of Ajekigbe (2004), globalization represents an institutional and societal change, manifested by an increase in cash inflow, technology, and labour, which result in the expansion of business corporations on a global scale. A similar account was put forward by Majekodunmi and Adejuwon (2012); that, globalization connotes an acceleration and intensification of global integration and interaction amongst persons, organizations, and constituted authorities such as the governments of different economies which affects individuals' welfare, economic growth, socio-cultural systems and national development on a global scale. Globalization is also the increasing flow of goods, services, capital, technology, information, ideas and labour at the global level driven by universal policies and technological changes (Ayuba & Okafor, 2014).

Globalization has been driven by key factors such as technological innovation,

international trade agreements, and financial liberalization, which have accelerated cross-border flows of goods, services, capital, and labor (Rodrik, 2018). Economic globalization, a critical aspect of globalization, focuses on the expansion of global markets and the reduction of trade barriers, allowing for increased movement of goods, services, and investments across borders. This process has led to economic growth and development in many countries, but it has also created disparities, especially in developing economies like Nigeria (Iyoha & Oriakhi, 2008). While globalization has opened up new economic opportunities, it has also heightened economic dependencies, making developing nations vulnerable to external shocks such as financial crises, commodity price fluctuations, and economic downturns in major economies (Amin, 2019).

Beyond economics, globalization influences political structures and governance by promoting international cooperation, regulatory frameworks, and transnational institutions. It also fosters cultural exchanges, leading to the diffusion of ideas, languages, and lifestyles across borders (Okereke, 2020). However, critics argue that globalization has deepened inequalities between developed and developing nations, widened income disparities, and weakened local industries due to intense foreign competition (Rodrik, 2018).

As a process, globalization is neither entirely beneficial nor detrimental; rather, it presents both opportunities and challenges that nations must navigate. For Nigeria, the challenge lies in leveraging globalization to foster economic growth while mitigating its adverse effects, particularly in terms of industrial competitiveness, labor market dynamics, and economic sovereignty.

Concept of Development

Development is a multidimensional concept that has been defined differently by scholars based on their perspectives and disciplinary orientations. Traditionally, development was viewed primarily in economic terms, focusing on growth in GDP, industrialization, and increased productivity (Todaro, 1982). However, this narrow perspective has evolved to incorporate social, political, and environmental dimensions. Walter Rodney (1972) conceptualizes development as a holistic process that enhances individual and societal capacities, creativity, and well-being. Similarly, Dudley Seers (1969) argues that true development should be assessed based on improvements in poverty reduction, employment opportunities, and equality. Amartya Sen (1999) shifts the focus to human capabilities, defining development as the expansion of people's freedoms to live the kind of life they value, an approach that underpins the Human Development Index (HDI). Gunnar Myrdal (1970) emphasizes a systemic transformation, describing development as the upward movement of an entire social system, while Joseph Stiglitz (2002) underscores the role of institutional reforms and equitable economic policies in ensuring sustainable progress. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1990) further expands the definition by framing development as a process of enlarging people's choices and improving their quality of life through access to education, health, and opportunities. More recently, Sachs (2021) defines development as a pathway toward sustainable well-being, emphasizing the importance of social inclusion, economic prosperity, and environmental conservation to achieve long-term progress. This perspective aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which prioritize eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and promoting climate action as integral

components of development (UN, 2015). These evolving definitions collectively highlight that development is not merely economic growth but a broader process encompassing human welfare, governance, sustainability, and global equity. In this study, development is operationally defined as the process of improving economic conditions, social well-being, and institutional effectiveness through policies and initiatives that enhance infrastructure, governance, human capital, and sustainable livelihoods. It encompasses measurable indicators such as employment generation, poverty reduction, access to quality education and healthcare, political stability, and environmental sustainability.

An Overview of Perspectives on Globalization

Globalization is a dynamic and multidimensional process that has been defined and analyzed by various scholars across different disciplines. Holms (2004) describes globalization as the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across borders, emphasizing how it fosters complex interconnections among states and non-state actors. This perspective highlights the overlapping structures and trans-border relations that influence policies and spheres of interaction in the international system.

Giddens (2006: p.235) defines globalization as "a social process in which the constraints of geographical or socioeconomic and cultural arrangements recede, and where people become increasingly aware that they are receding." His perspective aligns with modernization theory, arguing that globalization is largely driven by Euro-American cultural and capitalist influences, with forces beyond human control shaping global transformations.

A more concrete definition is provided by Ford (2005: p.203), who conceptualizes

globalization as "the intensification of global social relationships that link distant localities in a way that local existence is shaped by events happening many miles away." Ford contends that globalization creates a world where actions in one location have far-reaching consequences elsewhere, facilitated by the free flow of information, capital, and socio-economic values, predominantly from developed to underdeveloped societies.

McGuick (2006) sees globalization as an era of increased global interconnection and interdependence, driven by advancements in technology, information, trade, geopolitics, and socio-cultural interactions. This borderless world, according to McGuick, has transformed the global economy into a unipolar system dominated by capitalist forces. Similarly, Dennis (2002) argues that globalization has "webbed societies into one global family system," intensifying liberalization in trade, finance, production, research, transportation, and culture. These developments have facilitated remarkable advancements in microelectronics, information processing, biotechnology, and communication, fostering both cooperation and competition within the global system.

In the contemporary globalized world, the concept of interdependence is more evident than ever. Egwu (2003) notes that national alliances have become increasingly entangled, limiting the ability of states to maintain absolute sovereignty. Frequent diplomatic visits, globalized trade, and expanded financial flows demonstrate how deeply interconnected the world has become. According to the World Trade Organization (WTO, 2023), global trade volume increased by 2.6% in 2022 despite economic disruptions, reflecting the resilience of globalization.

The role of technology in globalization cannot be overstated. Kent (2004) highlights how technological advancements have

transformed space precision and high-speed delivery in various sectors. Digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok have revolutionized communication, while e-commerce has expanded global trade opportunities. More recently, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2023) reported that global e-commerce transactions surpassed \$5.4 trillion in 2022, underscoring the growing influence of digital globalization. Furthermore, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) continue to reshape economic and social interactions across borders.

Despite its benefits, globalization has also been criticized for deepening global inequalities. The International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2023) acknowledges that while globalization has driven economic growth in many regions, income disparities remain a significant concern. Developing economies, including Nigeria, often struggle with structural dependencies that limit their participation in high-value manufacturing. Instead, as Kent (2004) argues, globalization has reinforced an international division of labor where Euro-American nations dominate high-skilled manufacturing, while low-skilled production is relegated to Third World economies. This has resulted in an imbalance where Western nations benefit from outsourcing while developing countries face economic vulnerability due to trade deficits and job insecurity.

Moreover, globalization has been associated with neo-colonial tendencies, where powerful economies exert economic and cultural influence over weaker nations. Scholars such as Stiglitz (2020) argue that globalization, particularly in its neoliberal form, has led to economic domination by multinational corporations, limiting the policy autonomy of developing nations. The World Bank (2023) reports that 60% of the world's poorest countries are now at risk of

debt distress, partly due to economic globalization that favors powerful lending institutions and multinational corporations over local economic sustainability.

Theoretical Framework

Liberalist theory provides a compelling framework for understanding globalization, emphasizing free markets, democracy, international cooperation, and economic interdependence. Rooted in the works of classical scholars such as Adam Smith (1776), John Locke (1690), and Immanuel Kant (1795), liberalism posits that the removal of trade barriers, the spread of democratic governance, and the establishment of international institutions foster global peace, stability, and economic prosperity. In modern times, theorists like Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1977) advanced the concept of *complex interdependence*, arguing that globalization reduces the likelihood of conflicts by creating mutual economic and political dependencies among states. The fundamental assumptions of liberalist theory suggest that economic interdependence promotes stability, democratic governance reduces conflict, international institutions facilitate cooperation, technological advancements accelerate globalization, and free markets enhance global development. These assumptions align closely with contemporary globalization trends, particularly in the expansion of trade, international diplomacy, and cultural exchanges. The World Trade Organization (WTO, 2023) highlights that trade liberalization has facilitated economic growth by increasing foreign direct investments (FDI) and improving market access for developing nations, though concerns about economic inequalities remain. Politically, globalization fosters international cooperation through institutions like the United Nations (UN) and

the African Union (AU), reinforcing Keohane and Nye's (2000) argument that economic and political interdependence strengthens global governance. Technological advancements, a key pillar of globalization, have further accelerated global integration, as seen in the rise of digital trade, social media activism, and cross-border financial transactions. UNCTAD (2023) reported that global e-commerce transactions exceeded \$5.4 trillion in 2022, demonstrating the transformative power of digital globalization. Despite its benefits, liberalist globalization faces criticisms, particularly regarding economic dependency and cultural homogenization, as developing nations struggle to compete with more established economies. Nonetheless, by promoting free markets, democracy, and institutional collaboration, liberalist theory provides a valuable lens through which globalization can be analyzed, offering insights into its economic, political, and social implications for global development.

The relevance of liberalist theory to this study lies in its ability to explain how globalization shapes modern economies, governance structures, and cultural interactions. The theory provides a foundation for analyzing the positive and negative consequences of globalization, particularly in the areas of trade liberalization, technological advancements, and international cooperation. By applying liberalist principles, this study can assess how globalization influences national policies, economic growth, and the balance of power among nations. Additionally, the theory helps in understanding the role of global institutions in regulating economic activities and ensuring equitable development. Ultimately, liberalist theory provides a framework for evaluating globalization's impact on different societies, making it a crucial theoretical tool for this study.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, relying primarily on secondary data sources to examine the contradictions and structural challenges arising from Nigeria's integration into the global economy. The use of secondary data enables an in-depth analysis of existing literature, economic reports, policy documents, and scholarly publications related to globalization, trade liberalization, financial integration, and economic development in Nigeria. Key sources include academic journals, books, government reports, and publications from international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The Impact of Economic Globalization on Nigeria's Economic Growth and Development

Economic globalization has significantly influenced Nigeria's economic growth and development through trade liberalization, foreign direct investment (FDI), technology transfer, and integration into global financial markets. As Africa's largest economy, Nigeria has engaged in international trade and economic reforms to leverage globalization's benefits. However, while economic globalization has contributed to GDP growth, infrastructural development, and employment generation, it has also exacerbated economic inequalities, increased external dependency, and made the country vulnerable to global economic shocks.

One of the major positive impacts of economic globalization on Nigeria is the expansion of trade and investment. Since adopting economic liberalization policies in the 1980s and 1990s under Structural

Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Nigeria has integrated into the global economy, leading to increased exports of crude oil, its primary revenue source (World Bank, 2023). The World Bank further reports that Nigeria's oil exports accounted for over 80% of total exports, demonstrating the country's heavy reliance on global markets. Additionally, globalization has attracted FDI, particularly in the oil, telecommunications, and manufacturing sectors, which has contributed to infrastructure development and job creation. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2023), Nigeria remained one of the top FDI destinations in Africa, with inflows surpassing \$4.6 billion in 2022. The telecommunications sector, for instance, has seen significant foreign investments, leading to the rapid expansion of mobile and internet services across the country (NBS, 2023).

However, economic globalization has also posed challenges for Nigeria's economic development. The country's over-reliance on crude oil exports has made it vulnerable to global price fluctuations, as seen during the 2014 and 2020 oil price crashes, which led to economic recessions (IMF, 2023). The liberalization of trade has also increased import dependency, affecting local industries that struggle to compete with cheaper foreign goods. The manufacturing sector, for example, has faced stiff competition from Asian markets, particularly China, leading to the closure of many local industries and job losses (Akinola, 2022). Furthermore, globalization has contributed to rising income inequality, with wealth concentrated in a few sectors and regions, while rural areas and informal workers remain marginalized. The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2023) noted that despite Nigeria's economic growth, poverty and unemployment remain high, with over

40% of the population living below the poverty line.

Moreover, globalization has influenced Nigeria's financial sector by integrating it into global capital markets. The growth of financial technology (fintech) has expanded access to banking services, with companies like Flutterwave and Paystack facilitating digital transactions and cross-border payments (CBN, 2023). However, financial globalization has also exposed Nigeria to external shocks, such as the 2008 global financial crisis, which led to capital flight and instability in the banking sector (Eze & Okonkwo, 2021). Additionally, foreign debt accumulation has increased due to globalization, with Nigeria's external debt reaching \$41.6 billion in 2023, raising concerns about debt sustainability (DMO, 2023).

In conclusion, economic globalization has played a dual role in Nigeria's economic growth and development. While it has stimulated trade, investment, technological advancement, and financial integration, it has also introduced challenges such as economic vulnerability, deindustrialization, inequality, and debt dependency. To maximize the benefits of globalization, Nigeria must adopt policies that promote economic diversification, strengthen local industries, and enhance social welfare programs to mitigate the adverse effects of global economic integration.

The Contradictions and structural challenges arising from Nigeria's integration into the global economy

Nigeria's integration into the global economy has produced both opportunities and contradictions, exposing structural challenges that undermine sustainable economic growth and development. While globalization has facilitated trade expansion, foreign investment, and technological advancements, it has also deepened

economic vulnerabilities, exacerbated income inequalities, and weakened local industries. The contradictions of Nigeria's globalization experience stem from an over-reliance on crude oil exports, financial instability, deindustrialization, and the challenges of economic diversification, all of which reflect structural weaknesses within the economy (World Bank, 2023).

One of the key contradictions of Nigeria's global economic integration is the paradox of economic growth without substantial development. Despite being Africa's largest economy with a GDP exceeding \$477 billion in 2023, Nigeria continues to struggle with poverty, unemployment, and poor social infrastructure (IMF, 2023). The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2023) reports that over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line despite the country's vast natural resource wealth. This contradiction highlights the failure of globalization-driven economic growth to translate into broad-based human development due to structural deficiencies such as corruption, weak institutions, and policy inconsistencies.

Another major challenge arising from Nigeria's global integration is the country's persistent dependence on crude oil exports, which leaves the economy vulnerable to external shocks. Crude oil accounts for over 80% of Nigeria's total exports and 50% of government revenue (UNCTAD, 2023). This over-reliance on a single commodity has made Nigeria highly susceptible to fluctuations in global oil prices, as witnessed in the 2014 and 2020 oil price crashes, which triggered economic recessions (CBN, 2023). The inability to diversify the economy beyond oil has stifled industrialization and job creation, further worsening economic inequalities.

Additionally, trade liberalization and the influx of foreign goods have contributed to the decline of Nigeria's manufacturing sector. The liberalization policies

implemented under the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s exposed local industries to stiff competition from cheaper imports, particularly from China and other Asian economies (Akinola, 2022). As a result, many Nigerian manufacturing firms have shut down, leading to increased unemployment and capital flight. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP declined from 10% in 2010 to 7% in 2023, reflecting the impact of globalization-induced deindustrialization.

Financial globalization has also presented contradictions in Nigeria's economic integration. While it has facilitated the expansion of the banking sector, digital finance, and foreign capital inflows, it has also increased the country's exposure to global financial crises and external debt burdens (Eze & Okonkwo, 2021). Nigeria's external debt reached \$41.6 billion in 2023, raising concerns about debt sustainability and economic sovereignty (DMO, 2023). Furthermore, capital flight and speculative foreign investments have undermined financial stability, with investors withdrawing funds during periods of economic uncertainty. The 2008 global financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed Nigeria's vulnerability to external economic shocks, leading to currency devaluation and inflationary pressures (IMF, 2023).

Moreover, globalization has exacerbated socio-economic inequalities in Nigeria. While foreign investments and economic liberalization have created wealth in certain sectors, benefits have largely been concentrated among elites and multinational corporations, while informal workers, rural communities, and small businesses struggle to compete (AfDB, 2023). This has widened the income gap and increased social tensions, as seen in the rise

of youth unemployment and migration in search of better economic opportunities. In conclusion, Nigeria's integration into the global economy has been characterized by contradictions and structural challenges that hinder inclusive development. While globalization has facilitated trade, investment, and financial expansion, it has also entrenched economic dependence, deindustrialization, financial instability, and inequality.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's integration into the global economy has brought both opportunities and challenges, highlighting significant contradictions and structural weaknesses. While globalization has facilitated economic growth through increased trade, foreign direct investment, and financial expansion, it has also reinforced economic dependency, deindustrialization, financial instability, and socio-economic inequalities. The over-reliance on crude oil exports, vulnerability to external shocks, declining manufacturing sector, and rising debt burden have constrained Nigeria's ability to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

Arising from the above findings the study recommended the followings:

The Nigerian government should implement policies that promote economic diversification beyond oil dependence by investing in agriculture, manufacturing, and technology-driven industries. This can be achieved through targeted incentives for local industries, infrastructure development, and improved access to finance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to boost domestic production and reduce reliance on imports.

To mitigate the negative effects of globalization, Nigeria must enhance economic governance by promoting transparency, policy consistency, and institutional reforms. Strengthening

regulatory frameworks, reducing corruption, and ensuring effective implementation of trade and industrial policies will help create a more stable economic environment that attracts sustainable investments and enhances national economic competitiveness

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6

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

Corruption remains a significant obstacle, particularly in many African countries where institutional weaknesses persist. This paper examined the institutional fight against corruption in Nigeria and South Africa, two of Africa's largest democracies, using Institutional Theory as a framework for understanding how formal rules and informal norms shape anti-corruption efforts. Drawing on a documentary research methodology, the study critically analysed secondary data from academic sources, policy documents, government reports, and credible media publications. Findings reveal that despite the presence of multiple anti-corruption agencies and legal frameworks in both countries, challenges such as political interference, lack of institutional autonomy, slow judicial processes, and politicized leadership appointments continue to undermine progress. These systemic issues have weakened public trust, stalled development, and hindered good governance. The paper concludes that addressing these challenges requires granting operational and financial independence to anti-corruption bodies, adopting merit-based leadership appointments, establishing specialized judicial mechanisms for corruption cases, and equipping personnel with modern investigative tools. Ultimately, the study calls for strategic institutional reforms to enhance transparency, accountability, and the rule of law as prerequisites for sustainable development.

Keywords: Corruption, institutions, governance, Nigeria, & South Africa.

Introduction

Corruption has become one of the biggest problems facing countries around the world. It is not only found in developing countries but is also present in developed nations. Mynit (2020) explains that corruption is a global issue that seriously affects development, especially in less

developed countries. It damages institutions, slows down growth, and reduces trust in government.

In Africa, corruption continues to be a major problem, affecting progress and weakening institutions. According to Transparency International (2022), many

African countries are among the most corrupt in the world. Nigeria, for example, has been a center of attention in the fight against corruption due to the high rate of corrupt practices in both public and private sectors. In the 2020 Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International, Nigeria was ranked 24th out of 180 countries, showing a high level of corruption. Even though Nigerian governments have tried to fight corruption over the years, the results have not been very encouraging. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019) reports that various governments in Nigeria have set up several anti-corruption strategies and agencies. These include the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), and the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP).

However, corruption still remains a big problem in Nigeria. According to the NBS (2019), many government workers take bribes during recruitment, inflate contracts, and demand money for services in hospitals, schools, and elections. This shows that even with the presence of these anti-corruption agencies, corruption continues to affect every part of life in the country.

In the same way, South Africa, which is seen as one of Africa's strongest democracies, also faces corruption challenges. Natash (2017), in a global study covering 102 countries, ranked South Africa 36th in corruption. The 2020 Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International also placed South Africa at 43rd out of 180 countries. Even though South Africa has set up several anti-corruption systems and agencies like the National Anti-Corruption

Strategy (NACS), the Asset Forfeiture Unit (AFU), the Investigating Directorate Corruption (IDCR), the South African Police Service Anti-Corruption Unit (SAPS ACU), and the Investigating Directorate Organised Crime (IDOC), corruption is still a big problem. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2020) notes that major scandals involving government officials, public companies, and private businesses have reduced public trust in the fight against corruption.

The issues in Nigeria and South Africa show that corruption in these countries is caused by weak institutions and poor enforcement. Although both countries have laws and agencies to fight corruption, problems such as lack of political will, poor transparency, weak legal systems, and limited accountability continue to stop real progress. Also, in both countries, some anti-corruption efforts are used to fight political enemies instead of being used fairly for justice.

Based on all of this, this study aims to look closely at how corruption is being fought in both Nigeria and South Africa. By comparing the methods, successes, and challenges of each country, the paper hopes to understand how effective their efforts are and suggest better ways to improve the fight against corruption across Africa.

Conceptual Clarifications

Corruption

Corruption is a complex and multi-dimensional concept that has attracted global attention and concern due to its widespread occurrence and devastating effects on governance, development, and social justice. It is derived from the Latin word "corruptus", meaning "to break" or

“to destroy,” which reflects its harmful nature. In general terms, corruption refers to any act of dishonesty or unethical behaviour by a person in authority for personal gain. Transparency International (2022) defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain,” a definition widely accepted by governments, international organisations, and scholars alike.

Although corruption is often associated with financial wrongdoing, its meaning extends beyond mere bribery or theft. It includes a wide range of activities such as embezzlement, favouritism, nepotism, electoral fraud, and the misuse of public resources. According to the World Bank (1997), corruption is “the abuse of public office for private benefit.” This definition is significant as it ties the concept directly to governance and public service, suggesting that corruption undermines the duties and responsibilities entrusted to officials by the public.

Corruption can be categorised into various forms. Petty corruption refers to everyday abuse of power by low- and mid-level officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, often in the form of bribes or small favours. Grand corruption, on the other hand, involves high-level officials who manipulate policies or state institutions for personal enrichment. Political corruption involves the distortion of political processes, such as vote-buying, election rigging, or misuse of campaign funds, all of which damage the integrity of democratic systems (Amundsen, 2006).

Scholars have also developed theoretical definitions to capture the broader meaning of corruption. Nye (1967) defines corruption as “behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding

personal, close family, or private clique interests.” This includes practices such as bribery, nepotism, and misappropriation of public goods. Such behaviour undermines the principles of fairness, merit, and transparency, which are essential to effective governance and public trust.

Klitgaard (1998) further simplifies the concept by offering a formula: Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion – Accountability. This model explains that corruption flourishes when a person or institution has monopoly power over a resource or decision, the discretion to act without clear rules, and no accountability for their actions. This formula has become a foundation for designing anti-corruption policies and reforms across various sectors and institutions.

Furthermore, corruption is not limited to the public sector. It also exists in the private sector, civil society, and even in international organisations. Private companies may engage in corruption by offering bribes to secure contracts, evading taxes, or manipulating markets. These practices not only distort fair competition but also weaken public institutions and economic stability.

It is also important to note that corruption varies in perception and practice across cultures and legal systems. What is considered corrupt in one society might be seen as a normal or accepted behaviour in another, especially in systems influenced by patronage and kinship (Hope, 2000). Despite these differences, the common thread remains that corruption erodes public trust, undermines institutions, and obstructs social and economic progress.

Corruption is a deeply rooted societal problem that encompasses a range of

unethical behaviours. Whether seen through the lens of political theory, public administration, or legal systems, it is generally agreed that corruption threatens the foundations of justice, development, and good governance. A clear understanding of the concept is essential in forming effective strategies to prevent and combat it at all levels.

Institutional

The term institutional is rooted in the word institution, which refers to established and structured systems of rules, norms, and organisations that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups within a society. The concept of “institutional” relates to anything that is shaped by, derived from, or associated with these institutions. Institutions provide the foundation for the functioning of society, ensuring predictability, stability, and order in political, social, and economic relations (North, 1990).

Institutions can be formal, such as constitutions, laws, regulatory agencies, and government bodies, or informal, including traditions, customs, and unwritten social norms (Leftwich, 2005). As such, when something is described as institutional, it implies that it is connected to these enduring frameworks that influence how society operates.

Scott (2001) defines institutions as “multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources.” In this context, the term institutional refers to the structures and practices that are maintained over time through enforcement mechanisms, shared understanding, and legitimacy. Institutions are not merely physical bodies or buildings

but systems of rules and expectations that shape human interaction.

From a sociological and political science perspective, the concept of institutional is essential in explaining how systems of authority, justice, governance, and education function. March and Olsen (1989) assert that institutions are “collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relations between roles and situations.” Therefore, institutional behaviour involves actions and decisions that are aligned with these accepted standards and practices.

The institutional approach or institutional theory focuses on understanding how institutions influence behaviour, shape outcomes, and persist over time. This approach considers how institutions constrain or enable actions, how they evolve, and how they interact with one another in a broader system. When discussing institutional arrangements, institutional structures, or institutional frameworks, reference is made to the organised and rule-based systems within which individuals, groups, or governments operate (Peters, 1999).

In governance, the term institutional is widely used in contexts such as institutional reform, institutional effectiveness, or institutional capacity, all of which refer to the strength, structure, and efficiency of public institutions in delivering their mandates. Effective institutional systems are crucial for upholding rule of law, transparency, accountability, and service delivery (Grindle, 1996).

Institutional refers to what is shaped by or related to institutions, whether formal or informal, legal or normative. It encompasses the structures, rules, values,

and mechanisms that govern how society is organised and how individuals relate to one another within a given system.

Theoretical Framework- Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory forms the theoretical lens for this study on the fight against corruption in Nigeria and South Africa.

Institutional theory was developed by North (1990) and Scott (1995). Institutional theory is used to explain how institutions, both formal (laws, rules, organisations) and informal (values, norms, traditions), influence the behaviour of individuals and groups within a society. According to Scott (1995), institutions are structures that provide stability and meaning to social life by shaping and constraining human behaviour. North (1990) further argues that institutions are the humanly devised rules of the game in a society, shaping interactions and reducing uncertainty.

The main tenet of the theory is that institutions, whether formal or informal, play a central role in determining societal outcomes. Strong and independent institutions can guide behaviour toward ethical conduct and accountability, while weak and compromised institutions may allow corruption, mismanagement, and injustice to thrive. Institutional theory also explains that behaviour is influenced not just by personal intentions, but by the larger institutional environment in which individuals and organisations operate (Peters, 2011).

In the context of this study, institutional theory is used to analyse the structure, role, and effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria and South Africa. The theory assumes that when

institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in Nigeria, and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS), and Special Investigating Unit (SIU) in South Africa are strong, well-funded, and operate independently, they are more likely to deter, investigate, and prosecute corrupt practices. Conversely, when these institutions are underfunded, lack autonomy, or face political interference, their ability to fight corruption is severely weakened.

The theory further emphasizes the concept of institutional isomorphism, as explained by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), where states adopt similar anti-corruption bodies or laws not necessarily out of internal motivation for change, but as a way to gain legitimacy on the international stage. In such situations, anti-corruption institutions may appear effective in structure but lack the will, resources, or independence needed for real impact. This can be seen in both Nigeria and South Africa, where institutions exist, yet corruption remains widespread.

Institutional theory also helps to explain the various challenges affecting anti-corruption agencies in both countries. These include political interference, lack of autonomy in appointing agency heads, inadequate funding, and slow judicial processes. For instance, in Nigeria, cases involving high-profile politicians often remain unresolved due to adjournments, bail abuse, and political protection. In South Africa, political appointments and interference have equally limited the effectiveness of certain agencies despite their mandates.

Institutional theory is appropriate and relevant to this study because it highlights how the strength, independence, and integrity of institutions determine the success or failure of anti-corruption efforts. In both Nigeria and South Africa, while anti-corruption agencies have been established, their effectiveness is largely shaped by the institutional environment in which they operate. Thus, building strong, transparent, and accountable institutions remains central to reducing corruption and promoting good governance.

Research Methodology

This paper adopts a robust documentary research methodology to examine the institutional fight against corruption in Nigeria and South Africa. By critically evaluating a wide range of secondary sources, including academic journals, government publications, policy documents, media articles, and credible online materials, the study builds a solid foundation for comparing institutional approaches, identifying key challenges, and proposing practical recommendations for enhancing anti-corruption efforts in both countries.

A Synopsis of corruption in Africa

The issue of poverty and underdevelopment in Africa is directly linked to corruption. Momoh (2015) reveal that enormous resources in Africa have been lost to corruption. Government officials use their offices to steal resources meant for the purpose of development. Corruption have also been institutionalized spreading through which has become a norm in public and private life. Corruption according to Henson (2009).

Corruption in Africa in most cases are perpetrated by African leaders/ government officials. for example, in 2004, former head of the Kenyan anti-corruption commission was prevented by the Attorney General from unraveling evidence of corruption by a company called Anglo leasing which was awarded several contracts by the Government that was never executed (Hanson, 2009.) In Nigeria also, the autocratic regime of General Sani Abacha was accused looting about \$750million. Abacha regime was characterized by kickbacks bribery shady dealing and outright theft (Momoh 2005). Other African nations such as Malawi, where corrupt parliament members looted the state treasury to the tune of \$ 3million to build luxury in the country.

In Congo (Zaire) late Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Mbengu Wazabanga looted the country's treasury. Economic analyst even claim that he was richer than his country (Ojo, 2007). More revealing the afro barometer survey research network discovered that most or all state institution in South Africa are corrupt. The finding of the survey reveal that 56% of Police officials involve in corruption, 53% in the presidents office, 51% in the local government council and 50% parliament. The survey also confirmed that 71% of government officials go unpunished. (Patel and Govindasamy, 2021).

Moreso, Van Duyna and Harvey (2021) aver that, despite Nigeria and south Africa occupying first and third in the nominal Gross Domestic of \$443billion and \$283billion in 2020 respectively, the citizens in both countries still live in abject poverty as a result of endemic corruption. Van Duyne and Harvey (2021) present some findings regarding evidence of corruption in Nigeria. That in 2011 the

former Governor of Ogun State was accused of embezzling the sum of ₦211.3million and ₦300million against the governor of Borno State for misappropriation. The National security adviser to the former President Jonathan, Sambo Dasuki, was also charged to court by the EFCC for diverting huge sum of money means for the purchase of arms ammunition to fight Boko Haram. Diezani Alison Maduake the former Petroleum Minister during the administration of Goodluck Jonathan diverted billions of dollars to her foreign account for personal use. These among numerous corrupt practices by government office holders have further sunk Nigeria, South Africa and other Countries into abject poverty.

Collaborating the forgoing, the United Nations office on drugs and crime (UNODC, 2021) affirm that corruption especially in African countries has undermine sustainable development goals, economic loss and inefficiency, poverty and in equality, personal loss, intimidation and inconvenience, public and private sector dysfunction, electoral rigging and diminish state capacity to entrench a serious and workable pattern for development that will improve the living standard of their citizens.

Findings and Discussions

This part of the study discusses the findings generated from the study.

The Fight Against Corruption: The Case of Nigeria

Corruption in Nigeria have existed from the onset, the phenomenon became institutionalized under General Ibrahim Babangida. Ogundiya (2009) noted that corruption was raised to a level of state policy and allegation of corruption was

treated with outmost levity thereby destroying all efforts of the previous administration. Muhammed (2013) further noted that the return to democracy marking the beginning of the forth republic. Olusegun Obasanjo signed the anti-corruption bill which gave birth to anti-corruption agencies; the independent corrupt practice and other related offences commission (ICPC) and the Economic and financial crime commission (EFCC).

In addition, the code of conduct bureau (CBB) and the bureau for public procurement (BPP), The public complaints commission (PCC), the office of the Auditor-General are also in partnership with the ICPC and EFCC in fight against corruption in Nigeria. The functions and structure of this anti-corruption agencies will be highlighted below.

a. The Independent Corrupt Practice and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

- Mandate and responsibility: - to combat corruption through enforcement, Prevention and education of the public to support the commission in providing information that will assist the commission in fighting corruption to minimal level.
- The commission according to section 3(10) of the act is expected to perform its function effectively without interference.
- Anti-corruption and transparency and monitoring unit (ACTU'S) to serve as focal point of the commission in ministries, department and agencies (MDA'S) .

b. Economic and Financial Crimes Commissions (EFCC)

The EFCC was established in 2003 and amended in 2004 to perform the following:

-

The commission is saddled with the mandate to investigate all financial crime including advance fee fraud, illegal charge transfer, money laundering, counterfeiting, credit card fraud, contract fraud etc (Hassan, 2021).

- The Commission under the act of 2003 and amended 2004 is independent and expected to perform its function without interference.

c. The Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) Act

The Bureau was established in 2007 with the mandate:

- formulate the general policies and guideline relating to public sector procurement for the approval of the council.

- Published the details of major contracts in the procurement journal.
- Perform procurement and award of contract procedures of every entity to this act, prepare and update standard bidding and contract document, etc
- The Commission is independent from control.
(UNCAC, Article 6)

d. Anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria: EFCC and ICPC.

The establishment of this institution has contributed significantly in combating the activities to the extent that the scorecard assessing both the ICPC and the EFCC. The ICPC monitor in 2008 present that the data below as effort by the EFCC in Combating corruption: -number of persons arrested (3007), Number of persons convicted (145) and value of assets/ funds recovered (~~N~~ 725 billion) (Muhammed, 2013), more revealing Muhammed (2013) present the data below in the fight against corruption by the EFCC and ICPC.

Sn	Name	Case Status	Amount Involved	Status
1	Ayo Fayose (former governor of Ekiti state)	Arraigned on 51 state counts	₦1.2 billion	Case pending granted bail
2	Joshua Dariye (former governor of plateau state	Arraigned on 23 state counts	₦ 700 Million	Case pending granted bail since 2007
3	James Ibori (former governor of Delta state)	Arraigned on 170 counts	₦ 9.2 Billion	Case pending granted bail since 2008
4	Rasheed Ladoja (former governor of Oyo state)	Arraigned on 33 state count	₦ 6 Billion	Case pending granted bail 2008
5	Hammad Bello (EX C.G customs)	Arraigned on 46 state count	₦ 2.5 Billion	Case pending granted bail since 2009
6	Hassan Lawal (former minister of works)	Arraigned on 37 count Charges	₦ 75 Billion	Case pending granted bail by court

Amongst the above listed cases only chief James Ibori, the former governor of Delta state who was jailed in United Kingdom and released recently. In the light of the forgoing, Nnochiri (2023) reveal that the former chairman of the pension commission was jailed for eight count charges and was affirmed by the court of Appeal in Abuja for embezzling more than 50 billion naira. The EFCC have also been able to recovered huge amount of money from alleged corrupt official for instance, EFCC directed two directors of Ontario oil and gas limited to return the sum of 754 million naira (us\$,464,952) and were jailed for 69 years. The commission also recovered 3.04 billion naira (us\$,9,803,921) from former group managing director of the Nigeria National petroleum corporation (NNPC) through whistleblowers. Also provided information to anti-corruption agency which led to the recovery of over 11.6 billion naira in

2017(jamo,2021). These and many more arraignment and persecutions are the achievement that can be accredited to any corruption agencies in the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

The Fight Against Corruption: The Case of South Africa

Corruption has long been a characteristic of South African public service. Since 1994, achieving good governance and fighting corruption have become two of the most important challenges for the country in the post-apartheid era (National Anti-Corruption strategy, 2020).

Presently, there are anti-corruption agencies in south African that include, the Directorate for priority crime investigation (DPCI) saddled with the mandate of recovering public funds, siphoned through corruption, fraud and illicit money flows. The financial intelligence centre (FIC) is

established to combat money laundering activities and terrorist financing. Also, the independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA) is Saddled with the responsibility of creating ethical financing sector and promote sound practices. Other anti-corruption agencies include Independent Police Investigation Directorate (IPID), Special Investigating Unit and Special Tribunal (SIU), Office of Chief Procurement Officer (OCPO) in the National Treasury, among other anti-corruption agencies.

Anti- Corruption Efforts in South Africa

Baqwa (2001) points out that anti-corruption agencies in south Africa have been re-strategizing to fight corruption, though the level of corruption is recurring at unacceptable level.

The National investigation unit 6 “admitted that a veritable flood of new corruption cases was being received daily, and that... as far back as 2001” of the 238 employees indicated for corruption, 102 were found guilty and dismissed (Serfotein and weal 2015). Linda (2022) also reveals that the south African National Persecuting Authority Charged Matshela koko, former head of the country’s power provider, Eskom for Multiple counts related to corruption, fraud and Money laundering. Under his tenure also were charged in a complex case, which involves more than \$121 million in power station construction contracts. Burke (2021) reported that Jacob Zuma, the former South African president was charged for bribery, fraud, racketeering and money laundering relating to \$2.5bn deal to buy European military hardware to upgrade south Africans armed forces in 1999 when he was deputy president. The court also sentenced Jacob zuma 15 months

imprisonment for failing to appear before the court for trial. In a corruption case also, Special Investigating Unit (SIU) obtain preservation order to freeze pension benefits of Mr. Tshegofatso Daniel moralo from the Special Tribunal (ST) pending the finalization of civil action instituted against him (South African Government, 2023).

Notwithstanding, these and other cases have shown that south Africa is really fighting corruption.

Challenges Associated with the Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria and South Africa

- (i) On a general note, Lumumba (2013) Pointed out that, the greatest Challenge of anti-corruption Commission in Africa is centered on political interference (Mikail, madya, Ainuddini and Abdullahi (2018). For example, in Nigeria, Adeniyi (2011) and mikail (2016) pointed out that, the removal of Nuhu Ribadu as the Chairman of the EFCC by President Yar’adua is due to Ibori’s corrupt Scandal which manifest the political elites against combating corruption. Similarly, the removal of makasi of South Africa and the disbanding of his Scorpion team. In short, the Political interference in the course of investigation and prosecution had immense effect on the war against corruption in Nigeria and South Africa.
- (ii) Appointment of chief executives of anti-corruption agencies. Mikail.et al (2018) noted that the heads of anti-graft agencies are appointed by the presidents in most African countries including Nigeria and South Africa. The implication is that, the head of these agencies dance to the tune of the presidents and his loyalist.

- (iii) Poor funding. Muhammed (2013) infer that anti-graft agencies had been weak and ineffective in most African Countries. Muhammed Further noted that lack of funds usually affects the operation of these agencies especially money laundering that has to do with cross border investigation involving high Profile politicians or elites.
- (iv) Corrupt cases tapped in the court: In most cases those arranged in courts are granted bail and such cases die due to continues adjournment. As a result, the public keeps losing confidence on anti-corruption agencies. For example, Ademola (2011) Noted that late senator Ibrahim Mantu Mismanaged the sum of ₦ 400 million in the Failed operations taken to court, and nothing was done to bring him to book.
- (v) Organizational deficiency. Jumo (2021) empirically presents that, in 2012 and 2015 EFCC Annual Report revealed that lack of training of officers is another challenge to effectively perform. (George, 2004) at also reveal that anti corruption agency in South Africa needs to equip their staff with the knowledge of technology because technological development creates opportunities for organized crime (Faniel, 2009).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper critically examined the pervasive issue of corruption in Africa, with a particular focus on Nigeria and South Africa, and assessed its implications for governance, development, and institutional integrity. The findings reveal that, despite numerous anti-corruption initiatives and the establishment of specialized agencies, both countries continue to struggle with systemic

obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of their anti-corruption efforts. Political interference, lack of institutional autonomy, judicial delays, and flawed leadership appointments remain key challenges. These structural weaknesses have not only undermined public trust but have also perpetuated poverty, inequality, and social unrest. The persistence of corruption in these nations signals an urgent need for strategic, institutional, and policy-driven reforms aimed at fostering transparency, accountability, and good governance.

In light of the above findings, this paper makes the following recommendations:

Government should ensure that anti-corruption agencies are granted full institutional and operational autonomy, free from political influence, to enable them to function independently and effectively.

A transparent and merit-based system should be adopted for the appointment of leadership within anti-corruption bodies to ensure competence, impartiality, and public trust in the institutions.

A specialized and independent judicial framework should be established for the timely adjudication of corruption-related cases, in order to reduce delays and promote swift justice.

There should be a direct allocation of funds to anti-corruption institutions through the national budget, to safeguard financial independence and enhance accountability in the utilization of public resources.

Personnel of anti-corruption agencies should be adequately trained in digital forensics, data analysis, and other modern investigative techniques to effectively combat emerging forms of

corruption, including cyber and financial crimes.

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DIGITALIZATION AS A TOOL FOR COMBATING CORRUPTION IN THE NIGERIA IMMIGRATION SERVICE, EDO STATE COMMAND

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Abstract.

This study investigates the impact of digitalization in mitigating corruption within the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), focusing on the Edo State Command. The paper employed a mixed-method approach, combining surveys, interviews, and observational data, and grounded in Technology Acceptance Model (T.A.M). The research examines the current state of the digitalization efforts of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and its effects on reducing corrupt practices in passport processing, visa applications and border management. Results indicated that digitalization has significantly enhanced transparency, accountability and efficiency; leading to a demonstrable reduction in corruption within the Edo State Command. However, the study identifies infrastructural deficits, limited digital literacy, and resistance to change as key challenges hindering the optimal implementation of digital tools. Recommendations include the development of a comprehensive digitalization strategy, strategic investment in digital infrastructure, and targeted capacity-building programs to maximize the effectiveness of digitalization in combating corruption within the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS).

Keywords: Accountability, corruption, digitalization, immigration, transparency

Introduction

In Nigeria, corruption continues to be a major barrier to progress and sound administration, especially in government agencies like the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS). National development is seriously threatened by corruption in public sector organizations, which erodes public confidence and diverts vital funds (Verhoef et al., 2021). This paradigm change also applies to the Nigerian public service, which is an essential part of the nation's administrative structure. The goal of this study is to examine the various opportunities and difficulties that come up when the Nigerian public sector implements digital transformation. A key component of Nigeria's governance framework, the public

service is in charge of carrying out administrative duties at all governmental levels, implementing policies, and providing public services (Oyedele, 2015; Bello, 2021).

In the past, the Nigeria Immigration Service which is in charge of border control, visa issuance, and passport administration has been vulnerable to bribery, extortion, and document fraud, among other types of corruption. These difficulties have reduced the Nigerian immigration service's operating effectiveness and eroded public confidence in governmental institutions. Additionally, it not only damages the service's reputation but also makes it more difficult for it to fulfill its mission. An important chance to address these issues is provided by digitalization,

which is the incorporation of digital technologies into many facets of an organization's activities. Through process automation, increased transparency, and decreased face-to-face engagement, digitalization can reduce corruption opportunities and foster an accountable culture.

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was established in April 2001 to carry out Nigeria's National Information Technology Policy, which was developed in March 2001. Iweha and Adeyeye (2005). The policy marked the start of Nigeria's e-governance process. The national policy's main objectives were to use ICT in public administration to improve all citizens' access to government services, ensure transparency in government procedures, and bring government to people's doorsteps by establishing online forums and facilities (Adeyeye & Iweha, 2015). The use of ICT technologies helps restructure government and gives businesses and citizens the chance to communicate with government agencies for improved administrative efficiency and governance (Nigerian National Policy for Information Technology, 2001). One possible remedy for these problems is digital transformation, which is fueled by technical advancements like cloud computing, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (Akter et al., 2022). The public sector could improve service delivery, increase transparency, and streamline operations by using digital technologies into administrative procedures. However, according to Abdulkareem (2015), there have been a number of challenges to the Nigerian public service's embrace of digital transformation, from technological hurdles to bureaucratic institutions' opposition to change.

This article examines the Nigeria Immigration Service's current digitization initiatives and how they might be used to

fight corruption. The study's objectives are to determine how the adoption of digitalization has affected the decrease in corrupt practices in Nigerian border management, passport processing, and visa applications, as well as how well digitalization has improved operational efficiency, accountability, and transparency in the Edo state command of the Nigerian immigration service.

Concepts of Digitalization and Corruption in Nigerian Public Service

Digitalization, according to Kraus et al. (2022), is the deep integration of digital technology, procedures, and strategies into every facet of an organization's activities, resulting in significant adjustments to the way it provides value to stakeholders. To improve productivity, effectiveness, and user experience, it entails implementing cutting-edge digital tools, automation, data analytics, and redesigned procedures. Digital transformation is a significant and complex development that involves the smooth integration of digital technology into all aspects of a company, leading to a complete redesign of operational procedures and the way value is delivered to clients. It is more than just a technological change; it is a fundamental cultural shift that forces businesses to continuously challenge accepted wisdom, try out bold ideas, and accept failure as a springboard for development and innovation (Enterprisers Project, 2016). Essentially, digital transformation represents a comprehensive change to the organizational DNA rather than just the implementation of new tools and processes. It requires that long-standing company models, procedures, and tactics be rethought in order to create an atmosphere that lives on adaptation, flexibility, and quick response to the constantly shifting demands of the digital age.

Businesses go beyond conventional limits through this transformation, which improves client experiences, maximizes operational effectiveness, and uncovers new opportunities for value creation. The idea of digital transformation is clarified in the study by Fitzgerald et al. (2014) as a calculated application of new digital technology. These technologies cover a wide range of advancements, from analytics and embedded devices to social media and mobile technology.

Although corruption occurs all around the world, third-world nations especially those in Africa are where it is most common. Widespread corruption is a sign of a state that isn't working well, and a state that isn't working well can hinder economic progress, claim Abu and Karim (2015). If corruption is ingrained in the fundamental makeup of a society, nations with an abundance of natural resources may not develop in a way that favors common people (Edewor & Sokefun, 2002). By fostering the reign of roguery and unbridled dishonesty, corruption in Nigeria starts a process of societal degeneration. It erodes all rational social values by permitting ethical irresponsibility and inviting normative disorder. It corrodes and defaces social mores with lavatorial rottenness. It permits the nation's future to be stolen and erodes the will of the people.

Corruption has been defined broadly as a perversion or a shift from good to bad. Corruption, or corrupt behavior, is defined as the violation of established rules for personal gain and profit (Sidorenko & Lykov, 2019). Corruption is commonly defined as the misuse of power for personal gain (European Commission, 2019). Corruption is defined as the use of a position in the public administration or its connections to benefit oneself or a third party (Bennett, Durana & Konecny, 2020). Beck (2021) discovered that countries with similar economic structures

have lower levels of corruption on average. Corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon with economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions (Yousif, Grondys, Gad & Elsayed, 2020). Corruption is also associated with conflicts of interest and favoritism (Gavurova, Kovac & Khouri, 2020).

Digitalization Initiatives in the Nigeria Immigration Service

Digitalization has been embraced by the Nigeria Immigration Service more and more as a crucial tactic for enhancing service delivery and reducing corruption. In recent years, a number of noteworthy initiatives have been introduced.

- i. **Contactless Passport Application System:** By enabling citizens to apply for and renew their international passports from the convenience of their homes, this online platform greatly minimizes the necessity for face-to-face encounters that may encourage unethical behavior.
- ii. **e-Visa Platform:** By allowing international visitors to apply for visas online, the e-Visa channel streamlines the procedure and reduces the risk of extortion and bribery that comes with manual applications.
- iii. **Integrated Border Management System (IBMS):** By combining real-time data from seaports, land borders, and airports, this centralized platform improves security agency coordination, minimizes human intervention, and ensures quicker traveler clearance, all of which reduce opportunities for corrupt demands.
- iv. **Blockchain-based Document Verification Platform:** This cutting-edge system seeks to reduce identity fraud, which has been connected to corrupt practices, and make it harder to use forged documents by confirming the legitimacy of

passports, visas, and other travel documents.

- v. e-Gates: By automating the passport control procedure and decreasing direct interaction between immigration personnel and travelers, electronic gates at ports of entry reduce the possibility of bribery.
- vi. Body Cameras: By increasing accountability and transparency during public interactions, the proposed deployment of body cameras by immigration officials seeks to discourage corrupt behavior. In the end, these digital initiatives aim to diminish potential for fraudulent behaviors within the Nigeria Immigration Service by streamlining procedures, reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks, and improving transparency. (Ogbeide et al. 2023).

Potential of Digitalization in Combating Corruption in NIS

In the battle against corruption inside the NIS, digitization provides a number of significant benefits, according to Ogbeide et al. (2024):

- 1. Decreased Human Interface: Digitalization reduces face-to-face encounters between citizens and immigration officials by automating procedures including passport application, visa processing, and border clearance. Because there is less in-person interaction, there are less opportunities to demand or provide bribes.
- 2. Enhanced Transparency: Transactions and procedures may be easily audited thanks to digital platforms. For example, online application systems document each stage of the procedure, which facilitates application tracking and helps spot any anomalies or illegal actions.
- 3. Enhanced Speed and Efficiency: Compared to manual operations,

digitalized ones are typically quicker and more effective. Because there are fewer delays, service customers are less likely to become irate and turn to illegal ways to obtain faster services.

- 4. Enhanced Accountability: It is possible to incorporate accountability procedures into the architecture of digital systems. Digital workflows, for instance, can monitor the behavior of individual officers, which facilitates the detection and resolution of wrongdoing.
- 5. Data Analytics and Monitoring: Digital platforms provide enormous volumes of data that can be examined to spot trends and irregularities that point to corrupt practices. This makes it possible to monitor and intervene proactively. (Ogbeide, et al. 2024).

Challenges to Digitalization and Anti-Corruption Efforts

Notwithstanding digitalization's enormous potential, a number of obstacles could make it less successful in thwarting corruption in the Nigeria Immigration Service:

- a. Deficits in Infrastructure: The broad adoption and efficacy of digital platforms may be hindered by inadequate internet connectivity, unstable power supplies, and restricted access to digital devices, especially in remote locations.
- b. Digital Literacy Gap: A sizable section of the populace could not be able to use online services efficiently due to a lack of digital literacy, which could lead to a digital gap and impede the desired advantages of digitization.
- c. Opposition to Change: Some NIS employees may be reluctant to embrace new technology because they are afraid of losing their jobs, lack the necessary digital skills, or have a stake in keeping things as they are.

- d. **Cybersecurity Risks:** Cyberattacks can undermine data integrity, interfere with services, and possibly open up new channels for corruption, like identity theft or data manipulation. Strong cyber security protocols are essential for protecting digital platforms.
- e. **Policy and Regulatory Gaps:** When there are unclear rules and guidelines controlling the adoption and use of digital technology in the public sector, it can lead to confusion and make implementation more difficult.
- f. **Sustainability and Maintenance:** Sufficient financial resources and technological know-how are needed to guarantee the long-term sustainability of digital infrastructure and to provide continuous maintenance and updates (Nakolisa, 2023).

Review of Empirical Studies

Ofoma (2022) looked at the digital tools and technologies that Nigeria's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies employ to provide services to the public. Secondary data for the study came from a variety of sources, including published studies and government MDAs. Using an analytical approach, the data was examined and determined to be very pertinent to the research. According to the paper's results, service delivery to Nigerian citizens was extremely subpar, ineffectual, and inefficient before digital technologies were introduced into the country's public sector.

As a result, it was decided that while the digitalization-driven processes in public services should continue, policies that guarantee the installation and growth of content on wired and wireless public networks nationwide are necessary, as is the adoption of a public-private partnership model that aims to teach citizens, particularly those living in rural areas, how to use digital technology.

In a similar vein, Cinjel and Chujor (2024) investigated how digital government affected public sector productivity in Nigeria. The INEC and FRSC practices are heavily emphasized in the paper. Because the study was non-experimental, a mixed method research design was used. The study's sample size was established using the Krejcie and Morgan Table. The study's data came from a variety of public and unpublished sources, including books, newspapers, magazines, online resources, and more. According to the report, the Nigerian Public Service greatly benefits from digital technologies. The study also discovered that the use of digital technology in the Nigerian public sector is impacted by a number of variables, including inadequate tools, bad maintenance, poor network, and inadequate usage. Among many other things, the report suggests that the Nigerian government, INEC, and FRSC specifically need to train all staff on how to use technologies and understand the necessity of the tools' sufficiency and upkeep.

Additionally, Nadkarni and Prögl (2021) examine project management strategies for digital transitions in public education systems. The framework's application in practical situations is illustrated by the following: stakeholder engagement, project planning, change management system, Digital inclusion initiatives, risk management, project execution, and outcome evaluation. This includes putting in place a learning management system and Digital inclusion initiatives.

The significance of IT-based public accounting transformation in facilitating the digitization of good governance is also examined by Shittu (2020). The study examined 15 journals from prior research as well as official data and government publications between 2019 and 2023 in order to address the negative stigma that claims that technological innovation

products will eventually replace the role of accountants. When creating this article using a descriptive qualitative strategy, the study decided to use a literature review as its methodology. The findings of the 15 reviewed publications demonstrate that the adoption of digital good governance requires an IT-based reform of public accounting. Public accounting's ability to adjust to the changes in this highly dynamic era is thought to be what will allow it to survive the storm of digitalization. When it comes to good governance, if IT-based public accounting is applied consistently and sustainably, it can assist optimize good governance more quickly. Difficult-to-erase digital track records can be used as a continuous database for a number of public uses.

Theoretical Framework

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which was first put forth by Davis in 1989, was used in this study. It offers a methodical framework for comprehending and forecasting people's intentions to use new technology. In order to give a framework for comprehending the adoption and efficacy of digitization in lowering corruption in the Nigeria Immigration Service, this study uses the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). According to TAM, people's opinions about a new technology's perceived utility and usability have an impact on their intention to utilize it. Perceived usefulness in the context of this study refers to the conviction that digitization can successfully lower

corruption and enhance NIS service delivery. The degree to which people think utilizing digital technologies would be effortless is known as perceived ease of use. According to TAM, people and immigration officers are more inclined to embrace digital tools if they believe they are practical and user-friendly, which will increase accountability, transparency, and curb corrupt activities.

Research Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews to gather data on the impact of digitalization on corruption reduction in the Edo State Command of the Nigeria Immigration Service. A sample of residents and immigration officers who have dealt with the NIS's Edo State Command were given a survey questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information on opinions regarding how well digitalization has worked to improve efficiency, increase transparency, and lessen corruption. Using the Taro Yamane formula, the sample size was established, yielding 209 responses. A 95% response rate was obtained from the 200 completed and returned questionnaires. Frequencies and basic percentages were used in the analysis of the acquired data. Key stakeholders, such as top immigration officials, legislators, and representatives of civil society, were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain detailed viewpoints on the execution and results of digitization projects inside the NIS.

Table1: Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the implementation of digitalization and the reduction of corrupt practices in passport processing, Visa application and border management in Nigeria?

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral	Total Percentage
An online platform for visa application reduces the need for physical application and opportunity of bride.	60 30%	55 27.5%	30 15%	45 22.5%	10 5%	200 100
The Nigeria immigration service have a functioning online visa application platform.	53 26.5%	47 23.5%	40 20%	48 24%	12 6%	200 100%
Digitalization minimizes human interaction and improve efficiency in the Nigeria immigration service.	73 36.5%	40 20%	50 25%	30 15%	7 3.5%	200 100%

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2:

1. **Research Question 2:** How effective is digitalization in enhancing transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency in the Edo State command of the Nigeria Immigration Service?

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Total percentage
The NIS active body cameral have improve transparency of the in command.	89 44.5%	33 16.5%	35 17.5%	26 13%	17 8.5%	200 100%
The passport automated program has made passport processing fast and less stressful.	73 36.5%	40 20%	50 25%	30 15%	7 3.5%	200 100%
The Edo state command have active website to encourage easy access to information on her operation.	55 27.5%	29 14.5%	8 4%	50 25%	58 29%	200 100%

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Survey Results

Table 1 presents the survey results related to the impact of digitalization on corrupt practices. The data indicates that a majority of respondents perceive that online platforms for visa applications reduce the need for physical applications and opportunities for bribery. Respondents also generally agree that the NIS has a functioning online visa application platform, which has helped to reduce corruption and enhance efficiency. Furthermore, the results suggest that digitalization minimizes human interaction and improves efficiency within the NIS. The NIS digital landing and exit card

is perceived to streamline the immigration process and prevent overstay. However, there are mixed perceptions regarding the functionality of a blockchain-based document verification platform to curb fake documents and identify fraud.

Table 2 presents the survey results on the effectiveness of digitalization in enhancing transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of respondents believe that the use of body cameras has improved transparency within the command. The passport automation program is perceived to have made passport processing faster and less stressful. However, there are varying opinions on

whether the Edo State Command has an active website to encourage easy access to information and whether the command has fully transitioned to digital technology in its operations. A majority of respondents agree that the NIS is in partnership with other anti-corruption agencies to strengthen internal control mechanisms.

4..1.2 Interview Results.

1. Interviews with immigration officers revealed that the e-passport system has significantly reduced processing time and opportunities for applicants to offer bribes to expedite their applications.
2. Civil society representatives emphasized that online platforms have increased transparency by providing a clear record of transactions and reducing the discretionary power of immigration officials.
3. However, several interviewees also highlighted challenges such as inadequate training and technical support, which sometimes hinder the effective use of digital tools.

According to the study's findings, digitization might greatly lower corruption in the Nigeria Immigration Service's border administration, visa application, and passport processing. In line with the opinions of Afonaso et al. (2019), Mouna et al. (2020), and Androniceanu and Georgescu (2021) regarding the beneficial correlation between public administration digitization and corruption reduction, the survey results show that respondents generally view digitalization as an effective tool for fighting corruption. Like Bennett and Segerberg (2013), Moiseevskaya (2018), Russell (2020), and Androniceanu et al. (2022) on the role of digitalization in economic and social development, the study's results also support the notion that digitalization has a positive and statistically

significant impact on reducing corruption in Nigeria.

Additionally, the results show that digitalization can improve operational efficiency, accountability, and transparency in the Nigeria Immigration Service's Edo State Command. This supports the conclusions of Ofoma (2022) regarding the enhancement of service delivery in Nigerian public service through digitalization. However, there are obstacles and constraints to its implementation, and the efficacy of digitalization is contingent upon elements like accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency.

In this regard, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) offers a helpful framework for comprehending the uptake and effects of digitization. Both people and immigration officers' acceptance and use of digital tools are influenced by their perceived ease of use and value in lowering corruption and enhancing service delivery. The results of this study indicate that digital systems are more likely to support increased accountability, transparency, and a decrease in corrupt activities when they are seen as practical and user-friendly.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a lot of promise for using digitization as a weapon to fight corruption in the Nigeria Immigration Service. The continuous efforts to eliminate human interaction, improve transparency, and automate procedures are significant positive developments. However, in order to fully realize the benefits of digitalization, it is necessary to increase cybersecurity, fix infrastructure deficiencies, close the digital literacy gap, and create a favorable legislative and regulatory framework. The Nigeria Immigration Service can greatly lower corruption, increase its efficiency, and improve service delivery by introducing and maintaining digital innovations wisely,

bolstered by robust institutional frameworks and a dedication to accountability and openness.

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8

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AND ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria, focusing on data from 2000 to 2022. FDI, a significant driver of economic growth and development, plays a crucial role in Nigeria's strategy to close the investment gap and enhance capital creation. Utilizing multiple regression and Pearson Correlation Coefficient statistical techniques, the study analyzes the relationship between FDI and key economic indicators such as Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), Inflation (INFL), Balance of Payment (BOP), and Official Exchange Rate (OER). The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between FDI, RGDP, and BOP, indicating that FDI significantly contributes to economic growth and development in Nigeria. However, the study also highlights the complex interplay between these variables, noting that while FDI and BOP positively influence RGDP, inflation has an adverse effect. The analysis suggests that despite the positive impact of FDI on economic growth, challenges such as inflation and exchange rate volatility need to be addressed to fully realize sustainable development. The study concludes that enhancing policies to attract and effectively utilize FDI is essential for Nigeria's sustainable development. Additionally, it underscores the importance of addressing structural issues within the economy to maximize the benefits of FDI and achieve the SDGs. Further research and model refinement are recommended to validate these findings and ensure their alignment with Nigeria's sustainable development objectives.

Keywords: Foreign Direct Investment, Sustainable Development Goals, Impact, Economy

Introduction

The international community has supported around the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which consist of 17 interrelated goals aimed at tackling urgent global issues and fostering sustainable development by 2030 (United Nations, 2021). Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is now seen as a crucial catalyst for economic growth and development in a highly linked global economy, especially in developing nations. Nigeria, as the biggest economy and most populous country in Africa, has received a considerable amount of foreign direct investment (FDI), receiving major inflows in many industries (Imanche, 2021).

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria refers to investments made by a firm that is

under the whole or partial control of foreign entities. The Investment Code (Decree No. 16 of 1995) and the Foreign Exchange (Monitoring and Miscellaneous Provision) Decree, both enacted in 1995, provide complete support for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nigeria. These laws established the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) (Olukoyo, 2012). Nigeria has the potential to attract substantial levels of foreign private investment. Most countries want to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) due to its well recognised advantages as a catalyst for economic development. Africa, including Nigeria, has embraced foreign direct investment (FDI) as a key element of its

development strategy, as shown by its participation in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Giwa et al., 2020). The benefits of foreign investment, especially foreign direct investment (FDI), for rising countries cannot be overstated. It enhances their savings that are mobilised inside the local area and is often paired with technology and management expertise, which stimulate economic development. Foreign direct investment (FDI) may play a crucial role in promoting economic progress in developing nations by breaking the cycle of poverty (Adejumo, 2019). The advocates of growth theory highlight the significance of capital inflows in developing countries as they help bridge the gap between saving and investment. Hence, the presence of foreign capital inflows is crucial for enhancing capital formation and ensuring continuous human development due to the insufficient availability of domestic capital to facilitate growth (Madueke, Anisiobi and Ozoh, 2022). Promoting higher levels of foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing nations might potentially enhance their efficiency. This is because there is a need to stimulate the inflow of FDI into these countries.

Foreign direct investment has been categorized in a number of ways (FDI). Policymakers think that foreign direct investment (FDI) boosts host economies. Adoption of foreign technology and externalities are two forms of these advantages (Iheanachor and Ozegbe, 2021). Here, externalities might take the shape of staff training, imitation, licensing agreements, and the introduction of new procedures by the foreign companies (Alfaro, 2006). Older technology and conventional management approaches generate economic rents when foreign direct investment (FDI) is made in high-risk areas or emerging sectors. The economy of the receiver greatly benefits from these. Furthermore, foreign direct investment (FDI) serves to supplement domestic investment and bridge the gap created by the lack of capital, particularly when it flows to high-risk

regions of newly established enterprises where domestic resources are scarce.

Services are starting to get an increasing amount of foreign direct investment (FDI), and these services are also becoming more established (Magombeyi and Odhiambo, 2017). Numerous benefits, including greater productivity efficiency, infrastructure and technology transfer, and job prospects, have been made possible by foreign investment. It is impossible to draw conclusions from the extensive body of critical empirical research on the impact of foreign direct investment on Nigeria's economic development and growth with even a minimally acceptable degree of confidence. A multitude of diverse global communities have shown significant enthusiasm for the notion of sustainable development. Policymakers have encountered challenges in establishing a development framework that encompasses more than simply economic growth. "The impact of investment in Nigeria on its economic growth and development cannot be confidently concluded based on contemporary advancements in science and technology, democracy, and social organisation" (Ukangwa, Nwanosike and Onwuka, 2023).

Many different groups of people worldwide have expressed a great deal of interest in the concept of sustainable development (Tijani, Oksana and Lali, 2023). Policymakers have also found it difficult to create a development system that is not just concerned with economic expansion. The goal of luring foreign direct investment (FDI) into the Nigerian economy has been to optimize the possible gains from it while reducing any potential harm that its operations can cause to the nation (Oyegoke and Aras, 2021). The ongoing worldwide fear has resulted in increased unemployment, job losses, a lack of liquidity, and a severe credit shortage that is still evident in financial institutions. Nigeria has to work on finding solutions to issues with its weak public institutions, relative closed economy, corruption, government engagement in business, and negative external

image in order to attract more foreign direct investment. Because of this, the main goal of this essay is to critically analyze how foreign direct investment affects the Nigerian economy's ability to expand sustainably.

Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Level of Achievement of SDGs in Nigeria

Indicators like the Human Development Index (HDI) show that Nigeria is facing substantial obstacles in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Grace, 2023). Nigeria ranked 157th out of 189 nations in 2017 with an HDI score of 0.532, placing it in the poor human development category. This draws attention to the nation's ongoing problems with inequality, poverty, human insecurity, illiteracy, and bad health (Grace, 2023).

Impact of FDIs on SDGs in Nigeria

In order to close the investment gap and improve capital creation, Nigeria's economic growth plan heavily relies on foreign direct investment (FDI). Government initiatives to liberalize the economy and draw in foreign investors, such the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in the mid-1980s, have historically had an impact on FDI inflows. FDI inflows have the ability to affect macroeconomic indicators such as employment, investment, and gross national income (GNI) per capita, notwithstanding their volatility (Iheanachor and Ozegbe, 2021).

Re-evaluating regulations to promote successful FDI performance is necessary, nevertheless, as recent patterns point to a fall in FDI inflows. The potential of FDI to effectively promote sustainable development in Nigeria is still dependent on a number of factors, including the investment climate, the characteristics of the host nation, and absorptive capacity. Increased foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows may promote the

development of human capital through possibilities for skill transfer, education, and technology transfer. However, there are still issues with using FDI to successfully achieve Nigeria's development priorities, which include the SDGs (Iheanachor and Ozegbe, 2021).

Methodology

The study will use a multiple regression econometric approach and Pearson Correlation Coefficient statistical technique to examine the impact of foreign direct investment (FDI) on Nigeria's sustainable development and economic growth from 2022 to 2022. The study will collect time series secondary data from the World Bank Data and Nigeria Statistical Bulletin for the variables of interest. The dependent variable will be Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), while the independent variables will include FDI, Inflation Rate (INFL), Automated Teller Machine (ATM), Web Payment (Web PAY), and NIBSS Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT).

The functional version of the model will be expressed as $RGDP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FDI + \beta_2 INFL + \beta_3 ATM + \beta_4 Web\ PAY + \beta_5 NEFT + \epsilon$, where $\alpha =$ intercept.

The error term (μ) is a random variable that has well defined probabilistic properties. It is assumed to capture other exogenous factors that are capable of influencing investment growth.

The study uses FDI as the primary independent variable to determine its impact on sustainable development goals in Nigeria. The other variables were included in the model as control variables to account for other factors that may influence RGDP.

The study will conduct correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, interpretation and inference, and discuss the limitations and future research.

Analysis, Discussion and Limitations

OLS Regression Results

Dep. Variable:	RGDP	R-squared:	0.999
Model:	OLS	Adj. R-squared:	0.999
Method:	Least Squares	F-statistic:	1751.
Date:	Fri, 13 Dec 2024	Prob (F-statistic):	6.25e-12
Time:	13:50:21	Log-Likelihood:	-96.801
No. Observations:	14	AIC:	205.6
Df Residuals:	8	BIC:	209.4
Df Model:	5		
Covariance Type:	nonrobust		

	coef	std err	t	P> t	[0.025	0.975]
const	7.849e+04	1.1e+04	7.155	0.000	5.32e+04	1.04e+05
FDI	3.8634	1.147	3.369	0.010	1.219	6.508
INFL (%)	-3901.7734	1469.966	-2.654	0.029	-7291.521	-512.026
ATM	0.4698	0.251	1.868	0.099	-0.110	1.050
WEB PAY	-1.2554	1.696	-0.740	0.480	-5.167	2.657
NEFT	-0.1848	0.131	-1.410	0.196	-0.487	0.117

Omnibus:	0.992	Durbin-Watson:	1.664
Prob(Omnibus):	0.609	Jarque-Bera (JB):	0.692

Python Output, 2024.

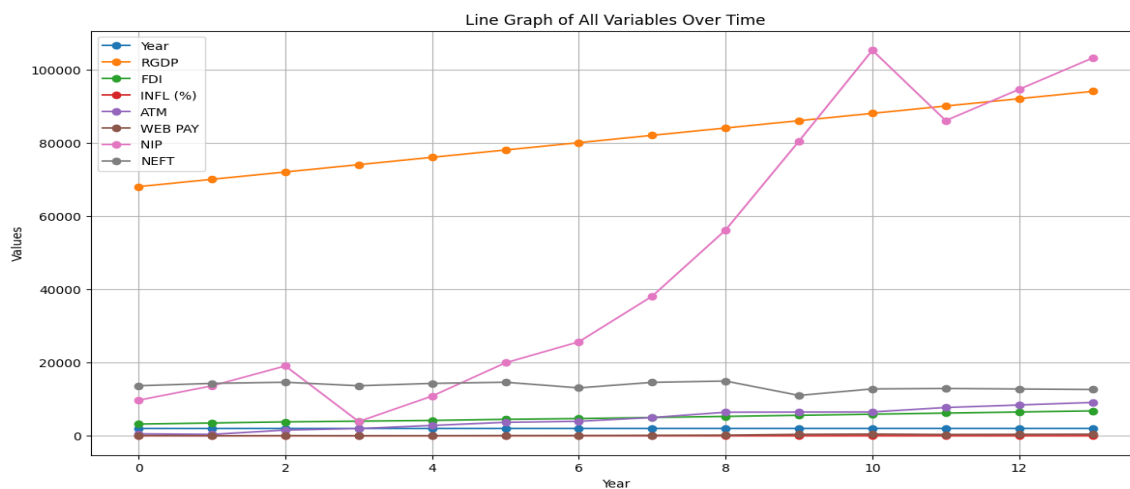


Figure 1: Line graph showing the yearly result of the factors which includes Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Inflation (INFL), Balance of Payment (BOP), Official Exchange Rate (OER), CHEQUE = Cheque, Point of Sale terminals (POS), Automated Teller Machine (ATM), Web Payment (WEB PAY), Mobile Payment (MOBILE PAY), NIBSS Instant Payment (NIP) and NIBSS Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT) from 2000-2022 on Nigerian economy.

Discussions of Findings

The dependent variable is RGDP (likely representing Real Gross Domestic Product), indicating that the analysis aims to understand the factors influencing RGDP.

R-squared: 0.999 suggests an exceptionally high level of explained variance in the dependent variable by the independent variables in the model. This means that 99.9% of the variability in RGDP can be explained by the model. Also very high (0.998), it accounts for the number of predictors in the model, confirming that the predictors used are useful.

The F-statistic of 171 indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis that all regression coefficients are equal to zero. A very small p-value (6.25e-12) indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis, suggesting that at least one of the independent variables significantly predicts RGDP.

14 indicates that the analysis is based on 14 data points. 8, showing the degrees of freedom associated with the residuals, which affects the statistical testing. 5, revealing the number of independent variables used in the model. Nonrobust indicates that standard errors calculated are not adjusted for heteroskedasticity. The coefficients for each predictor variable represent the expected change in the dependent variable (RGDP) for a one-unit increase in the predictor, while controlling for the other variables. 7.849e+04 (approx. 78,490), this indicates the expected value of RGDP when all independent variables are zero. The t-statistic and p-value: The very high t-statistic (7.155) and a p-value of 0.000 suggest this intercept is statistically significant. FDI

Coefficient: 3.8634; a 1 unit increase in FDI is associated with an increase of approximately 3.86 units in RGDP, with a highly significant p-value (0.000). Coefficient: -3901.774; signifies that as inflation increases by one unit, RGDP is expected to decrease by about 3901.77 units, which is also statistically significant ($p = 0.011$). Coefficient: -0.468; a unit increase in ATMs corresponds to a slight decrease in RGDP, but with a p-value of 0.154, this is not statistically significant.

Coefficient: -1.2554; indicates a negative relationship with RGDP, but with a p-value of 0.537, this result is not statistically significant. Coefficient: -0.1848; similarly shows a negligible effect on RGDP and is not statistically significant ($p = 0.630$).

On the Statistical Tests, Omnibus: 0.992, which tests for the normality of residuals. Durbin-Watson: 1.664, indicating low autocorrelation in residuals (values between 1.5 and 2.5 are generally acceptable). Prob (Omnibus) and Jarque-Bera (JB) tests both

indicate that the residuals may not significantly deviate from normality (p -values > 0.05).

The OLS regression results suggest a solid model that explains a high proportion of RGDP variability, with significant impacts from FDI and inflation. However, the variables ATM, WEB PAY, and NEFT do not show statistically significant relationships with RGDP, indicating that they may not have meaningful effects in this context. Overall, the analysis highlights the importance of FDI while suggesting caution regarding the influence of inflation in the economic context examined.

The figure 2 titled "Actual vs Predicted RGDP" compares actual and predicted Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) values from 2010 to 2022. The x-axis represents the years, while the y-axis displays RGDP values ranging from approximately 70,000 to 95,000, clearly illustrating changes over time. The blue solid line with circular markers represents actual RGDP values, and the orange dashed line with 'X' markers shows predicted values from an econometric model. The close alignment between these lines indicates that the model effectively captured the trends in RGDP, with only minor deviations suggesting robust forecasting capabilities.

Both lines exhibit an upward trend, reflecting consistent economic growth during the observed period. This close fit underscores the model's reliability in understanding the economic conditions affecting RGDP, which is crucial for policymakers and analysts in strategizing and planning interventions. Overall, the graph highlights the effectiveness of the regression model in predicting RGDP, demonstrating a strong correlation between actual and predicted values.

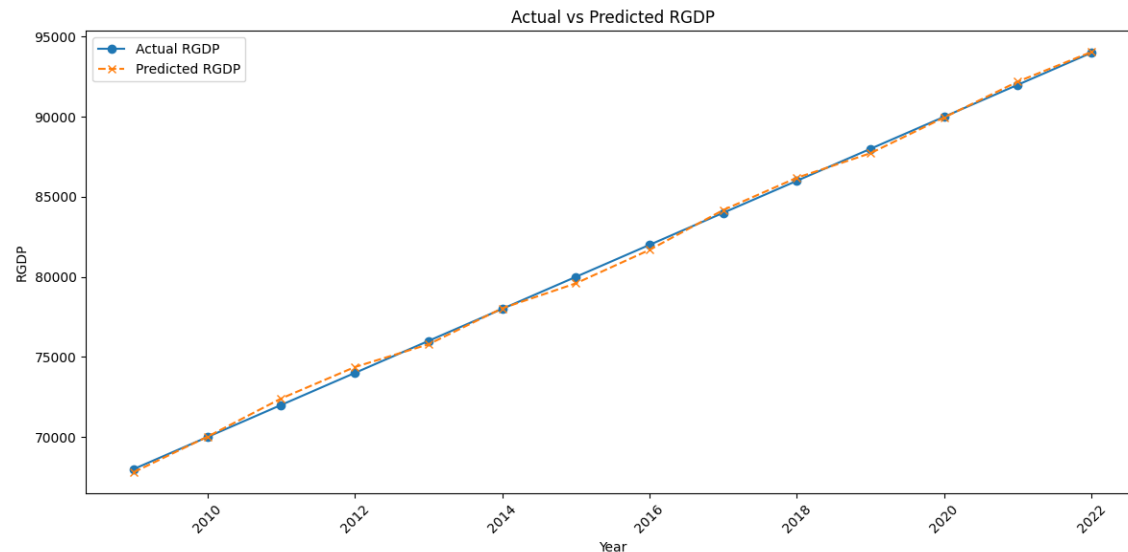


Figure 2: The graph titled "Actual vs Predicted RGDP" effectively compares the actual values of Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) with the predicted values obtained from a regression model over the years from 2010 to 2022.

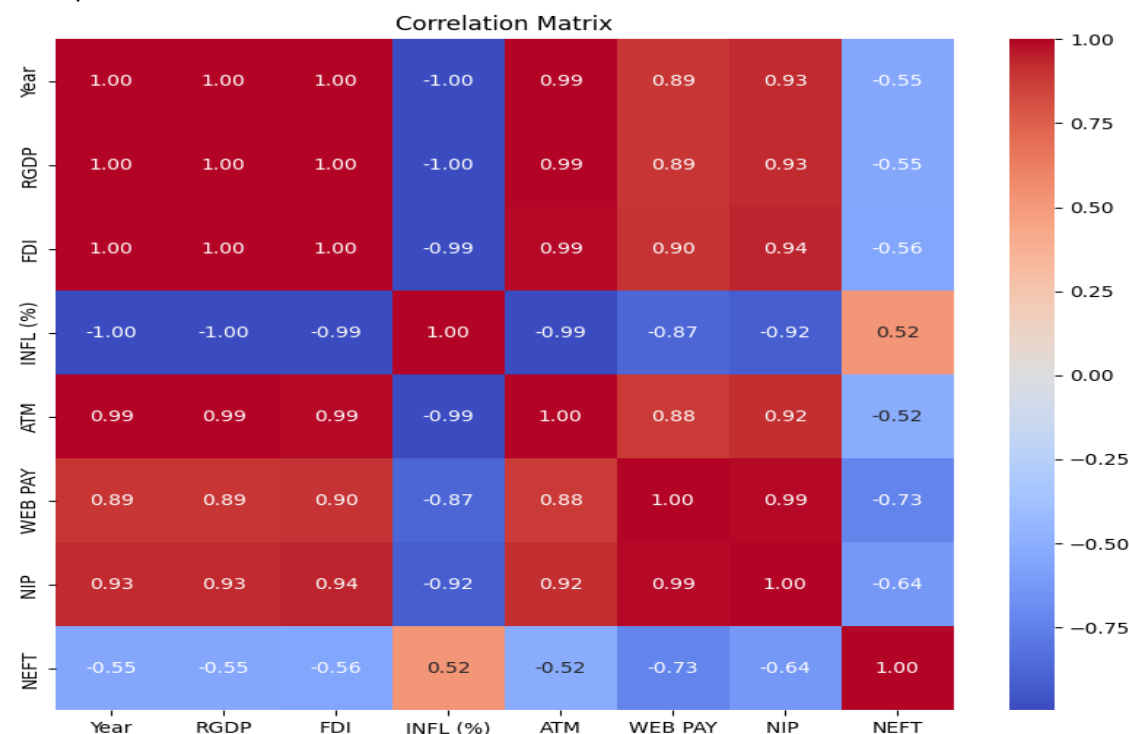


Figure 3: Heatmap showing the correlation matrix which includes Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Inflation (INFL), Balance of Payment (BOP), Official Exchange Rate (OER), CHEQUE = Cheque, Point of Sale terminals (POS), Automated Teller Machine (ATM), Web

Payment (WEB PAY), Mobile Payment (MOBILE PAY), NIBSS Instant Payment (NIP) and NIBSS Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT) from 2000-2022 on Nigerian economy.

The correlation matrix illustrates the relationships between various economic indicators, including Year, RGDP (Real Gross

Domestic Product), FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), INFL (Inflation), ATM (Automated Teller Machines), WEB PAY (Web Payments), NIP (National Instant Payment), and NEFT (National Electronic Funds Transfer). Each cell displays correlation coefficients ranging from -1 to 1, where 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation.

All diagonal values are 1.00, denoting perfect self-correlation. A strong positive correlation (0.99) exists between Year and RGDP, suggesting RGDP has been consistently increasing over time, along with high correlations with FDI and INFL. RGDP shows significant positive correlations with FDI (0.99), ATM (0.89), WEB PAY (0.90), and NIP (0.94), indicating that increases in these variables are associated with higher RGDP. Conversely, it has a strong negative correlation with INFL (-0.99), indicating that rising inflation negatively impacts RGDP.

The INFL variable has a strong positive correlation with WEB PAY (0.88) but negative correlations with NIP (-0.92) and ATM (-0.87), suggesting that higher inflation may discourage the use of these payment methods. ATM, WEB PAY, and NIP show strong positive correlations (0.88 to 0.99), indicating that increases in one payment method are likely to correspond with increases in the others. NEFT displays weaker correlations with RGDP (-0.55) and FDI (-0.56), suggesting it is less associated with economic growth compared to other indicators. Negative correlations, particularly involving NEFT, indicate that some variables may react unfavorably to inflation or time changes, hinting at reduced favorability of NEFT in inflationary conditions.

In conclusion, the correlation matrix reveals strong relationships among key economic indicators, particularly highlighting the impacts of inflation on various variables. Understanding these correlations is essential for effective economic analysis and strategic planning.

Implications

The above result implies that foreign direct investment is crucial to achieving sustainable development in Nigeria, which justifies the need for the government to enhance and develop policies aimed at promoting an increase in FDI since, if this increase is successful, it will contribute to Nigeria's sustainable development. The above result also suggests that foreign direct investment plays a very important role in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria, and this justifies the need for the government to develop strategies geared towards encouraging an increase in FDI. Another important conclusion from the preceding research is that inflation and the balance of payments both have a major impact on achieving sustainable development since they contribute, respectively, adversely and favorably, to the expansion of sustainable development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The report asserts that it is crucial for Nigeria's sustainable development to improve policies in order to attract and efficiently employ Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Furthermore, it highlights the significance of tackling fundamental problems inside the economy in order to optimize the advantages of foreign direct investment (FDI) and accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The exchange rate plays a crucial role in explaining a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable (sustainable development), when considering the combined effects of all explanatory factors. It is recommended to do additional research and make improvements to the model in order to validate these findings and ensure that they are in line with Nigeria's sustainable development goals. However, when it comes to its impact on sustainable development, the exchange rate alone has a statistically insignificant effect.

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Appendix

Year	RGDP	FDI	INFL	BOP	OER
2000	50,000	1,000	10.00	500	100
2001	52,000	1,200	8.50	520	102
2002	54,000	1,500	7.80	540	105
2003	56,000	1,800	7.20	560	107
2004	58,000	2,000	6.90	580	110
2005	60,000	2,200	6.50	600	112
2006	62,000	2,500	6.20	620	115
2007	64,000	2,800	5.80	640	118
2008	66,000	3,000	5.50	660	120
2009	68,000	3,200	5.30	680	123
2010	70,000	3,500	5.00	700	125
2011	72,000	3,800	4.80	720	127
2012	74,000	4,000	4.60	740	130
2013	76,000	4,200	4.50	760	132
2014	78,000	4,500	4.30	780	135
2015	80,000	4,700	4.20	800	138
2016	82,000	5,000	4.00	820	140
2017	84,000	5,300	3.80	840	143
2018	86,000	5,600	3.70	860	145
2019	88,000	5,900	3.50	880	148
2020	90,000	6,200	3.40	900	150
2021	92,000	6,500	3.20	920	153
2022	94,000	6,800	3.10	940	155

	RGDP	FDI	INFL	BOP	OER
RGDP	1.000000	0.999178	-0.951771	1.000000	0.999824
FDI	0.999178	1.000000	-0.945873	0.999178	0.998982
INFL	-0.951771	-0.945873	1.000000	-0.951771	-0.951389
BOP	1.000000	0.999178	-0.951771	1.000000	0.999824
OER	0.999824	0.998982	-0.951389	0.999824	1.000000

Python output, 2024.

	RGDP	FDI	INFL	BOP	OER
RGDP	1	0.9992	-0.9518	1	0.9998
FDI	0.9992	1	-0.9451	0.9992	0.9989
INFL	-0.9518	-0.9451	1	-0.9518	-0.9514
BOP	1	0.9992	-0.9518	1	0.9998
OER	0.9998	0.9989	-0.9514	0.9998	1

9

POPULAR RULE OR ELITE CAPTURE? A DECONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE DEFICITS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Democratic Charter is premised on fundamental freedoms, protection of citizen's rights, active and engaged citizens, free and franchised elections, pluralistic political party system and inclusive and equitable society anchored on rule of the law. However, there are indications of democratic decline in African states, resulting from power systems that advance the whims and caprices of the elites in democratic countries. This depicts a negation of the ideals, principle and expectations of democracy towards meeting the yearnings and aspirations of the populace. This paper examines the deteriorating dynamics of democracy in Africa by interrogating the paradox of popular rule versus elite capture in an attempt to offer a deconstruction of liberal democratic governance in Nigeria. Indications are rife to the effect that the dominant political elite in Nigeria tend to have substituted external colonization for an internal domination through the emasculation of the democratic process. This tendency has been instantiated by their exclusionary self-regarding politics that manifests gross governance deficits. Relying on elite capture theory and qualitative analysis of data, the paper posits that the ruling elite in Nigeria have circumvented the democratic processes and institutions in order to further their whims and caprices in power. This is analogous to internal colonization and systematic democratic arrest. The paper adds that the powerful self-regarding crop of elites appear to have mainstreamed and weaponized poverty and insecurity against the seemingly captive civil populace, whose wishes and aspirations are merely incidental in governance. The paper, therefore, advocates for a reformation of the democratic rule especially the institutions in order to entrench utilitarian and popular principles in a manner that evince the ideals of democracy.

Keywords: Democracy, elite capture, governance, popular rule

Introduction

Across the globe, democracy has been championed as the optimal framework for organizing political power, resolving conflicts, and fostering inclusive development. This is predicated on the assumptions that democratic governance presumably provides institutional mechanisms for accountability, representation, and the protection of fundamental human rights, forming the bedrock of a just and equitable society. In this lens, democracy, as a political system is premised on the principles of popular

sovereignty, institutional accountability, and political pluralism, making it the most widely accepted mechanism for structuring political power for ensuring political stability, economic development, and social cohesion. At its core, democratic governance seeks to empower citizens through participatory mechanisms that ensure inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness in the exercise of state authority. The primacy of democratic governance in fostering national stability and development has been widely acknowledged,

with empirical evidence demonstrating strong correlations with economic prosperity, human development, and conflict resolution (Diamond, 2019).

However, whereas liberal democracy seems to have continued to foster effective in most western countries through popular rule, the manifest elite capture has led to democratic deficits in most countries of Africa especially Nigeria. For instance, democratic governance in Nigeria depicts a process fraught with weak institutions, electoral malpractices, corruption, and overbearing influence of political elites. This scenario creates a contradiction that negates the notions of democratic governance. In fact, the persistence of structural deficiencies ranging from electoral irregularities to institutionalized corruption has continued to impede the realization of genuine democratic governance. Periodic conduct of elections, often considered the hallmark of democracy, has been marred by systemic fraud, voter suppression, and political violence. Electoral cycles in Nigeria have been characterized by widespread vote buying, ballot manipulation, and the instrumentalization of security agencies to intimidate opposition candidates and suppress dissent (Omotola, 2021). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), despite its constitutional mandate to conduct free and fair elections, has often been alleged of complicity in electoral malpractices, raising fundamental concerns about the credibility of Nigeria's electoral process. Beyond electoral distortions, governance in Nigeria has been plagued by institutional inertia and the erosion of public trust in state institutions. The Nigerian judiciary, positioned as the guardian of constitutional democracy, has frequently been allegedly compromised by political interference of the elites thereby undermining its capacity to serve as an impartial arbiter of electoral disputes and governance conflicts (Suberu, 2020). Similarly, the national legislature, appear to have lost its essence of legislative oversight powers by being largely subservient to executive

interests, often prioritizing self-preservation over the public good. The resulting governance landscape is one in which democratic institutions exist in form but lack substantive independence and effectiveness.

As should be emphasized, the epistemological foundation of democracy rests on the notion of popular rule government of the people, by the people, and for the people. However, the Nigerian democratic experience presents a stark deviation from this ideal, as political power remains overwhelmingly concentrated in the hands of an entrenched elite. The phenomenon of elite capture, wherein a privileged minority exercises disproportionate influence over political and economic decision making, has become a defining feature of Nigerian governance. Elite capture manifests in various dimensions, including the monopolization of political parties, the entrenchment of patrimonial networks, and the manipulation of state resources for private gain. At the core of Nigeria's governance crisis is the subversion of democratic institutions by a political class that prioritizes personal and sectional interests over national development. Political parties, which ought to serve as vehicles for ideological representation and policy contestation, have instead been reduced to instruments of elite negotiation, where power is recycled among a select group of political actors (Adejumobi, 2019). Intra party democracy is virtually nonexistent, with candidate selection processes often determined through backroom deals rather than transparent primaries. Consequently, elections in Nigeria appear to be less about popular will and more about elite consensus, wherein political office is allocated based on patron client calculations rather than merit or public legitimacy.

In Nigeria, elite capture has its roots in the country's colonial past, where power was concentrated in the hands of a small governing elite. The legacy of colonial rule created a political structure that was inherently exclusive, serving the interests of the colonial administration and local elites. Upon gaining

independence, Nigeria's political elite, consisting largely of former colonial administrators, regional leaders, and wealthy elites, inherited this system of power concentration. The resulting political economy was marked by an unequal distribution of resources and a system where political participation was largely restricted to a small, privileged class. The post-colonial Nigerian state did not undergo a radical transformation that would disrupt the entrenched elite structures. Instead, the political and economic elite-maintained control over state institutions, and the state itself was used as a tool for the accumulation of wealth by these elites. Over time, this elite class expanded to include those with access to the lucrative oil resources and other key sectors of the Nigerian economy, creating a powerful coalition that ensured the continued dominance of elite interests (Akinola, 2019). This historical context highlights that elite capture in Nigeria is not a fleeting or incidental phenomenon, but rather a systemic feature of its governance structure. The persistence of elite control over both state and economic institutions has led to widespread corruption, weak institutions, and persistent inequality all of which undermine the fundamental ideals of democratic governance.

Indicatively, democratic experience in Nigeria, while formally structured around the principles of popular rule, remains fundamentally constrained by the phenomenon of elite capture. This gripping entrenchment of a privileged political and economic class within the corridors of power has systematically subverted the fundamental tenets of democratic governance such as transparency, accountability, participation, and equitable representation. Elite capture in Nigeria manifests through the monopolization of political institutions, the instrumentalization of state resources for private gain, and the erosion of mechanisms meant to facilitate genuine citizen participation in governance. The apparent systemic entrenchment of elite hegemony

raises fundamental concerns about the legitimacy and efficacy of Nigeria's democratic institutions. At the heart of the governance crisis in Nigeria is the paradox of a democratic state that, in practice, operates as an oligarchic structure. While elections are periodically conducted, and democratic institutions such as the judiciary and legislature exist in principle, their operations are largely dictated by elite interests rather than by constitutional imperatives. This fundamental contradiction underscores the reality that formal democratic institutions alone are insufficient to guarantee democratic governance if the substantive mechanisms of accountability and popular participation are systematically undermined.

In other words, the extent to which elite capture has distorted democratic governance in Nigeria can best be understood by examining key governance deficits that have become entrenched within the country's political system. These deficits ranging from systemic corruption and electoral manipulation to institutionalized impunity and lack of accountability serve as conduits through which elite dominance is perpetuated at the expense of popular rule. Therefore, this paper is set to examine the operability of popular rule versus elite capture by deconstructing the bearing on Democratic governance deficits in Nigeria

Conceptual Frame of Reference: Popular rule, elite capture and democratic governance deficits

Popular rule, often synonymous with the principle of popular sovereignty, constitutes the foundational premise of democratic governance. It refers to a political system in which governmental authority derives from the collective will of the people, who exercise ultimate power over the decision-making process through mechanisms such as electoral participation, civic engagement, and institutional checks on authority (Dahl, 1989). The conceptual essence of popular rule is encapsulated in the classical democratic dictum that government must be "of the

people, by the people, and for the people.” This principle is operationalized through key democratic tenets such as electoral representation that allow Citizens to participate in free, fair, and competitive elections that determine political leadership based on popular choice. It also encompasses accountability mechanisms and Rule of Law that ensure that government officials remain answerable to the electorate through institutional oversight, judicial independence, and legislative scrutiny. At the same time the legal framework ensures that all individuals regardless of status are subject to the same legal standards, preventing the concentration of unchecked power.

There is no doubt that Nigeria’s theoretical constitutional democracy is predicated on the ideals of popular rule, with periodic elections and a system of governance designed to reflect the will of the majority. However, in practice, popular sovereignty is frequently undermined by structural and institutional distortions that limit citizen influence in governance. The dominance of money politics, electoral fraud, and political violence significantly reduces the efficacy of elections as a true expression of the popular will (Ibeanu, 2021). Furthermore, systemic corruption erodes public trust in institutions, weakening the participatory elements of governance and relegating citizens to passive political spectators rather than active political agents. The reality suggests that popular rule in Nigeria is continuously subverted by elite capture, which distorts democratic institutions and reconfigures governance structures to prioritize the interests of an entrenched ruling class. This subversion is neither incidental nor circumstantial; it is a calculated, structural phenomenon designed to preserve elite hegemony at the expense of mass political empowerment. The deconstruction of elite capture is, therefore, critical in understanding the governance crisis in Nigeria.

Elite capture refers to a governance phenomenon in which a small, powerful group monopolizes political and economic decision

making, subverting democratic institutions to serve its interests rather than the collective good. This concept is particularly relevant in states where historical, economic, and institutional weaknesses have enabled entrenched elites to wield disproportionate influence over governance structures (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Elite capture manifest in political monopoly, economic predation, institutional manipulation and patronage networks. In these instances, a select group of politicians, bureaucrats, and business magnates dominate political parties, electoral processes, and governance institutions, marginalizing alternative voices. They create avenues where national resources are disproportionately allocated to a privileged few, reinforcing wealth disparities and economic exclusion. Manipulated state institutions, including the judiciary, legislature, and security agencies, are co-opted to serve elite interests rather than perform their democratic functions. Thus, governance operates through client list structures in which political loyalty is rewarded with state resources, while opposition figures and dissenters are systematically excluded.

Nigeria presents a quintessential case of elite capture, with a political class that has consistently manipulated democratic processes to maintain power. The country’s ruling elite, comprising entrenched political families, business oligarchs, and retired military generals, has effectively transformed governance into an instrument for wealth accumulation and self perpetuation (Obi, 2020). This elite dominance is reflected in the electoral processes, state institutions, resource allocation and security apparatus. Security forces are frequently deployed to suppress political opposition and civil society activism rather than address legitimate security threats. The persistence of elite capture in Nigeria is not merely an outcome of historical precedents; it is actively reinforced by the deliberate weakening of governance structures. This necessitates an explicit interrogation of democratic governance

deficits as a derivative of elite control. Therefore, the consequence of elite capture is a governance model that is exclusionary, non-transparent, and resistant to reforms aimed at fostering democratic deepening. This systemic subversion of democratic institutions directly contributes to Nigeria's persistent governance deficits.

Democratic governance deficits refer to the structural and operational failures that hinder the proper functioning of a democratic state. These deficits manifest in weak institutions, ineffective public administration, lack of accountability, and the inability of governance structures to deliver public goods equitably. While democratic governance entails a commitment to the rule of law, human rights, and participatory decision making, governance deficits reflect deviations from these principles, often due to elite manipulation and institutional decay (Rotberg, 2014). The institutionalization of corruption as a norm within Nigerian governance has far reaching implications for democratic accountability. When political officeholders are more concerned with personal accumulation than governance delivery, the capacity of the state to fulfill its democratic obligations such as providing public goods, ensuring security, and fostering economic inclusivity is severely compromised. Furthermore, the pervasiveness of corruption erodes public trust in democratic institutions, leading to widespread disillusionment with the political process and a weakening of civic engagement.

Elections in Nigeria are theoretically designed to be the primary mechanism through which political power is allocated based on the popular will. However, in practice, the electoral process has been systematically manipulated by the ruling elite to entrench their hold on power. Electoral malpractices including voter suppression, ballot stuffing, vote buying, and the coercion of opposition candidates have become standard features of Nigeria's political landscape (Ibeanu, 2021). The consequences

of electoral manipulation are profound, as they fundamentally distort the competitive nature of democratic governance. When elections are reduced to mere formalities, with outcomes predetermined by elite consensus rather than by genuine electoral choice, the legitimacy of the democratic process is called into question. Political apathy, fueled by the perception that electoral outcomes are manipulated, further weakens citizen participation, reinforcing a vicious cycle in which elite control is continually reproduced.

Theoretical Anchorage

The trajectory of elite capture and the consequent democratic governance deficits in Nigeria can be vividly explained with the abstractions of Elite capture theory. Elite capture theory draws from both classical and contemporary political economy, particularly from the works of scholars who study the dynamics of power and wealth distribution within societies (Olson, 1965). According to elite capture theorists, economic and political elites possess a disproportionate amount of power and influence, which they use to shape policies and institutional arrangements in their favor, effectively limiting or undermining the capacity of popular governance to influence meaningful change. A critical assumption of elite capture theory is that the control of political institutions and resources allows elites to perpetuate their power, often through mechanisms such as corruption, clientelism, and political patronage (Khan, 2010).

Elites are able to shape the political landscape by influencing elections, manipulating public opinion, and controlling legislative and judicial systems. In this context, even when democratic elections are held, the outcomes may be heavily skewed in favor of those who have the means to mobilize resources, sway public opinion, and maintain control over key political structures. The theory posits that political and economic systems are often manipulated by a small, cohesive group of elites who control key

institutions, resources, and policies for their own benefit, at the expense of the wider population. This concept is crucial in understanding the limitations placed on the realization of popular rule in democratic systems, especially in post colonial African contexts like Nigeria, where formal democratic structures exist, but real political power is disproportionately held by an entrenched elite.

Manifestations of Elite capture and Democratic Governance Deficits in Nigeria

Corruption and Lack of Accountability

Corruption remains one of the most entrenched governance deficits in Nigeria, with political officeholders routinely engaging in acts of financial mismanagement, nepotism, and abuse of power. The weakness of anti corruption institutions, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), has allowed political elites to evade accountability. Corruption impedes service delivery, discourages investment, and erodes public trust in governance (Okechukwu, 2021). Corruption in Nigeria is not merely a symptom of weak governance; it is an entrenched mechanism of elite consolidation.

Political office in Nigeria is often regarded as an avenue for wealth accumulation rather than a platform for public service. The country's vast natural resources, particularly its oil wealth, have been systematically appropriated by a ruling elite that prioritizes self enrichment over national development (Obi, 2020). Public funds are routinely misappropriated through inflated contracts, procurement fraud, and outright embezzlement, with little to no repercussions for those implicated.

The institutionalization of corruption as a norm within Nigerian governance has far reaching implications for democratic accountability. When political officeholders are more concerned with personal

accumulation than governance delivery, the capacity of the state to fulfill its democratic obligations such as providing public goods, ensuring security, and fostering economic inclusivity is severely compromised. Furthermore, the pervasiveness of corruption erodes public trust in democratic institutions, leading to widespread disillusionment with the political process and a weakening of civic engagement.

Electoral Malfeasance and Political Exclusion

Elections, the cornerstone of democratic legitimacy, are frequently manipulated in Nigeria through vote buying, rigging, and state sponsored violence. These malpractices diminish electoral competitiveness and restrict genuine political participation, allowing elite actors to maintain their grip on power (Ibeanu, 2021). This portends that elections in Nigeria are theoretically designed to be the primary mechanism through which political power is allocated based on the popular will. Thus, the electoral process has been systematically manipulated by the ruling elite to entrench their hold on power. Electoral malpractices including voter suppression, ballot stuffing, vote buying, and the coercion of opposition candidates have become standard features of Nigeria's political landscape (Ibeanu, 2021).

The consequences of electoral manipulation are profound, as they fundamentally distort the competitive nature of democratic governance. When elections are reduced to mere formalities, with outcomes predetermined by elite consensus rather than by genuine electoral choice, the legitimacy of the democratic process is called into question. Political apathy, fueled by the perception that electoral outcomes are manipulated, further weakens citizen participation, reinforcing a vicious cycle in which elite control is continually reproduced.

Judicial Complicity and Weak Rule of Law

A functional democracy requires an independent judiciary capable of upholding legal and constitutional principles. However, in

Nigeria, judicial corruption and executive interference have severely undermined the rule of law. Court rulings, particularly in high profile corruption cases, are often influenced by elite interests, reinforcing the culture of impunity (Suberu, 2020). The judiciary, as the custodian of constitutional democracy, ought to serve as a bulwark against elite impunity. However, the Nigerian judicial system has been systematically weakened through executive interference, political intimidation, and corruption. Court rulings on electoral disputes and corruption cases are frequently influenced by elite interests, leading to judgments that favor the politically connected rather than uphold legal integrity (Suberu, 2020).

The lack of judicial independence has severe ramifications for democratic governance, as it removes a critical avenue through which political accountability can be enforced. When those in power are assured of judicial complicity in shielding them from the consequences of their actions, the incentive for governance malfeasance increases. The result is a governance system in which impunity thrives, public confidence in legal institutions diminishes, and the rule of law is effectively undermined.

Legislative Weakness and Policy Manipulation

The Nigerian legislature, while constitutionally designed to provide checks and balances, has been largely co-opted by the executive, reducing its effectiveness as an oversight institution. Legislative debates and policymaking are frequently shaped by elite bargains rather than empirical assessments of national development needs (Okechukwu, 2021). A functional democracy requires a legislature that is independent, responsive, and committed to serving as a check on executive excesses. However, in Nigeria, the legislative arm of government has largely functioned as an extension of elite power rather than as a representative body for the electorate. Parliamentary debates and legislative actions are often dictated by

executive influence, with lawmakers prioritizing personal gains such as access to constituency funds and executive patronage over substantive legislative oversight (Okechukwu, 2021).

The consequence of a compromised legislature is that critical issues of governance, such as economic policy formulation, security sector reform, and social welfare provisioning, are dictated by elite interests rather than by the developmental needs of the populace. This legislative subservience further consolidates elite dominance, making it increasingly difficult for alternative voices whether from opposition parties or civil society to influence the policy agenda.

State Fragility and Security Deficits

The Nigerian state has increasingly struggled to provide security for its citizens, with the rise of insurgencies, banditry, and communal conflicts exposing the weaknesses of its security apparatus. Rather than addressing these security challenges through inclusive governance and strategic reforms, the state has often resorted to militarization, further alienating affected communities. This governance failure is exacerbated by elite driven policies that prioritize regime security over human security (Okeke, 2022).

Unequal Distribution of Resources and Opportunities

Elite capture has transformed the Nigerian state into a machinery for the redistribution of public wealth upwards, concentrating resources, privileges, and opportunities in the hands of a narrow oligarchy. Access to employment, education, healthcare, and entrepreneurial support is largely mediated by proximity to power, while merit and need are relegated to secondary considerations. This structured inequality consolidates elite dominance by creating socioeconomic barriers that exclude the majority from the circuits of upward mobility. The rural poor, urban underclass, and ethno-religious minorities are systematically disenfranchised, reproducing

conditions of structural poverty and marginalization.

The diversion of public resources into elite-controlled ventures has severe implications for poverty alleviation and national development. Funds earmarked for public welfare such as education, primary healthcare, and social safety nets are routinely misappropriated or underfunded, thereby undermining human capital development. Consequently, indices of social development, including maternal mortality, child literacy, life expectancy, and access to clean water, remain dismally low despite Nigeria's considerable wealth. Elite capture thus obstructs the realization of developmental goals by perpetuating cycles of deprivation and social exclusion.

As elites exploit state institutions to serve parochial interests, public trust in these institutions deteriorates. The judiciary is perceived as a pliable instrument in the hands of the powerful, anticorruption agencies are viewed as politicized, and law enforcement is regarded as complicit in elite impunity. This de-legitimization of public institutions fosters a governance vacuum where informal power structures and non-state actors begin to assume roles traditionally reserved for the state, further weakening democratic authority.

The erosion of institutional trust breeds cynicism, resentment, and disaffection among the populace, creating fertile ground for civil unrest and anti-state violence. In regions plagued by chronic underdevelopment and elite neglect, such as the Niger Delta and the North-East, the failure of the state to equitably deliver public goods has catalyzed insurgencies, militancy, and separatist movements. Thus, elite capture not only undermines the legitimacy of democratic governance but also jeopardizes the coherence of the Nigerian state itself.

Stunted Development

Elite capture imposes a structural drag on economic development by diverting resources

from productive investment to elite consumption. Infrastructure projects are either abandoned or executed sub-optimally due to corrupt procurement practices, while macroeconomic policies are crafted to favor rent-seeking interests rather than industrial diversification or job creation. The dominance of extractive over productive sectors persists because elites profit from short-term gains in resource exploitation rather than long-term investments in innovation, agriculture, or manufacturing. Consequently, economic growth, when it occurs, is uneven, unsustainable, and exclusionary.

The quality and accessibility of public services are direct casualties of elitedriven governance. Educational institutions suffer from chronic underfunding, leading to dilapidated infrastructure, underpaid staff, and poor academic outcomes. The health sector is similarly debilitated, pushing citizens toward private alternatives or medical tourism. Basic services such as electricity, sanitation, and transportation are either unavailable or unreliable, particularly in nonurban areas. These deficiencies are not incidental but systematic emanating from a governance model that prioritizes elite comfort over collective welfare.

Embedded within each of these consequences is a stark indictment of Nigeria's democratic experiment: that despite the institutional accoutrements of democracy elections, legislatures, courts, and constitutions true popular rule remains elusive. Instead, the state continues to operate as a conduit for elite reproduction, consolidating the power and privileges of a narrow class while excluding the majority from the dividends of governance. Unless these structures of elite dominance are dismantled, the promise of democracy in Nigeria will remain unfulfilled a mirage sustained by procedural formalities, but void of substantive legitimacy.

Democratic Governance Deficits and their Implications for Popular Rule

The cumulative impact of governance deficits is the erosion of democratic legitimacy and the disempowerment of ordinary citizens. When institutions fail to function independently, when elections do not reflect the popular will, and when corruption permeates all levels of governance, democracy ceases to be a government of the people. Instead, it becomes an instrument of elite preservation. Thus, Nigeria's democratic governance deficits are not merely administrative shortcomings but structural distortions that fundamentally compromise the essence of popular rule. These deficits ensure that governance remains an exclusive preserve of the elite, limiting opportunities for equitable development and exacerbating socio-economic inequalities. Addressing this democratic dysfunction requires a fundamental reconfiguration of governance structures to dismantle elite dominance and restore the primacy of popular sovereignty. The next section will explore pathways for democratic reclamation and institutional reform in Nigeria.

The above highlights show that the principles of popular rule, remains fundamentally constrained by the phenomenon of elite capture. This pervasive entrenchment of a privileged political and economic class within the corridors of power has systematically subverted the fundamental tenets of democratic governance transparency, accountability, participation, and equitable representation. Elite capture in Nigeria manifests through the monopolization of political institutions, the instrumentalization of state resources for private gain, and the erosion of mechanisms meant to facilitate genuine citizen participation in governance.

Democracy, in its truest sense, is intended to be a system in which power is derived from the collective will of the people and exercised for the common good. However, in Nigeria, the institutionalization of elite dominance has

created a governance framework that prioritizes the interests of a select few over the broader aspirations of the citizenry. The result is a state apparatus that functions not as an agent of social welfare and development, but as a vehicle for rent extraction, patronage politics, and political exclusion. This systemic entrenchment of elite hegemony raises fundamental concerns about the legitimacy and efficacy of Nigeria's democratic institutions.

At the heart of the governance crisis in Nigeria is the paradox of a democratic state that, in practice, operates as an oligarchic structure. While elections are periodically conducted, and democratic institutions such as the judiciary and legislature exist in principle, their operations are largely dictated by elite interests rather than by constitutional imperatives. This fundamental contradiction underscores the reality that formal democratic institutions alone are insufficient to guarantee democratic governance if the substantive mechanisms of accountability and popular participation are systematically undermined. Elite influence over legal institutions renders the judiciary susceptible to manipulation, undermining justice and democratic governance. The principle of equality before the law is routinely undermined in Nigeria, as politically connected individuals evade legal consequences while ordinary citizens face harsh penalties for minor infractions. The selective prosecution of corruption cases, where opposition figures are targeted while ruling elites enjoy impunity, further delegitimizes the legal system and erodes public confidence in governance.

Mechanisms of Elite Capture in Nigerian and implications for governance

The manner in which elite capture manifests itself in Nigeria's political system is multifaceted. At the heart of elite dominance is the strategic control of political institutions, economic resources, and electoral processes. Each of these mechanisms works in tandem to ensure the perpetuation of elite power. The

persistent entrenchment of elite capture within Nigeria's political system has profound implications for the realization of popular rule. The fundamental premise of democracy is that governance should be reflective of the will and aspirations of the people. However, in Nigeria, the governance structure has been recalibrated to serve elite interests, thereby negating the essential features of democratic representation and accountability.

One of the most immediate consequences of this governance distortion is the widening gap between state policies and public welfare. When governance priorities are dictated by elite bargaining rather than by the collective needs of the populace, essential services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development are either neglected or grossly underfunded. The result is a state apparatus that is unresponsive to the developmental needs of its citizens, leading to a growing sense of disenfranchisement and alienation from the political process.

Furthermore, elite capture has exacerbated social inequalities, deepening the divide between the political class and the masses. The monopolization of economic opportunities by a privileged few, facilitated through state patronage and rent seeking behaviors, has effectively marginalized large segments of the population. This economic exclusion, coupled with governance failures, has fueled widespread poverty, unemployment, and social unrest conditions that undermine the stability of the democratic system itself (Okeke, 2022).

For instance, during electioneering, wealthy elites, through their control of state resources and political parties, are able to buy votes, intimidate opposition candidates, and rig the electoral process to secure political power (Omotola, 2010). In this environment, the power of the electorate is diminished, as political outcomes are determined by a small group of elites rather than by popular will. Patronage networks further entrench elite control by offering material rewards to supporters in exchange for political loyalty.

This creates a system where political legitimacy is based not on democratic principles, but on the exchange of material benefits, such as jobs, government contracts, or infrastructure projects. As a result, political competition becomes less about ideological contestation and more about the ability to distribute patronage to key constituencies (Joseph, 1987).

This facilitates the perpetuation of the elite group for continued control state resources, particularly the lucrative oil sector, which has become a central pillar of the country's political economy. These elites allegedly divert public funds into their private coffers through various corrupt practices, such as the awarding of inflated contracts, embezzlement of state funds, and kickback schemes (Ihonvbere, 1996). Elite capture also weakens key democratic institutions, such as the judiciary, the legislature, and the media. The judiciary, in particular, has been subject to political interference, with judges and court officials often being appointed or dismissed based on their loyalty to the ruling elite (Suberu, 2007). This undermines the ability of the judiciary to act as an independent check on executive power or to protect the rights of ordinary citizens. The legislature, instead of acting as a counterbalance to executive authority, often aligns itself with elite interests, prioritizing the enrichment of its members over the needs of the public (Ojo, 2006). Similarly, the media, which should serve as a watchdog of the political system, is often co-opted or silenced by elite interests, limiting its ability to expose corruption and hold political leaders accountable.

Impact of Elite Capture on Popular Rule and Democratic Governance

Democratic governance, in its ideal form, seeks to promote inclusivity, accountability, and equitable development through institutions that facilitate public participation and transparency. However, in Nigeria, the reality remains far from this democratic ideal, as elite capture pervades virtually all aspects of

governance. The consolidation of political and economic power among a small, entrenched elite has led to systemic governance deficits, undermining the principles of popular rule and sustainable development. The consequences of elite capture for popular rule are profound. By consolidating power within a small, unaccountable elite, the political system becomes disconnected from the needs and aspirations of the broader population. While formal democratic institutions may exist, such as regular elections, the real political power is vested in a small group that has no incentive to prioritize the welfare of the people.

Elite capture undermines the legitimacy of democratic institutions, as citizens begin to view elections and government actions as meaningless when they are controlled by elites. In this lens, the electoral process is allegedly perennially compromised by elite interference, reducing its efficacy as a tool for genuine political representation. Electoral irregularities, ranging from voter suppression and ballot stuffing to the falsification of results, have consistently marred the integrity of democratic processes (Obi, 2020). The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the body tasked with conducting elections, has often been accused of colluding with powerful political actors to manipulate electoral outcomes. Despite electoral reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, structural deficiencies such as logistical failures, compromised voter registration systems, and weak enforcement of electoral laws continue to undermine the legitimacy of the electoral process.

Money politics has become an entrenched feature of Nigerian elections, wherein political offices are often "purchased" through extensive vote buying and patronage networks. Wealthy elites, often with access to state resources, leverage financial inducements to secure electoral victories, effectively sidelining candidates who lack substantial financial backing. This phenomenon distorts electoral competition, as political offices are secured not based on

competence or public trust but on financial muscle and transactional politics (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2018). Electoral violence further compounds these challenges, with powerful political actors resorting to intimidation, thuggery, and violence to suppress opposition and ensure electoral dominance. Pre-election and postelection periods are often characterized by targeted assassinations, violent clashes between party loyalists, and the deployment of security forces to intimidate opposition figures. The use of violence as an electoral strategy perpetuates elite dominance by discouraging political participation and entrenching a system where political office is reserved for those willing and able to deploy coercive tactics.

Beyond elections, elite capture erodes civic engagement by stifling participatory governance. Public hearings, budget consultations, and community dialogues are often reduced to formalities devoid of real influence, as policy decisions are determined by elite calculations rather than collective deliberation. This has stunted the maturation of a participatory democratic culture, replacing it with a passive, transactional, and disempowered polity. The space for civil resistance, grassroots mobilization, and citizen-led policy advocacy is continually narrowed, reinforcing a vicious cycle of disengagement and elite entrenchment.

Elite capture also results in significant governance deficits, such as widespread corruption, electoral fraud, and lack of accountability, which severely hinder the country's ability to develop and meet the needs of its citizens. Political god-fatherism remains a defining feature of Nigerian politics, wherein influential individuals dictate electoral outcomes by handpicking candidates, manipulating party primaries, and dictating governance decisions once their protégés assume office. This patron-client relationship subverts democratic principles, as elected officials remain accountable not to the electorate but to their political benefactors. The consequence is a governance structure

that prioritizes elite interests over public welfare, reinforcing a cycle of political stagnation and underdevelopment.

The absence of transparency in government expenditures facilitates elite resource capture. Budgetary allocations, procurement processes, and public spending are often shrouded in secrecy, allowing for the diversion of funds meant for public welfare into private hands. Despite Nigeria's adoption of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative, opaque financial practices continue to undermine economic accountability, depriving citizens of the benefits of public resources. Nigeria boasts several anticorruption agencies, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). However, these institutions have largely failed to hold elites accountable due to political interference, selective prosecution, and judicial bottlenecks (Agbibo, 2012). High-profile corruption cases involving politically connected individuals often result in protracted legal battles with little to no convictions, reinforcing the perception that the law applies only to the powerless.

Judicial appointments in Nigeria are often influenced by political actors, compromising the independence of the judiciary. Judges who rule against powerful elites frequently face intimidation, removal, or coercion, while those who align with elite interests are rewarded with career advancements and financial incentives (Gberevbie, 2014). This erosion of judicial impartiality results in a legal system that disproportionately serves elite interests while denying justice to ordinary citizens.

In other words, elite capture does not merely constitute a distortion in the structural mechanisms of governance; it fundamentally undermines the normative foundations of democratic practice, thereby disfiguring the concept of popular rule. The monopolization of political and economic resources by a privileged few marginalizes the vast majority from substantive political engagement,

disrupts equitable resource allocation, and corrodes the social contract that binds state and society. The implications are far-reaching, cascading across dimensions of political participation, resource distribution, institutional trust, and developmental outcomes. This section interrogates the multidimensional consequences of elite capture on the quality and practice of popular rule in Nigeria, offering a disaggregated analysis of its systemic effects.

The institutionalization of elite dominance within Nigeria's political system has precipitated a pervasive sense of political alienation among the citizenry. When political spaces are monopolized by oligarchic networks, the average citizen perceives participation in electoral or civic processes as futile, thereby retreating into political apathy. Elections, no longer viewed as instruments for change, are interpreted as orchestrated rituals with predetermined outcomes. The result is a steady decline in voter turnout, particularly among youth and marginalized communities, who increasingly perceive the electoral process as an exclusive domain of the elite class.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite Nigeria's formal democratic structures, the pervasive dominance of elite interests continues to undermine the essence of popular rule. Elections remain largely transactional, institutions are systematically weakened, and governance is orchestrated to serve a privileged few rather than the broader citizenry. This persistent elite capture has led to widespread political apathy, deepening inequality, and an erosion of public trust in state institutions, ultimately stunting national development. Without substantive reforms, democracy in Nigeria will remain an illusion existing in form but not in function.

However, the struggle for genuine democratic governance is far from lost. Strengthening electoral integrity, enforcing judicial independence, promoting transparency, and curbing the influence of

money in politics are necessary steps toward dismantling elite dominance. Civic engagement, media freedom, and institutional accountability must be reinforced to restore public confidence in governance. True democracy demands the active participation of the people, not just periodic elections. Until governance is reclaimed as a public trust rather than an instrument of elite consolidation, the aspirations of millions will continue to be subverted in the name of democracy. Addressing the crisis of democratic governance in Nigeria requires a multi-dimensional approach that involves institutional reforms, political reengineering, and active civic engagement. Strengthening electoral institutions to ensure transparency, enhancing judicial independence to uphold democratic accountability, and promoting intra party democracy to dismantle elite monopolization of political platforms are critical steps toward reversing the tide of elite capture.

The realization of popular rule in Nigeria hinges on the dismantling of elite-dominated structures and the establishment of a governance framework that prioritizes public interest over private gain. The recommendations outlined above provide a roadmap for reclaiming democratic governance from elite capture, reinforcing the principles of transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making. Without these fundamental reforms, democracy in Nigeria will continue to be a façade operating in procedural terms but devoid of substantive legitimacy. The struggle for true democratic governance is not merely a policy imperative but a moral and existential necessity for the nation's future.

Equally important is the role of civil society and the media in holding power to account, fostering political consciousness, and advocating for governance structures that genuinely reflect the aspirations of the Nigerian people. Ultimately, the question of whether Nigeria's democratic future will be defined by popular rule or elite capture

depends on the capacity of its institutions and citizens to resist the entrenched forces of political exclusion and economic domination. The battle for democratic governance in Nigeria is, at its core, a struggle between the ideals of people centered leadership and the entrenched realities of elite dominance. The resolution of this struggle will determine the trajectory of Nigerian democracy in the years to come.

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NATURE OF IDENTITY POLITICS IN NIGERIA AND THE CHALLENGES OF PEACE-BUILDING, 2019-2025

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Abstract

The study examines the nature of identity politics in Nigeria and the challenges of peace-building, 2019-2025. The study employed documentary research methods and qualitative research methods. Therefore, secondary sources of data and observation methods of gathering data were employed. The study finds out that identity politics pose challenges to peace-building in Nigerian society because the nature of identity politics in Nigeria prevents the articulation of a universal vision for social change, splinter into ever-narrow categories, leads to an inability to perform coalitions that can agitate for progress, and lead a particular group to no space to participate politically. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that the National Assembly should amend the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to make the country operate a regional system of government based on the current six (6) geo-political zones, and make a constitutional provision for state governments to control their affairs (mineral resources and internal security) and contribute only 30% of their revenue to their regional government and 20% of their revenue to federal government, while the state governments will retain a quantum sum of 50% of their revenue for the development of their states. The suggested solution will reduce to the barest minimum the nature of identity politics in Nigeria that produces marginalization policies, ethnic cleansing, identity crisis and marginalization of ethnic groups to pose challenges to peace-building in the country, while at the same time creating equal opportunities for progress and sustainable peace-building among sub-national political units.

Keywords: Ethnic group, identity politics, peace-building, political identity, religious identity

Introduction

At the international level and in international relations, identity politics has always been important for forming and preserving alliances because it shapes how countries cooperate, interact, and create shared identities (Smith, 2023). This is partly because one of the most divisive topics in communities where there is conflict is identity politics, which may both fuel violent conflicts and obstruct efforts to promote peace (Visoka, 2018). Even though identity politics has always been one of the issues in conflict, it should be noted that conflict itself is inevitable in every human society. Consequently, the inevitability of conflict has led to a situation where identity

politics also influences the maintenance of alliances, as member states within an alliance navigate the complexities of their shared identities and interests over time. Identity politics has the potential to both reinforce and undermine the cohesiveness of alliances once they are established (Smith, 2023). In a nutshell, identity politics can also serve as an avenue to manage conflict in human society. Ethnic, religious, and cultural ties are important factors in determining how people view themselves and their place in society, and identity politics are pervasive in the Middle East (Nkomo, 2024). Identity politics is an ethnic, religious and cultural incline in shaping

behaviour in human society. Therefore, people and individuals including elites and non-elites are influenced by the sentiments that constitute identity politics. Identity politics is sentimental because the things that form it are the various values that shape the behaviour of people in human society.

At the national level, it has been observed that identity politics has a lot in common with ethnic identity only that the former is somewhat broader than the latter. Ethnic identity has its foundations in combined remembrances of experience and common aspirations, values, norms and expectations. That is, it is the sense of continuity and belonging that arises from one's own or other people's ascription to a group that claims a shared cultural heritage and ancestry. (Ojukwu, & Onifade, 2010). Another sub-set of identity politics in political society is political identity. A person's political identity is determined by how he defines himself and the group or philosophy he belongs to (Etim, Duke, & John (2020). Political identity is coterminous with political party identity where members of the same political party are expected to be influenced by the same values and orientation since they are expected to share the same political ideology.

The understanding of identity politics is expected to be a poser to predicting human behaviour and knowing those things that are worth influencing human behaviour in society. This is why scholars have argued that In addition to making it easier to study social chaos, strong identities also make it easier for people and collectivities to govern themselves (Visoka, 2018). Identity politics can also represent a broader view of some groups of people who have come to see the need to hold values that transcend beyond their ethnic, religious and political affiliations. For instance, it has been argued that the analysis of each person's unique agency disappears once their individuality is obscured by the broad labelling, and the potential for collective impact becomes evident. (Visoka, 2018). Identity politics can hold a broader ideology or narrow

ideology of what their identity ought to be and what it should be. This is why other scholars have posited that self-identification, as explained by identity politics may go beyond religious, cultural or ethnic consciousness to political sentiments where the people involved unite and assert themselves in the society (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). The above observation can be made possible courtesy of developed political culture. To corroborate the foregoing, Finer (1988) has argued that developed political culture occurs where there is high political participation and knowledge of what is expected from the government. This political culture breeds identity politics.

It has been noted that identity politics are positioned as a form of collective action to transform institutions, mainstream culture, values, policies and structures (Bernstein (2005). The above observation revealed that the extent to which identity politics can transform the foregoing is a poser on whether sustainable peace-building will be achieved or challenges to sustainable peace-building will be prevalent. The reason is that identity politics can be a tool for representation and empowerment, when it becomes politicized, it frequently results in violence, marginalization, and division. (Yousaf, 2025).

The debate on whether identity politics is achieving sustainable peace-building or posing challenges to peace-building was partially responded to by a scholar who contended that the Nigerian government has often been criticized for not being transparent and accountable to its citizens. As a result, people no longer trust the government to fulfil its commitments (Gumbi, & Baba, 2024). The criticisms being melted on the ruling elites since Nigeria re-emerged in 1999 show that there is a problem of identity politics that can be accepted by all. This problem of identity politics is a poser to the multicultural societies in Nigeria. This development has led to a scenario where Since Nigeria returned to democratic administration in 1999, an atmosphere has been created that has sparked the reappearance of identity crises in the

country's political landscape (Nnorom, & Odigbo, 2015). It is based on the challenges that identity politics have produced in Nigeria despite opportunities that unity is diversity can create that inform this present study. Therefore, the objective of this study is, to interrogate the nature of identity politics in Nigeria and the challenges of peace-building, from 2019-2025. This study intends to answer the research question that says, what are the natures of identity politics in Nigeria that pose challenges to peace-building from 1999 to 2025?

Conceptual Clarifications of Terms: Identity Politics and Peace-building

There are many definitions of identity politics by scholars in politics and social sciences. One such definition was the one given by Bernstein (2005) who defines identity politics as the political practice that entails any mobilization related to politics, culture, and identity. Related to the above definition is the definition by Smith (2023) who defines identity politics as the advocacy of the distribution and allocation of public resources among various social groupings. Thus, identity politics implies an introductory component in the commencement of associations (Smith, 2023). What can be deduced from the foregoing definitions is that identity politics is an attempt by some people to mobilise individuals who share some sentiments to dominate the government. For this study, identity politics is the coming together of people who share the same ethnic, religious, cultural or political affiliations to embark on advocacy on how state resources ought to be distributed as against how it is presently being shared to the various groups in the society to influence and dominate public policies.

The definition of peace-building defiles an agreed universal definition; however prominent scholars of peace and conflict studies have come up with diverse definitions of the subject matter. One such definition is given by Ayeni, Uzoigwe, Sani and Dubu (2019) who define peace-building as all the

progressions working to ensure pleasant relationships among the persons in the society, without oppression, extortion, exploitation, absolute poverty and violation of fundamental human rights. This definition fits into the subject of study because it itemized the elements that can pose challenges to peace-building in modern society.

Theoretical Framework

This study employed social identity theory as the theoretical framework of analysis. The theory was propounded by Henry Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. The theory states that people have a natural inclination to perceive their in-group in a positive light while being neutral or even negative towards out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Simply put, the theory of social identity theory holds that people have the natural inclination to favour their ethnic group, while they do not favour people of other ethnic groups.

In applying the above theory to this study, researchers usually believed that individuals, especially political elites usually favour people with whom they share the same ethnic, religious or political party affiliations in appointment into public offices over those who they do not share the same ethnic, religious or political party affiliations with the group. The above is corroborated by Going by Etim, Duke, and John (2020) who argued that no section in the state is vindicated by these sentiments of favouring one ethnic group above other ethnic groups.

This theory is relevant to this study because identity politics which is our independent variable in this study is laden with the burden of ethnic, religious or political party sentiment in the allocation of state resources that is expected to pose challenges to the peace-building, which is our dependent variable. This study shows that an inclusive and context-sensitive analysis of conflict and peace can be explained by an analytical framework that is based on social identity theory. This study shows that there are interesting insights to be gained by interrogating the nature of

identity politics in Nigeria that pose challenges to peace-building in the country. Thus, the theory links stages of identity politics in addition to relating peace and conflict, which can add to current debates about peace-building (Hoving, 2014).

A good way to look at identity politics is to take a critical look at the most strategic appointment of every government in Nigeria and relate it to the ethnic, religious or political party of the political authority in power. Depending on the level and place in which a group acts, different perspectives on the system of politics are developed. This shows that identity politics can impact the power dynamics within associations, affecting which countries or ethnic groups take on leadership roles and how choices are made (Smith, 2023).

Empirical Review

Yousaf (2025) evaluates the role of identity politics in ethnic conflicts by analyzing historical and contemporary case studies, including the Rwandan Genocide, the Balkan Wars, and ethnic tensions in Myanmar. A mixed-methods approach is employed, incorporating qualitative analysis of case studies alongside quantitative data on ethnic violence trends. The findings reveal that identity-based mobilization can lead to exclusionary policies, ethnic cleansing, and prolonged socio-political instability.

Nkomo (2024) investigates the intersectionality in Middle-Eastern conflicts: identity politics and national interests. Through an analysis of historical context, contemporary events, and case studies, it elucidates the multifaceted nature of Middle East conflicts and how identity-based narratives intertwine with strategic calculations by regional and international actors. The study found that by recognizing the intersection of identity politics and national interests, policymakers, practitioners, and scholars can develop more effective strategies for conflict resolution and peace-building.

Smith (2023) investigates the role of identity politics in shaping alliances, focusing

on examples from the United States (USA), Canada, Europe, and Africa. The study adopts the documentary research method. The study reveals that shared identities within alliances often promote solidarity and cooperation, as seen in historical alliances like NATO and NORAD.

Etim, Duke, and John (2020) examine the implications of ethno-religious identity on peace-building in Nigeria from a public policy perspective. The study relies on secondary data with content analysis of newspapers, books, journals and internet sources. Findings revealed that ethno-religious disharmony is a clog on the wheel of peace-building in Nigeria. It was discovered that ethno-religious identity gives impetus to perceived unfairness and injustice by some ethnic and religious groups, especially as regards the distribution of resources among groups and regions in the country.

Hoving (2014) investigates “identity in peace and conflict”. This study shows that an inclusive and context-sensitive analysis of conflict and peace can be done by building an analytical framework based on identity theory. The study employed a qualitative research method. The framework is based on identity insecurity. The study finds that there are interesting insights to be gained by connecting levels and connecting peace and conflict, which can add to current debates about peace-building.

Many studies have been conducted on identity politics, for instance, Yousaf (2025) carried out a study on the role of identity politics in ethnic conflicts by analyzing historical and contemporary case studies, including the Rwandan Genocide, the Balkan Wars, and ethnic tensions in Myanmar; Nkomo (2024) investigates the intersectionality in middle-east conflicts, with emphases on identity politics and national interests; Smith (2023) did a study on the role of identity politics in shaping alliances, focusing on examples from the United States (USA), Canada, Europe, and Africa. Other studies carried out by Etim, Duke, and John (2020)

examine the implications of ethno-religious identity on peace-building in Nigeria from a public policy perspective; and Hoving (2014) investigates “identity in peace and conflict”. Despite the various studies carried out on identity politics and the others on peace-building, no study has deemed it necessary to investigate “identity politics and the challenges it poses on peace-building, either in Nigeria or elsewhere. The present research intends to fill this gap, by investigating the nature of identity politics that pose challenges to sustainable peace-building in Nigeria. It is on the exigency of the above gap in the literature that this study intends to interrogate “the nature of identity politics in Nigeria and the challenges of peace-building, from 2019 to 2025.

Research Methodology

The study employed documentary research methods and qualitative research methods. Therefore, secondary sources of data and observation methods of gathering data were employed.

Results and Discussions

Identity Politics and the Challenges of Peace-building

Identity politics has both negative and positive benefits. To corroborate the above, Horowitz (1985) argues that identity politics that is based on ethnicity, fosters group solidarity but also deepens societal fractures, exacerbating grievances that often escalate into conflict. This is even as Nigeria is a multiethnic society. While identity politics often adds to conflict escalation, it also plays a role in peace-building and reconciliation (Yousaf, 2025). The following are the characteristics of identity politics that pose challenges to peace-building.

Identity politics prevents the articulation of a universal vision for social change

The fact that identity politics involves the vision of a people or group in a political society may prevent the articulation of a universal

vision for social change that can lead to national transformation in a country. This is because the role of identity politics in ethnic conflicts is actively constructed and mobilized by political elites seeking to leverage ethnic identities for strategic gains (Brubaker, 2004). Identity politics promotes ethnic leaders who seek ethnic interests rather than national elites who can work for the national transformation of a country, especially a multiethnic society. This development can make efforts at peace-building within the ethno-religiously divided entity to defy real and apparent solutions (Etim, Duke, & John, 2020). Identity politics will make ethnic or religious political elite seek for the welfare of people from their ethnic and religious affiliation thereby leaving the other groups from other ethnic or religious groups unattended to. To buttress the fact that identity politics prevents the articulation of a universal vision for social change, Wahab (April 17, 2025, para. 1-2) of Vanguard Newspaper has reported that a former federal lawmaker – Senator Shehu Sani has condemned northern politicians for saying that the appointment by President Bola Tinubu is largely skewed in favour of his region (southwest), the former senator argued that former President Muhammadu Buhari’s government committed worse nepotism in appointment of political office holders during his administration. There is no articulation of a universal vision because of identity politics that makes the northern politicians condemn President Tinubu’s administration for favouring his region at the detriment of other regions when it is obvious that former President Buhari who handed over power to President Bola Tinubu appointed people from this ethnic group in a quantum large number than other ethnic group. The former senator who belongs to the same ethnic group as the people criticizing Tinubu is supporting the President because of the political affiliation he has with the President. It is obvious that it is identity politics sentiments are the reason why the two parties cannot

articulate the same universal vision for social change that can bring about development.

The above scenario creates a problem of political trust in a country. This is because political trust is based on the performance assessment of political institutions and depends on the extent to which citizens believe that the governance has led or can lead to desired results (North, 1990). Bias individuals from a particular ethnic group who believe that their political elites have been marginalized in political appointments may tend to rate the performance of political institutions under the control of the political elite of other ethnic groups low because of identity politics rather than objective analysis of the situation. For instance, it has been noted:

There is no boundary to the reach of sentiments in the discourse of identity politics, especially in a pluralist society like Nigeria. No matter the level of advantage gained by an ethnic or religious group in a pluralist society, it is believed that more have been left undone. This perception brings about perpetual dissatisfaction which transforms itself into disagreements and violent conflicts. In Nigeria, religious and ethnic sentiments have constituted the major causes of violent conflicts. This sentiment influences the agitations for resource control and other political privileges. It also stands against the drive towards 'one Nigeria' (Etim, Duke, & John, 2020, p. 15).

Identity politics have a great possibility of posing challenges to peace-building, especially in a society with a low and parochial political culture where sentiment toward ethnic affiliation is very high. The parochial political culture operating in a particular society can affect the identity politics of the people to the extent that people seek the good of their ethnic, religious and political identity that is self-satisfying rather than the one that helps the society as a whole. For instance, Mieroop (2007) argue that there are institutional identity and professional identity, the former refers to the social positioning of the speaker

as a member of his organization, while the latter refers to the organisational positioning of the speaker. To corroborate the above, a member of the Nigerian Bar Association has argued in support of his professional identity at the detriment of national identity that ought to promote good national identity for Nigerians. The case of the Nigerian Bar Association that collected 300 million hosting rights from the Governor of River State, only to turn around to say that the money collected from the River State government was not for hosting rights but a mere gift to the association. It is parochial political culture and self-seeking that make people promote personal and group interests over national interests.

The identity politics that is prevalent in Nigeria support micro-level interest rather than macro-level interest. The above is aptly explained by Bernstein (2005) who contends that "Neo-Marxist approaches to defining identity politics discusses macro level issues regarding what constitutes power and what are the forces of oppression". In identity politics in a country where there is a parochial political culture, political elites seek to pursue power in the political society to seek different types of identities unknowingly at the detriment of national interest and peace-building. People have further sought lower levels of identity politics by reflecting identity politics that align with political party identity, economic identity, social identity, educational identity, religious identity, and ethnic identity. People in the political society talk of power when they talk of the following: the political party they belong to; where they work or the businesses they own and control, their friends and who they are related to; their course-mate in a higher institution; their religion practice and the tribe they belong to. The above are all signals to show that they have identity politics as individuals. The above is so because identity is something all people ought to have, or are searching for; identity is something all groups have, or ought to have; identity is something people and a group can have without being

aware of it; and strong notions of collective identity imply strong notions of group boundedness and homogeneity (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Even though it is normal to seek identity in a political society, the degree to which people seek those identities that promote personal and group interests rather than national interests is posing a challenge to peace-building. This is all because of the prevalence of parochial political culture in operation in Nigeria (give an example of how personal and group interest by political elites is posing a threat to peace-building in Nigeria).

Identity politics tends to splinter into ever-narrow categories

Ethnic conflicts have been a recurring challenge in global politics, often fueled by identity politics, which shapes group solidarity, political mobilization, and socio-economic disparities (Yousaf, 2025). Ethnic politics occur at both the global arena and at the national seen.

The role of identity politics is central to either posing a threat to peace-building or enhancing peace-building. This is because identity politics can serve both as a tool for group empowerment and as a mechanism for division and violence (Horowitz, 1985). Identity politics is often used by political elites in politics, governance and social advancement in Nigeria. The above is corroborated by Hoving (2014) who noted that "governance, politics and social advancement in Nigeria can therefore almost be equated with identity politics because the government as an apparatus cannot be trusted because it does not carry any generally acknowledged legitimacy. This means that ordinary Nigerians cannot rely on any government to protect their deep-seated norms, beliefs and characteristics; in short, their identities". The above observation shows that identity politics tends to splinter into ever-narrow categories because of its reflection in the politics and governance system of Nigeria who have over the years controlled the seat of power. This development has further divided the country

into various ethnic and religious lines. This has further led to a situation where there are strong overlapping identifications in terms of religion, ethnicity, geographical descent and economic development, which have made many people perceive Nigeria at a national level as deeply divided between the North and South (Hoving, 2014). This means that a southern presidency perspective of governance might not be the same as a northern presidency.

This has led to a situation where the country has played host to diverse ethnic and religious conflicts (Etim, Duke, & John (2020). To say the least, the 1950s were years of acrimonious ethnic politics in Nigeria. During this period, the greatest immigration of southern Nigerians into Kano took place. Igbos formed the great majority of the immigrants. The Kanawa saw this unprecedented immigration of stranger elements into their midst as a political device by which southerners would take over Northern Nigeria (Ojukwu, & Onifade, 2010). Not only that from independence in 1960 till date, Nigeria has failed to enjoy merit and neutrality as a country, during elections and appointments, as major religious groups (Christians and Muslims) are in a constant struggle for dominance (Etim, Duke, & John, 2020). The observation of the first research shows that former President Buhari's administration's political appointments skew towards the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. This means that identity politics as seen from the above has been manipulated to favour one ethnic group as against the other.

It is not out of point to say that the above data analysis confirmed that identity politics, when manipulated for political gain, remains a major driver of ethnic conflict and that effective governance structures are crucial for mitigating ethnic tensions and fostering peace (Yousaf, 2025). The closer and insider a person feels to a place he develops his stronger identity affiliated with that place. On the other hand, the outsideness of a person is determined by the separation or alienation

from a place, which is largely influenced by the experience of the place (Visoka, 2018).

The above development has led to the problem of trust in government. For instance, many conflicts are caused by a lack of trust in the government of Nigeria. This in turn has fuelled problems with local anarchy and insecurity in local communities, who are not sure whether their survival as an identity group can be guaranteed. Therefore, local people have resorted to those they do trust; people from their identity groups. In Nigerian society therefore there is a very large emphasis on ethnicity, geographic descent and religion. This is also reflected in the established system of politics, in which patronage and identity politics are the norms of politics (Hoving, 2014). Identity politics pose challenges to peace-building because of patronage politics that enable the political elites of the ethnic group that support political authority to be favoured while the political elites whose ethnic groups do not support political authority are marginalized no matter how competent they may be and what they have to offer for national development. This is why Pye (1966) notes that achieving agreement in newly independent states about the legitimate nature of political authority and their appropriate duties has been a problem linked to the constitutional problem of what should be the association between the central government and other units of government.

Identity politics leads to an inability to perform coalitions that can agitate for progress

Identity politics at a national and regional level prevent the development of trust among local and regional identity groups because it encourages the view that one group can only advance its cause at the expense of another, and this calls for negative identifications between in and out-groups. So this system of identity politics and zero-sum game politics seems to be an important part of the context of peace-building at all levels of Nigerian society (Hoving, 2014). This identity politics did not allow a coalition of political elite to agitate

for national progress. This development is known to have hindered national progress. For instance, history has it that, identity politics impacted negatively on the relationship between the Yorubas and the Igbos particularly in 1951 when Nnamdi Azikiwe was forcefully asked by his colleagues from the western region to go back to the Eastern region to continue his political career; and between the Igbos and the people from the South-South when within the same period Zik was sent back to the Eastern region, Eyo Ita who was not an Igbo was also sent packing by his colleagues from the Eastern region House of Assembly (Ojukwu, & Onifade, 2010). Identity politics discourage coalition of best human resources because of sentiment for ethnic, religious and political party affiliation rather than competent that should drive growth.

Etim, Duke, and John (2020) find out that no country is prone to violent identity crises as a country with fissiparous tendencies. As a heterogeneous society, Nigeria is faced with numerous crises which are traced to ethnic and religious sentiments. These crises stand against peace-building which is expected to be achieved through good governance. Furthermore, good governance which is the adequate handling of citizens' problems and the proper allocation of resources to promote stability and create an authoritative rule for collective actions, has been neglected in the country by its leaders because we are not from the same ethnic, religious or political party. For Nigeria to achieve the much-anticipated peace and security, the government must ensure that citizens perceive fairness, equity and justice in its activities. No ethnic, religious or political party in the country should be left in the dark as regards the distribution of the nation's wealth. The will of the masses (majority) on public policies should be respected at every point, as this will encourage political participation at all levels (Etim, Duke, & John, 2020). From our observation, the government of former President Buhari is such that hinders the coalition of a certain major

ethnic group in the national security in the country, as there was no service chief representing the south-east region of Nigeria during his tenure as president.

The above development has been attributed to the prevalence of parochial political culture in the country. For instance, it has been noted that identity politics as cultural politic is believed to be cultural because its identity groups are seen as advocating for acknowledgement and respect for their cultural differences, which stem from their district group (Bernstein, 2005). People who occupy the position of president in Nigeria always want to carry people from their culture along more than people from other cultures. This seems to make a case for a situation where many cultural differences competing for superiority and recognition may imply a crisis of achieving a common sense of identity, hence the reason traditional forms of identity range from tribe to ethnic and linguistic groups compete with the sense of larger national identity (Pye 1966). Political elites from other ethnic groups want to identify with the culture of the political authority at the Centre, in the area of dressing. The crisis of identity has further fueled the identity crisis as government officials are now faced with whether to be loyal to the nation to achieve national development or to shift loyalty to their ethnic group that has sharpened their political culture. The above has seriously hampered development in Nigeria. It should be noted that development is the process of making the people better off than what they were before or improving the living conditions of the people (Ayeni, 2016). The inability of political elites to form a coalition in discharging their role in ensuring national progress can be traced to the struggle for identity rather than the struggle for development. Had there been a struggle for the development of Nigeria rather than a struggle for identity politics, financial security and peace-building of the general public would have been achieved. This is because “the provision of financial security for people undergoing structural violence is an

attempt at peace-building since a hungry man is an angry man” (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2024). The provision of financial security must be delivered to the general public irrespective of ethnic, religious and political party affiliations if peace-building must be achieved. This is because the ability of individuals to meet their necessities through legal methods is known as financial stability (Ayeni, 2024). The coalition of political elites to bring about national progress must start with the provision of financial security to every member of the public, whether they belong to the ethnic group of the ruling elites or not.

Identity politics embrace sentiments that may make it not to form a coalition as a whole with other ethnic groups to support progress. For instance, Uthman, Senyo, Maji and Abraham (February 16, 2025) of Punch Newspaper have reported that “the Northern leaders have been divided on the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in 2027. Core northerners complain about President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s unfavourable disposition towards the region, and minority groups in the region argue that they have fared well under his administration. The middle belt, southern Kaduna residents, Hausa Christians of Northern Nigeria, and many natives of Plateau State have distanced themselves from the plot to unseat Tinubu (para. 1-3). The above observation is a fallout from the fact that President Tinubu has not given the core northern Muslim political elites appointments as expected, rather northern Christians have also been given political appointments just like their Muslim counterpart– even though the president and the vice-president run on the Muslim-Muslim ticket. The above observation shows that there is identity politics that is posing a challenge to peace-building in the country now because the president did not identify with the core northern Muslims that voted for him by giving them more appointments than they were given, hence they are not willing to form another coalition to ensure the continuity of the present administration – whether there is going to be

progress in the policies of the administration or not. The above is one of the reasons why the rationality of the present central government political authority is being challenged by the core northern Muslim politicians. According to Anifowose (2008) who quoted Rousseau as saying that, the government “is not legitimate unless it was exercised directly by the people, hence individuals must obey the law they give to themselves. His ideas have thus been integrated into the constitutions of many nations, like the United States and France”. Identity politics in Northern Nigeria has re-interpreted “the people” that Rousseau talked about to mean people with the same ethno-religious affiliations. Identity politics in Nigeria align more with sentiment. This is why political elites are not concerned about the suffering of the people or people undergoing structural violence. For Ayeni and Andeshi (2024), structural violence is the refusal to provide fundamental basic needs and opportunities necessary for the well-being of people and the restoration of human dignity. Politicians employ identity politics to pose challenges to peace-building, rather than addressing poverty that causes structural violence.

Identity politics can at times lead a particular group to no space to participate politically.

Ideally, identity politics is supposed to ensure that sustainable peace-building is pursued to ensure that all the ethnic, religious and political party affiliations are included in the structure of governance to address the root cause of conflict. Thus, Ayeni and Abdullahi (2024) have posited that the pursuit of peace-building lies in addressing the root cause of conflict by meeting the economic needs of people. Even though identity politics does not eliminate the root cause of conflict, it is germane that conflict should be managed to avoid posing a threat to peace-building. Therefore, Ogunode, Ayeni and Samuila (2024) have noted that conflict management refers to all the methodologies employed by individuals and groups to address violent conflict and ensure that there is a peaceful atmosphere

that gives room for people to carry out their day-to-day business. It should be the responsibility of all political elites to understand conflict management since development and progress cannot be achieved in a conflict environment.

Consequently, identity politics has been weaponized to deepen divisions, justify discrimination, and instigate violence, even though identity politics can serve as a tool for political representation and cultural preservation (Yousaf, 2025). Apart from the fact that identity politics pose a challenge to peace-building, it also can ensure that a particular group has no space to give political representation. Identity politics in Nigerian politics has been one of the rational while a particular ethnic group in Nigeria has not been able to occupy the political authority at the centre in Nigeria. Observation has it that the last time the ethnic identity of the ethnic group ruled Nigeria, the political authority did not punish the people behind the killing of the political elites of other major ethnic groups in the 1960s. This has been aptly explained by Bernstein (2005) who argued that a political tactic, identity placement means conveying identity such that the environment of conflict becomes the person so that the values, categories, and practices of individuals become the subject of debate. As we write, the reason why political elites of the other two major ethnic nationalities were killed, while the political elite of the third ethnic nationality were spared remains a subject of debate as to why political elite from such ethnic group should be given another chance to take over the political authority at the centre in Nigeria.

Identity politics can create space for people to participate in politics, however, it can at the same time refuse to create space for people to participate in politics. For instance, Egbejule, Adetayo and Olurounbi (29 May 2023) of Al Jazeera Online News reported that Buhari won a second term in office despite not being better than the man he succeeded, in terms of delivering on his campaign promises that included: tackling insecurity, stem

corruption and fix economic troubles (para. 4). Identity politics can make one win election in Nigeria because of parochial political culture that is clouded with ethnic, religious or political identity. From a rational perspective, one would have argued that President Muhammadu Buhari is not supposed to have won a second term in office since he was not able to address insecurity, corruption and economic challenges bedevilling the country, based on his campaign promise. Even though President Buhari did not perform in his first term in office, the core Muslim northern states of Nigeria still voted for him in mass in addition to his political party members from the southern part of the country in his re-election of 2019. The above observation lends credence to the fact that identity politics in Nigeria can make politicians win elections or prevent politicians from winning elections since it is rooted in ethnic, religious and political party affiliations rather than competence and quality of candidate in an election

The study finds out that the nature of identity politics in Nigeria poses challenges to peace-building because the nature of the former prevents the articulation of a universal vision for social change, splinters into ever-narrow categories, leads to an inability to perform coalitions that can agitate for progress, and lead a particular group (ethnic group et cetera) to no space to participate politically. The finding of this study is corroborated by the study carried out by Yousaf (2025) who found that Ethnic cleansing, discriminatory laws, and protracted sociopolitical instability can result from identity-based mobilization. Identity-based mobilization is carried out by identity politics to discriminate and marginalize other ethnic groups with different identity politics.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has been able to investigate the nature of identity politics in Nigeria and the challenges of peace-building, 2019-2025. The study concludes that identity politics pose

challenges to peace-building in Nigerian society because the parochial political culture that influences identity politics prevents the articulation of a universal vision for social change, splinter into ever-narrow categories, leads to an inability to perform coalitions that can agitate for progress, and lead a particular group to no space to participate politically. This has resulted in identity-based mobilization that leads to exclusionary policies, ethnic cleansing, and marginalization of other ethnic groups.

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that the National Assembly should amend the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to make the country operate a regional system of government based on the current six (6) geo-political zones, and make a constitutional provision for state governments to control their affairs (mineral resources and internal security) and contribute only 30% of their revenue to their regional government and 20% of their revenue to federal government, while the state governments will retain a quantum sum of 50% of their revenue for the development of their states. The suggested solution will reduce to the barest minimum the nature of identity politics in Nigeria that produces marginalization policies, ethnic cleansing, identity crisis and marginalization of ethnic groups to pose challenges to peace-building in the country, while at the same time creating equal opportunities for progress and sustainable peace-building among sub-national political units.

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11

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns on earth. It is a global issue affecting both the developed, developing and the underdeveloped nations of the third world countries. Its effects in Nigeria is translating to shortage of arable land for agriculture thus forcing farmers/herders to migrate and resettle in a more fertile location with likelihood of crime and clashes between indigene and settlers leading to loss of lives and properties. The study adopts Securitization and the Tragedy of the Commons Theories to explain the menace of climate change and rural crime. Data for this study was based on secondary sources and the findings revealed that climate change reduces social control, contributes to characteristics conducive to crime and criminality, increases certain opportunities for crime, and creates social conflict. Therefore, it is recommended that Forest, bushes and rural farms should be properly guarded by the security operatives to adequately prevent it from the occupation of criminal elements like bandits, kidnappers and other terrorist groups. Establishment of cattle colony, ranching and the RUGA will also help in managing the effects of climate change induced crime and criminality in rural Nigeria.

Keywords: Climate change, crime, migration, banditry, cattle colony

Introduction

Climate change is a global issue affecting both the developed, developing and the underdeveloped nations of the third world countries. Nwaonicha, (2018) identified China, United States, Brazil, Indonesia and Japan as the top five most polluting countries globally; he further argued that African countries tend to bear the brunt of the environmental pollutants emitted by these countries on a daily basis, and Nigeria is known to be hardest hit. For example, flooding and heat waves in Nigeria in the recent time are caused by global warming and climate change.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns on earth. It is primarily caused by human activities that release greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat from the sun and cause the planet to

warm up, leading to various impacts like rising sea levels, extreme weather events, melting glaciers, and changes in ecosystems that causes largescale, deadly, humanitarian consequences in terms of human migrations fleeing flooded seacoast and push riverside or coastal peoples who depend on rainfall or irrigated agriculture to, in search of access to water and land, engage in fierce conflict with the host communities, consequently leaving behind tales of deaths among different families (Messer, 2010).

The effects of climate change in the form of desertification, flooding etc. in Nigeria, particularly the Northern part, is translating to shortage of arable land for agricultural thus forcing farmers/herders to migrate and resettle in a more fertile location with likelihood of crime and clashes between

indigene and settlers leading to loss of lives and properties.

Available literature have indicated that the effect of climate change is felt more in developing countries of Africa, including Nigeria, because of inadequate coping capabilities. According to Odjugo (2010), Nigeria currently is bedeviled with varied ecological challenges driven by the ongoing climate change; and these challenges caused by climate change are concentrated more in the North-Eastern parts of the country. Odjugo (2010) further observed that Northern Nigeria is worst heat by the effect of climate change evidenced in the prevalence of desertification in States of Yobe, Borno, Sokoto, Zamfara, Jigawa, Kaduna, Niger, Nasarawa, Kogi, Kebbi, Kwara, Benue, and Katsina. The resultant effect is shortage of arable land for agriculture thus leading also to emigration and resettlement of people to an alien land with accompanied crimes and likelihood of communal clashes among herders and farmers that result in loss of lives and property. It is alleged that the migration of herdsmen from Zamfara to Taraba particularly the central zone looking for favorable weather and adequate pasture for the grazing of their cattle has a direct connection with most of the kidnappings going on in the area.

Also, the vegetation, wideness and climatic nature of the Birnin-gwari forest that covers parts of Kaduna, Niger, Kebbi and Zamfara States are both the determinant and the promoter of the insecurity in the the area. And this criminality is perpetuated mostly by the emigrants that transform into bandits, rustslers, kidnappers and even terrorists who migrated from the desert encroached and conflicts affected communities of Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

The study is justified because the northern communities are the most affected by crimes and conflicts associated with climate change looking at its position as a center of agriculture in the country. In addition, there is little effort and accurate crime statistics that reflect the reality of climate change related crimes and

conflicts in northern Nigeria. This study therefore, examined the nexus between climate change and security challenges in Northern Nigeria, with a view to identify the forms of crimes prevalent and how they affect security therein.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Securitization and the tragedy of the commons Theories as the theoretical framework to explain the menace of climate change and security challenges in northern Nigeria. Securitization theory is a concept in international relations that focuses on the process through which certain issues or threats are constructed as matter of security. It was developed by scholars like Barry Buzan and Ole Waever in the 1990s. According to Securitization theory, security is not an objective condition but a social construct. It suggests that actors with sufficient power can frame certain issues as existential threats to society, thereby justifying extraordinary measures and policies to address them.

According to them, both the political, social, economic, environmental and human needs are vital aspects of human security which also constitute potential risk to insecurity (Buzan & Hensen, 2009). According to Bala, Jeffrey & Mahmood, (2020) political issues such as ethnic, politics, lack of social cohesion, political violence, subversion of democratic process and national question can threaten the peace and security of a community or a state at large. Economic issues including underdevelopment, inflation, mismanagement, low level of industrialization, and low productivity are economic threats that can leads to insecurity in the society. Social problems are another dimension to non-traditional security threats such as corruption, unemployment, poverty, diseases, hunger, malnutrition, inequality and gender violence can constitute potential risk and threat to peace and security in the affected societies. Environmental hazards which include man-made and natural disasters can cause a serious security dilemma like pollution, overcrowding,

over population, flood, draught, desert encroachment, deforestation, and other related. All these can cause a security crisis just like the traditional/military threats (Bala et, al 2020). Buzan (1983) concluded that the security discourse should be divergent and must be looked into from dual perspective. Any attempt to narrow security threats to military is a suicide in contemporary world in which the non-military threats are more dominant.

This theory is fundamental in explaining the role of climate change (non-military threat) in causing insecurity in the form of kidnapping, banditry, cattle rustling, farmer/herder conflicts in Nigeria. As argued by the theory, Environmental hazards which include man-made and natural disasters can cause a serious security dilemma like pollution, overcrowding, over population, flood, draught, desert encroachment, deforestation, and other related. All these can cause a security crisis just like the traditional/military threats. For example, the effects of climate change in the form of desertification, flooding etc. in Nigeria, is translating to shortage of arable land for agriculture thus making it necessary for migration of not only the herders but also the farmers and resettle in an alien fertile location with likelihood of crime and clashes between indigene and settlers causing serious security and economic consequences.

The pastoralist herdsman who are the prime suspects of kidnapping, cattle rustling and other forms of rural criminality, are in constant move searching for better climatic condition to feed and sustain their cattle, therefore, this movement and resettlement (non-traditional military threats) is characterized with series of criminal dispositions that compound to security challenges not only in the northern parts but Nigeria at large. The tragedy of the commons is a theory propounded by Garrett Hardin in (1968) according to him finite resources like forests, fisheries, clean air and clean water used in common will inevitably decline into ruin so long as their use is unregulated. To him,

that is possible because naturally, human individual are motivated to seek and increase their own benefits without any regards for the aggregate consequences or implications of their actions. Where users are free to exploit a common resource at will, they will inevitably increase their consumption of it until the resource is entirely depleted (Hardin, 1968). This theory is fundamental in explaining the human activities (anthropogenic) that contributed to the problem of climate change. For example the release of greenhouse gasses such as carbon monoxide into the atmosphere making planet to warm up leading to various impacts like rising sea level, extreme weather event that resulted to various environmental problems that induces migration and its attendants consequences – conflicts and crimes.

Another example as posited by Hardin, is deforestation of the rain forests, he argued that while the clear-cutting trees for grazing pasture or development may directly benefit those who own and use the land, the cost of losing that rainforest land is more widely distributed and as a consequence, the inhabitants of the affected area have no option that to start searching for better climatic condition elsewhere, hence migration and insecurity.

Conceptualizing Climate Change and Insecurity

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns on earth. It is primarily caused by human activities that release greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat from the sun and cause the planet to warm up, leading to various impacts like rising sea levels, extreme weather events, melting glaciers, and changes in ecosystems that causes largescale, deadly, humanitarian consequences in terms of human migrations fleeing flooded seacoast and push riverside or coastal peoples who depend on rainfall or irrigated agriculture to, in search of access to water and land, engage in fierce conflict with

the host communities, consequently leaving behind tales of deaths among different families (Messer, 2010).

Global climate change, according to Odjugo (2010) is responsible by two major factors that includes- natural processes referred to as biogeographical and human activities referred to as anthropogenic. The biogeographical processes are the astronomical and the extraterrestrial forces which include changes in the orbital procession, that is the earth's trajectory movement, while the anthropogenic factor is the climate change which pertains to human activities with either of two consequences: emission of large amount of green-house gases into the atmosphere thereby depleting the ozone layer or activities that reduce the amount of carbons absorbed from the atmosphere. In concrete terms, the human activities that result in the former consequence include industrialization, burning of fossil fuel, gas flaring, urbanization and agriculture, while the latter include deforestation, alterations in land use, water pollution and agricultural practices. However, human factor is mainly to blame for the present and ongoing climate change and global warming (Odjugo, 2010). Five countries, viz: China, United States, Brazil, Indonesia and Japan have been identified as top five most polluting countries globally; African countries tend to bear the brunt of the environmental pollutants emitted by these countries on a daily basis, and Nigeria is known be hardest hit. For example, flooding and heat waves in Nigeria in the recent time are caused by global warming and climate change (Nwaonicha, 2018).

Further studies establishing the linkage between criminality and climate has long been postulated by scholars such as Dagaci, (2012) he opined that significant ecological changes would lead to water wars over increasing scarcity, land conflict over decreased arable and livable land. The consequences of climate change have in a long while been concentrated in conflict and crime prone regions of the world that continue to experience high

insecurity and underdevelopment. Additionally, population explosion and urbanization couple with inequitable access to and shortage of land, and resource depletion have been generally predicted to worsen, thereby posing precarious challenge to the stability of rural and urban living (Conroy, 2006).

Studies by (Yugunda, 2002; Yaqub, 2007; Adjugo, 2010) reveal that conflict between herders and farmers claimed over 196 lives in six northeastern states of the country between 1998 and 2006. Rural-Urban migrations of destitute because of drought and desertification have further compounded the problem. All this in addition to other climate propelled crimes or conflicts such as the Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, armed banditry, amongst others, have continued to ravage the Nigerian nation with unprecedented consequences of enormous quantum of crime and criminality, which has continued to exacerbate poverty, homelessness, diseases, bad governance and absence of social justice.

Research Methodology

This study is built on documentary approach. Therefore, secondary sources of data from online publications such as journals and agency reports, textbook, which were then content analysed, because of the paper's reliance on secondary source data.

Climate Induced Crimes and Criminality in Rural Nigeria

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) reported that while Africa is the lowest contributor of global emissions, it is the most vulnerable continent to climate change living majority of its population relying on the land for subsistence and economic activity. Thus, according to the 2015 UN Environmental Programme's Adaptation Gap Report, Africa would require between US\$20 – 30 billion dollars annually over a period of 10 – 20 years to meet its climate change adaptation needs (UNDP, 13

Climate Action, 2019). Studies have shown that climate change promotes strain, reduces social control, weakens social support, contributes to characteristics conducive to crime and criminality, increases certain opportunities for crime, and creates social conflict as consequence (Messer, 2010).

Dagaci, (2012) opined that significant ecological changes would lead to water wars over increasing scarcity, land conflict over decreased arable and livable land. The consequences of climate change have in a long while been concentrated in conflict and crime prone regions of the world that continue to experience high insecurity and underdevelopment. Additionally, population explosion and urbanization couple with inequitable access to and shortage of land, and resource depletion have been generally predicted to worsen, thereby posing precarious challenge to the stability of rural and urban living (Conroy, 2006).

The connection between climate change and criminality in Nigeria, typified in criminal activities involving clashes between herders and farmers in the middle belt in particular and other regions of the country generally, terrorism in the northeast, armed banditry in the northwest, the spate of kidnapping across the nation, among others, show the extent to which changes in climate has directly and/or indirectly precipitated crime and criminality and threatened social cohesion, peaceful and harmonious living within the country (Dagaci & Anthony, 2019). The common crimes in a the northern Nigeria are mainly agriculture related like farmer/herder's conflicts, cattle rustling, banditry & kidnapping etc., (California Casualty, 2017).

- i) Armed Banditry and Cattle Rustling-** Cheserek, Omondi, and Odenyo (2012) have defined cattle rustling as "the act of forceful raiding of livestock from one community by another often leaving behind destruction of property and loss of lives" (cited in Dagaci & Anthony, 2019). Banditry involving cattle rustling

has occupied a central place in the Nigerian crime lexicon especially in the last decade. The phenomenon has posed serious threat to public safety and security in the country, leading to loss of lives, human injury, population displacements, and loss of many cattle, that does not augur well for the collective wellbeing of the herding communities (Shehu, Victor & Binta, 2017 cited in Dagaci & Anthony 2019). Cattle rustling as an age-old and deeply entrenched feature of pastoralist livelihoods, which fostered competition between groups that found themselves in harsh, delicate environments, and served as a means of primitive accumulation of a cowhead in the context of subsistence and commercial pastoralism, is an ancient practice dating back over seven thousand years (Blench, 2004; Rangers and Osborne, 2006, cited in Egwu, 2016). They stated that cattle rustling is generally a large scale theft of cattle through violent means and often involves the use of weapons. Thus, cattle rustling is regarded as a form of armed banditry, which is wider in scope and including different forms of crimes such as highway robbery and gang-like invasion of settlements to confiscate wealth and properties (Cheserek et al 2012).

Rural banditry associated with cattle rustling driven by different needs and factors among which is climate change, currently poses serious concern for public policy formulation in Nigeria. It is a phenomenon that involves the practice or habit of stealing cattle and animals from herders, or the raiding of cattle from the ranches. It has increasingly become an economically-based form of criminality perpetuated by informal networks (Egwu, 2016). A study on "The Menace of Cattle Rustling and Banditry in North-West Nigeria": A Case Study of Katsina State, by Shehu, Victor, and Binta (2017), revealed that frequent drought and famine in the area accounted for

the menace of cattle rustling and banditry. The study also found that among the several implications of the criminal activities of cattle rustling and banditry were, deaths, immigration, internal displacements, sexual assault and rape, poverty resulting from destruction of source of livelihood, early marriage and polygamy made possible by earnings from rustled cattle or raided livestock by youths. This corroborates the findings by Egwu (2016), which indicated that rural banditry is accompanied by rape, kidnapping, organized attacks on villages and communities, and looting.

ii) Herder/Farmer Crisis- Changes in the global climate induces serious conflicts between indigenous people and settlers in Nigeria. The migratory habits of the Fulani Cattle breeders, who move in search of fresh water and pasture for their livestock by encroaching into people's farmlands, have often resulted in clashes between them and the community land owners (Dagaci & Anthony 2019). They further argued that the herders who even though do not move of their own volition, but forced to do so by climatic effects such as deforestation, desertification and lack of water, often come into contact with the locals who see the herders as invaders and therefore unwelcome. Asueni and Godknows, (2019) observed that climate change in Northeastern Nigeria has forced migration of Fulani Herdsmen from up North to down South, where they could access fresh water bodies and other resources needed to sustain their cattle. The migration out of their habitual residence or grazing area to other parts of Nigeria has often led to violent conflict and the death of thousands of people in its wake. Climate change has unequivocally been linked to increased insecurity in terms of crime and criminality as evidenced in conflicts and killings involving herders and farmers, in most parts of Nigeria (Asueni

and Godknows, 2019). This trend has prompted several agitations such as cattle colony, ranching and the RUGA (Rural Urban Grazing Area) scheme in recent times, notably by the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), which advocates for the social, political, economic, and cultural integration of Fulani in communities where they settle (Awogbade 1987, cited in Dagaci & Anthony 2019).

iii) Terrorism/Insurgency- A Study by Lytle (2017) on "Climate Change as a Contributor to Terrorism: A Case Study in Nigeria and Pakistan," revealed that in Nigeria, climate trends and agriculture influence terrorism trends in the country, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency. It shows that climate change creates the platform for terrorism generally to thrive. The finding of the study agrees with a report commissioned by the German government which showed that some 30 million people across Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon are competing over a shrinking water resource, and reiterated that chronic drought around Lake Chad in particular, is reinforcing terrorist group, Boko Haram's grip on the region. This report further confirms the belief that climate change feeds global terrorism. Further, as climate change around Lake Chad contributes to resource scarcities thereby increasing local competition for land and water, three conditions are favourable to Boko Haram's expansion in the area: 1) the group can operate more easily in these fragile areas where the State has little authority and suffers from lack of legitimacy; 2) affected population is more vulnerable not only to negative climate impacts but also to recruitment by Boko Haram; and 3) Boko Haram use natural resources such as water as a weapon of war or inhibit access to

natural resources (David, 2017 cited in Dagaci & Anthony 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study revealed that climate change is responsible for most of the conflicts and crimes taking place especially in the Nigeria's northern communities. The study affirms that climate change promotes strain, reduces social control, weakens social support, contributes to characteristics conducive to crime and criminality, increases certain opportunities for crime, and creates social conflict as consequence, therefore, government must increase its efforts in providing policies and programs that would manage and control climatic changes so as to curtail climate change induced migration and consequent insecurity not only in the north but Nigeria at large. Effort should also be made in promoting peace and security across cities within the country. The adverse effects of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty among the youths are the major causes of crime and insecurity particularly in Nigeria's north therefore, provision of more educational institutions, employment opportunities, basic and infrastructural facilities will significantly help in providing healthy and sound population. Generally, there is usually low police presence in terms of police size and patrol in Nigeria. This makes it possible for insecurity to thrive because the prevention, management and control of crime requires more capable and committed hands. Forest, bushes and rural farms should be properly guarded by the security operatives to adequately prevent it from the occupation of criminal elements like bandits, kidnappers and other terrorist groups. To address the farmer/herder's conflicts, establishment of cattle Development.

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colony, ranching and the RUGA will not only avert conflict between farmers and herders but also facilitate a synergy or an interdependent relationship that will foster social cohesion, peace and development

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EFFECT OF PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In as much as education remains the viable tools for development, it is equally a significant measure of a successful society. The study examines the effect of educational expenditure on economic growth in Nigeria. Ex-post facto research design was employed; the theory suitable for this study is the human capital theory while the methodology used was the ARDL method of data analysis to analyze data, unit root and other post estimation testes; and the data used were elicited from the World Bank data base, World Bank development indicators and Central bank statistical bulletin. It's empirically reviewed that educational expenditure has a positive effect on economic growth in Nigeria during the period under review. The result discussed that there are cointegration among public education expenditure and real gross domestic product of the country. In conclusion public educational expenditure relate positively to economic growth and statistically significant in the long-run. This study recommended the following policy options for the Federal Government, policy makers, stakeholders and future researchers. Based on the empirical literature reviewed and empirical analysis presented, the policy recommendations that: Government should increase budgetary allocation to education sector and provide quality infrastructural facilities and human resource to improve human capital development, produce qualified manpower, teachers/lecturers, medical personnel and improved working conditions for high economic growth in the country.

Keyword: Education, expenditure, economic growth, human capital

Introduction

In as much as education remains the viable tools for development, it's equally a significant measure of successful society. Educational expenditure constitutes public investment in education sector. This includes recurrent and capital expenditure that government incurred in every financial year (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2021). More to that, government expenditure in training the human beings to acquire and improve skills and knowledge of different types will impact on the economy positively because every human being is a resource for economy. Therefore, education up-scales

hidden abilities which if properly harnessed would enable the citizens to contribute more to the economy. That is, education refers to knowledge, skills at all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) whether formal or informal.

Similarly, education is an instrument through which the society can be transformed because it equips human resources with knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to improve productivity, robust economic growth, enhance personal and social improvement, increases people's creativity

and innovation, promotes entrepreneurship abilities and technological innovations and decrease social differences. However, Education in Nigeria is a shared responsibility amongst the three tiers of government that is, the federal, state, and local governments. All tiers are jointly responsible for the provision of primary, secondary and tertiary education across the thirty-six states and 774 local government areas of the country (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). As asserted by Torruam *et al* (2014) that education is key component of human capital formation. It is recognized as being vital instrument in increasing the productive capacity of people. Education, especially at the tertiary level, contributes directly to economic growth and development by making individual workers more productive and indirectly by leading to the creation of knowledge, ideas, and technological innovation in the country. In achieving the significant impact of human capital development, the United Nations, Education Scientific and Cultural Organization recommended that 26% of the national budget be committed to education as cited in Johnson and Wasiu (2016).

Education in the right quality and quantity is expected to catalyse skill sets, technology and innovation in the service of economic growth and development and thereby reducing poverty among the populous in Nigeria. But it has failed to do so in Nigeria because of constraints facing the educational sector. For example, the considerations and attentions given to educational sector by the governments (federal, state and local) are absolutely low in terms of investment in educational sector. Nigeria has one of the lowest expenditure commitments to education in Africa and in the world at large. The Nigeria government spent under 1% of her GDP on education in the 1980s and most of the 1990 while her educational expenditure-budget ratio averaged about 9.5% from 1986 to 2022 (CBN, 2022). Compare this to Ghana's 4% of GDP and 24% of the budget or Malaysia's 5% of GDP and 20% of the budget (Umo, 2012).

In addition, Abayomi, (2012), Ojewumi and Oladimeji (2016) admitted that Nigeria spent an insignificant proportion of financial resources on education. Education budget as a percentage of total national budgets were 8.43% in 2012, 8.67% in 2013, 8.4% in 2014, average 5.4% in 2022 which is lower than United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) recommendation of 26 percent of the country's annual budget should be allocated to educational sector and those of other underdeveloped countries including South Africa, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Morocco which had 25.8%, 31%, 30%, 23% and 17.7% respectively for their annual budget for education (see Ojewumi & Oladimeji 2016).

The consequences of inadequate funding of educational sector cannot be over emphasized in Nigeria. Alternative source of financing education explored by the federal government is the Education Tax Fund (ETF) established in 1995. ETF ensures that companies with more than 100 employees contribute 2% of their pre-tax earnings to the fund. Primary education receives 40% of this fund; secondary education receives 10% and higher education 50%. Primary education has also in the past decades receives from the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) for capital expenditure and provision of infrastructural materials and TEDFUNDS. It is obvious, the inadequate funding of education sector which reflects in the area of poor state of the infrastructural facilities, irregularities of teachers' remuneration, inadequate staffing, poor salaries to teachers have resulted to intermittent strikes by some unions including the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) and Non- Academic Staff Union of Universities in Nigeria for the recent periods.

Conceptualizing Public Education Expenditure

Education is source of quality labour force for production, distribution and exchange of goods and services in the society. As asserted by Torruam, Chiawa and Abur (2014) that

education is key component of human capital formation. It is recognized as being vital instrument in increasing the productive capacity of people. Education, especially at the tertiary level, contributes directly to economic growth and development by making individual workers more productive and indirectly by leading to the creation of knowledge, ideas, and technological innovation in the country. Furthermore, educational expenditure constitutes public investment in education sector. This includes recurrent and capital expenditure that government incurred in a financial year (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2021). In addition, government expenditure in training the human beings to acquire and improve skills and knowledge of different types will impact on the economy positively because every human being is a resource for economy. Therefore, education up-scales hidden abilities which if properly harnessed would enable the citizens to contribute more to the economy.

Education refers to knowledge, skills at all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) whether formal or informal. Education is an instrument through which the society can be transformed because it equips human resources with knowledge, skills and competencies necessitated to improve productivity, robust economic growth, enhance personal and social improvement, increases people's creativity and innovation, promotes entrepreneurship abilities and technological innovations and decrease social differences. That is the reasons why both advanced countries and under developed countries of the world consistently emphasize the development of educational sector because education is considered as a long term investment that leads to a high economic growth and development for a nation in the nearest future and Nigeria has no exceptions in developing and enhancing its educational system in order to be among the leading economies in the world by 2030 (UNDP, 2018). Therefore, we can conclude that no country can achieve robust economic growth and

development without considering significant investment in human capital development.

Furthermore, Umo (2012) admitted that the revolution in the economics of human capital has highlighted the centrality of education. When generally viewed, educational sector contains cognitive skills, knowledge, technology, socio-political networking skills, health and migration which today underpin economic growth. The world is now evolving a new economy in which knowledge provided by education plays a critical role. Growth in intangible (knowledge) asset now accounts for 90% of total assets in industrialized economies (Umo, 2012). Resource-based growths are showing serious limitations with the explosive progress in science and technology. It is clear that without a good dose of investment in quality education, it would be difficult to sustain growth with employment essential for poverty reduction.

Education in Nigeria is a shared responsibility amongst the three tiers of government that is the federal, state, and local governments. All tiers are jointly responsible for the provision of primary, secondary and tertiary education across the thirty-six states of the country. The federal government allocates revenue based on the federal revenue sharing formulae to state and local government. The revenue sharing allocation is distributed as 52.68 percent to the federal government, 26.72 percent to the states, and 20.60 percent to local governments. The states and local governments are expected to allocate four percent of their share towards the financing of primary and secondary education (Budget Office, 2012).

Moreover, the early years of independence in Nigeria, it witnessed significant public expenditure and resulted in the high enrolment rates. Government expenditure on education has been inconsistent over the years with no stable increase. In 1970, 6.2 million naira was allocated to education, increased to 1, and 238 million naira in 1980 and further increased to

9,434 million naira in 1994 before declining. The share of federal government expenditure to education was recorded at 9.9 percent in 1997 and reduced to 8 percent in 2002 (CBN, 2010).

But despite the inconsistencies in public spending and enrolment rates, government expenditure on education can improve productivity, raise living standards, improve social cohesion and increase the inflow of foreign capital and local business activities as human capital development progress, which ultimately supports economic development (Olulu, Erhieyovwe *et al.* 2014). This is in line with the national policy for the education sector in Nigeria and the government will continue to discover new and innovative ways to finance education provision and reduce the high number of out of school children within the country. Hence, there is the need to examine the impact of public educational expenditure on economic development in Nigeria.

Public education expenditure denotes public expenditure on Education in Nigeria. It is a core component of human capital development and the more Nigerian government spending on primary, secondary, tertiary education and other forms of education, the higher is the return on investment (Schultz, 1999).

In conclusion, the study would proceed to draw some fundamental theories in the subsequent section which can explain education for higher economic development of any nation. This study aims to determine the effect of public educational expenditure on economic growth. The paper is further split into theoretical framework, methodology analysis and presentation of results, conclusion and recommendation.

Theoretical Framework: Human Capital Education Theory

Education is considered to be of extreme importance. It is also considered as one of the key extension of the neo-classical growth model (Lucas, 1988; Romar, 1990; Bils and

Klenow 2000). Human capital generally mean total number of people with acquired skills and knowledge through education and training that are ready to apply their skills to the development of the economy. It means skilled workers are the most vital factors to economic growth in the state. In Barro, (1991, 2001); Mankiw, Romar and Weil, (1992); Miller and Upadhyay, (2000), it was believed that the quality of human capital resides in the total amount of public Expenditure in education, culture and health services and non-rival consumption and free supply (Teal, 2001). According to Todaro (2007), Education does go a long way in contributing to economic growth when such capital is linked to good governance accompanied by stable political regimes.

Empirical Review

Olukemi and Dominic (2020) examined the notion that education facilitates economic growth by studying the impact of Government expenditures on education at different levels on economic growth using Nigerian data covering the period 1980-2018. Time series econometrics tests such as Unit Root test, co-integration test, Error Correction Model and Granger Causality test were employed to test the hypothesis of education expenditure-led growth theory. The results of the studies indicated that there is co-integration between total government expenditure on education; primary, secondary and tertiary education expenditure and economic growth. The result of the study also shows that all levels of education expenditure contribute to economic growth positively (tertiary education exerting more positive impact) and are statistically significant (except primary education expenditure that is not significant) at 5% level. The study also indicated bi-directional causality between all levels of public expenditure on education and economic growth. It was recommended that improved funding for education at all levels given their interconnections. It also recommends that funding of primary education should be supported by Federal Government as weak

primary school funding will impact on quality of pupils that graduate to secondary school. Again policies aimed at diversifying and broadening the Nigerian economy be rekindled as economic growth have the potential of increasing education spending.

Aigbedion, Iyakwari and Gyang (2017) in their research on education sector and economic growth in Nigeria: an impact of analysis. The paper focused on the empirical examination of the impact of education sector on economic growth in Nigeria. Time series data were used and the study employed ordinary least squares (OLS) tools of analysis. The result reveals that the education sector has a positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria. This indicates that economic growth can be improved by increasing education investment in Nigeria. The study recommended that the government through budget planning, implementation and monitoring should ensure that education funds are judiciously and fully utilized in Nigeria to improve the impact of education sector on economic growth on Nigeria.

Mphno and Bosupeng, (2015) studied payoffs of education expenditure in Botswana: Long-run Economic growth implications. Examine data from 1960-2013 and attempts to link GDP and education expenditure spending in a long run framework. It is a well-known fact that member states of the United Nations are under pressure to achieve development goals and countries like Botswana need to estimate not only public expenditure requirements and the macroeconomic implications of financing them, but also the potential social and economic rewards associated with education. The study applies the Johnsen cointegration test and Granger causality procedure to examine the long-run relationship of the variables. The result revealed that there is no long-run relationship between GDP and education spending for the period under study (1960-2013). In essence government should consider the programs each high institution of learning such as university of Botswana has to offer for economic growth and empowerment,

it is no use for the government to sponsor student whose degree program will not be beneficial to the long-run economic growth and sustainability.

Concerning education and economic growth, Umo (2012) admitted that the revolution in the economics of human capital has highlighted the centrality of education. When generally viewed, educational sector contains cognitive skills, knowledge, technology, socio-political networking skills, health and migration which today underpin economic growth. The world is now evolving a new economy in which knowledge provided by education plays a critical role. Growth in intangible (knowledge) asset now accounts for 90% of total assets in industrialized economies (Umo, 2012). Resource-based growths are showing serious limitations with the explosive progress in science and technology. It is clear that without a good dose of investment in quality education, it would be difficult to sustain growth with employment essential for poverty reduction.

Adelowokan and Oluwaseyi, (2012) analysed growth effect of education and health expenditure in Nigeria, they analyzed the effect of education and health expenditures on economic growth in Nigeria between 1970 and 2010 using a state regression model. The long-run relationship between human capitals spending using the Engle-Granger two-step cointegration procedure. The estimate model revealed that public investment and public consumption (in education and health) posit positive influence on economic growth, while, private investment and public capital investment posit negative effect on economic growth in Nigeria. It was recommended that government should channel more fund to the positive sectors of the economy like education and health sectors, which have the potential of promoting human capital development and economic growth in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The *ex-post facto* research design is used to enable the researcher examine the effect of public educational expenditure on economic growth in Nigeria. The data for this analysis were sourced from secondary sources because of its nature. It uses data from World Bank development indicators (World Bank, 2022) and Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletins, (CBN, 2022). The study obtain data on the RGDP= Real gross domestic product and PEX = Public education expenditure. Meanwhile, the model specified for this study is in line with Human capital education theory. It applies ARDL as method of data analysis. This study has conducted post estimation tests or diagnostic tests to verify the applicability and reliability of the model built to examine the effect of public educational expenditure on economic growth in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework for Model Specification

The model specified thus in line with Grossman model (Grossman, 1972) for education production function with some modifications as presented in equation (3.1). According to Grossman (1972), education investment function is denoted as:

$$RGDP=f(EI, I_0)..... (3.1)$$

Where EI = education investment

I_0 = initial conditions all were substituted into equation (3.2) we have:

Functional form of the model (3.1) is denoted as:

$$RGDP = f(PEX,..... (3.2)$$

The empirical form of the equation (3.2) above is given as:

$$\ln RGDP_t = \beta_1 PEX_t \mu_t.....(3.3)$$

Where:

RGDP = Real Gross Domestic Product in Nigeria

PEX = Public Education Expenditure

The intercept of the equation, β_1 - β_5 are the coefficients of the explanatory variables to be estimated, μ_t is the stochastic term.

In addition, the fundamental reason for using natural log (Ln) is to minimize the problem of multicollinearity in the analysis and for uniformity of unit of measurement in this study.

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Estimates (ARDL)

The ARDL model is specified thus for RGDP and PEX

$$\Delta \ln RGDP = \beta_1 \ln PEX$$

Unit Root test

The Augmented Dickey-Fuller [ADF] (1979) unit root tests will be employed to test for the stationarity of the time series data before estimation. The ADF unit root test includes extra lagged terms of the dependent variable in order to eliminate the problem of autocorrelation. The decision to accept or to reject the null hypothesis of $\delta = 0$ is based on the Dickey –Fuller critical value. The tests will be applied mathematically as follows:

$$\Delta Y_t = \delta Y_{t-1} + a_{2t} + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta \Delta Y_{t-1} + U_t.....(3.5)$$

Where:

Δ = difference operator

Y_t = dependent Variable

μ_t = white noise

Under the null hypothesis if $\delta = 1$, it becomes a random walk, that is non-stationary process, if $\delta < 1$ this means that the series Y_t is stationary.

Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Sample: 1986 2021

	RGDP	PHX	PEX	EXR	INF	GFCF
Mean	40530.17	102.1989	168.7650	123.9229	19.39167	9.01E+12
Median	34531.27	37.41071	78.51544	123.4015	12.55000	4.28E+12
Maximum	72393.67	423.3298	646.7475	427.6000	72.80000	5.42E+13
Minimum	17007.77	0.041315	0.225005	2.020600	5.400000	1.09E+11
Std. Dev.	20102.51	127.3981	198.4356	111.3434	17.58528	1.26E+13
Skewness	0.400680	1.160687	1.065161	0.932155	1.742133	2.199669
Kurtosis	1.530271	3.166909	2.918604	3.274726	4.703787	7.474633
Jarque-Bera	4.203422	8.124955	6.817347	5.326684	22.56451	59.06479
Probability	0.122247	0.117206	0.063085	0.069715	0.000013	0.000000
Sum	1459086.	3679.161	6075.541	4461.224	698.1000	3.25E+14
Sum Sq. Dev.	1.41E+10	568059.8	1378184.	433907.7	10823.48	5.53E+27
Observations	36	36	36	36	36	36

Source: Extracted from Researcher's Compilation through Eviews Version 10, 2023.

Furthermore, the most important of this statistics was the Jarque-Bera statistics and its probability values which were RGDP 4.203422 (0.122247) and PEX 6.817347 (0.063085), the observations included in the study were 36 observations which were relative good sample size. It is good yardstick for policies

formulation and recommendations in this study. The next step was to conduct unit root test for the study. In this work, Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test has been adopted to check the stationarity of time series data used in this analysis.

4.1 Summary of unit root test (ADF)

Variables	ADF at level	ADF at 1 st Diff	Mack. Crit. Val	Prob.*	Order of Int.	Remark
RGDP	-0.598584	-3.785884**	-2.951125	0.0069*	I(1)	Stationary
PHX	-6.104506 **	-----	-2.967767	0.0000*	I(0)	Stationary
PEX	-2.625552	-3.955292 **	-2.986225	0.0033*	I(1)	Stationary
EXR	2.716757	-3.212973**	-2.951125	0.0279 *	I(1)	Stationary
INF	-3.407802**	-----	-2.951125	0.0176*	I(0)	Stationary
GFCF	1.488645	-3.180465**	-2.951125	0.0317	I(1)	Stationary

Source: Computed by Authour Using E-views Version 10, 2023.

In addition, the unit root test adopted here for this study was Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test as criteria to ascertain the stationarity of the data included in the model. While the result of the ADF test indicated that real GDP was not stationary at level when investigated but it becomes stationary at first difference. It

reveals that public educational expenditure (PEX) variable was not stationary at level but it becomes stationary at first differencing. It can be seen from the value for PEX -2.625552 which was lower than the critical value of -2.951125

Short-run ARDL Result

Effect of Public Educational Expenditure on Economic Growth in Nigeria

Dep: RGDP				
VARIABLE	COEFFICIENT	STD ERROR	T-STATISTIC	PROB.
Constant	1590.371	335.0099	4.747235	0.0001 **
Δ (RGDP-1)	0.303661	0.136632	2.222467	0.0386**
Δ (PHX)	14.38600	8.003372	-1.797492	0.0882
Δ (PEX)	3.187867	6.384081	0.499346	0.6233
Δ (EXR)	-31.82957	9.880235	-3.221540	0.0045**
Δ (INF)	-32.83221	11.74487	-2.795451	0.0115**
Δ (INF-1)	30.10257	12.10861	2.486046	0.0224**
Δ (GFCF)	2.29E-11	1.25E-10	0.182737	0.8569**
Δ (GFCF-1)	-3.61E-10	1.40E-10	-2.569979	0.0187**
CointEq(-1)*	-0.515711	0.003153	4.983217	0.0001**
R ² = 0.695456	R ² = 0.581252	F-stat = 6.089602	D-W = 2.104153	0.000188**

Source: Authour's Computation using E-View Version 10.0, 2023.

The results of ECM as contained indicate the coefficient of Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) and its speed of adjustment to the long run equilibrium. By the ECM coefficient of -0.515711 was in line with economic theory which stated that it has negative sign and it will be statistically significant by its probability value of 0.0001 and its t-statistics of 4.983217. In addition, public educational expenditure (PEX) has positive effect on economic growth in Nigeria. It contributed 3.187867 units or 3% amount of effect on the real gross domestic product (RGDP) in the model. However, it was statistically insignificant in the study based on the P-value of 0.6233 and T-statistic of 0.499346. This implied the amount of government budget to education sector was meagre and has not significant impact on the average citizens in Nigeria.

The model to address main objective of this study which was to examine the effect of human capital formation on economic growth in Nigeria.

Furthermore, by the F-statistic values of 6.089602 and p-value of 0.000188, it indicated that all the variables (RGDP and PEX) were jointly impacted on economic growth in the short-run. It was statistically significant in both short-run and long-run analysis.

In this study, the result revealed that the Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.104153 approximately 2 which means no presence of autocorrelation in the model and hence the

model is non-spurious. Then, it can be used for policy recommendations on how public educational expenditure can be sustain in Nigerian economy.

Discussions of Results

In this section, the study discusses the major findings of the analysis and its implications on Nigerian economy. This study revealed the long-run equilibrium between public educational expenditure and economic growth in Nigeria when it applied ARDL F-Bounds test. The result shows that there are cointegration among public education expenditure and real gross domestic product of the country. Finally, in this analysis, there were short-run and long-run effects of public educational expenditure on economic growth in Nigeria. This result corroborated the work of Inuwa and Haruna (2012) studied health expenditure and economic growth nexus: on ARDL approach for the case of Nigeria where they examined the dynamic relationship between health expenditure and economic growth from 1980-2010 in Nigeria using the newly developed ADRL Bounds testing procedure and Granger causality test. The result of the study reveals that there is a long-run relationship between health expenditure and economic growth, indicating that there is a causality relationship in at least one direction.

Moreover, its findings were in line with the study of Stephen *et al.* (2020) in their research work empirical retrospect of the impact of government expenditure on economic growth by using capital expenditure, recurrent expenditure and the government fiscal expansion in line with support for budgetary allocation to various sectors in the context of the Nigerian economy. The researchers adopted Pesaran ARDL approach to conduct the impact analysis using annual time series data ranging between 1981 and 2017. Their findings established the existence of a level relationship between public expenditures indicators and economic growth during the study period.

Conclusively, the F-statistic values of 6.089602 and p-value of 0.000188, it indicated that all the public educational expenditure variable (PEX and RGDP) were jointly impacted on economic growth in the short-run. It was statistically significant in both short-run and long-run analysis. It also revealed that the Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.104153 approximately 2 which means no presence of autocorrelation in the model and hence the model is non-spurious. Then, it can be used for policy recommendations on how public educational expenditure can be sustain in Nigerian economy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on empirical review and analysis, this study concludes that public education expenditure have positive and insignificant effect on economic growth in Nigeria in the short-run. This study recommended the following policy options for the Federal Government, policy makers, stakeholders and future researchers. Based on the empirical literature reviewed and empirical analysis presented, the policy recommendations that: Government should increase budgetary allocation to education sector and provide quality infrastructural facilities and human resource to improve human capital development, produce qualified manpower, teachers/lecturers, medical personnel and improved working conditions for high economic growth in the country.

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CHALLENGES OF INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (INEC) IN REGULATING CAMPAIGN FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

The paper examines the challenges of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in regulating campaign financing of political parties in Nigeria. The paper adopts elite theory as its theoretical framework. It uses secondary sources of data collection which involves review and analysis of documentary evidences like textbooks, newspapers, magazines that were sourced from the library, and online materials to generate information relevant to the study. The paper reveals that INEC has not lived up to expectation due to harsh political environment, corruption, and inadequate funding. Therefore, the paper recommends for independence of electoral body should collaborate effectively with the intelligence agencies and NGOs in regulating the campaign financing of political parties in Nigeria.

Keywords: Political party, campaign financing, electoral body, election, democracy

Introduction

The role of the electoral body in regulating the campaign financing of political parties has become one of the daunting challenges confronting the institution in all democratic states all over the world. It is the only body that is mandated to conduct credible elections in any democratic state, advanced or nascent. The body registers political parties; regulates the conduct of parties, including auditing their accounts for income and expenditure; delimits electoral constituencies and wards; establishes rules for the election campaign; conducts voters' registration and civic education; and fixes dates for elections as well as announcement of election results (Ali, 2024).

In Nigeria the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is mandated by the constitution to conduct and supervise elections in the country. The body is empowered by the electoral law 2022 to monitors and regulates the campaign funds of political parties in order to provide a level plain grounds for political parties and actors to

compete equally and promote inclusion in the country's democracy. It is obvious that unregulated campaign financing can create an unbalanced and unfavourable conditions in election contest. A political party with huge sums of money can manipulate and undermine other parties that are financially weak and even electoral process to gain electoral success.

Records has shown that the party in power or the incumbent candidate controls political apparatus of the state and project it to serve his interest no matter whose oars is goads. This situation is compounded due to the fact that the financial entry requirements for electoral competition is getting higher on yearly basis. In the 2022 APC primary election, the nomination fees for presidential aspirant was N100,000,000.00, N50,000,000 for Governor, N20,000,000 for Senate, N10,000,000 for House of Representatives and N2,000,000 for State House of Assembly and PDP N45,000,000.00. This is quite outrageous, as many party members cannot afford the fees,

can result to political exclusion of good party members who cannot afford the fees. In addition, there is sharp increase in campaign finances to the extent that INEC finds it very difficult to regulate the financial conducts of political parties as it relates to campaign.

With the above development, money has become the determinant factor in Nigeria's political system. A lot of money is needed for nomination fees and campaign activities. The money bags and political Godfathers have taken over political parties, dictating who gets the party tickets and how government is formed and managed. This continues to prevail despite INEC legal mandate to regulate the campaign financing of political parties in Nigeria. Therefore, the paper examines the challenges of INEC in regulating campaign financing of political parties in Nigeria and what can be done to mitigate menace.

Conceptual Clarifications

Political Party

Political party is a body of people with similar or same views or ideas whose primary objective is to take over the machinery of government in a state through election. Adedeji (2013) described political parties as the conglomeration or association of men and women with broad, common interest who want to influence or control decision making in government by electing political candidates to public office. Ranny (1975) contends that political parties are autonomous organized group that makes nomination and contests elections in the hope of eventually gaining and exercising control of the personnel and policies of the government. Examples of political parties in Nigeria are: the SDP, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), and so on.

Electoral Body

Electoral body is a body mandated by constitution to run and supervise elections in

the country. The body carries out the affairs of conducting elections and making sure that people are elected into various political positions. In Nigeria the electoral body that conducts election is the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Campaign Financing

Political party financing is one of the major activities of political parties, which is targeted at raising or generating resources for campaigns and routine activities. It involves the procedure and process through which money is being used to deploy men and resources for political Objectives. Wakil (2022) posits that the funding or financing of political parties is an integral part of campaign finance. Thus, political parties are financed by contributions from multiple sources, such as contributions from party members, subscriptions and donations.

Election

Election is the process through which leaders are chosen through voting. Ujo (2004) describes election as the procedure that allows members of an organization or community to choose representatives who will hold positions of authority within it. Election is associated with democracy as it involves processes and procedures by which citizens of a given country choose or select either through direct or indirect voting those who will represent them in the parliament and other positions in the government (Johnson, 1994).

Democracy

Democracy is a system of government that allows for popular participation, where people take active part in the governing process of their country. It is a system of government in which sovereignty belongs to the people from which government drives all its power through the constitution. Democracy is generally attributed to the concept of rule of law, constitutionalism, separation of power, checks and balances, periodic election, the presence of opposition and public opinion (Ali, 2017).

Methodology

This is the process and procedure involved in data collection. The paper uses secondary method of data collection which involves the review and analysis of journals, newspapers, textbooks, and articles from the library and internet. Since the method of analysis is the secondary mode, the method of analysis is the qualitative method, which means that it is more of explanatory theories has to do with using various reviews from other works relevant to the paper.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the elite theory as its theoretical framework, the theory stresses the concentration of political power in the hands of minority group which performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the benefits that come with power. Elite theorists often emphasize differences in inherent abilities as a source of elites. All people are not created equal: some are stronger, more intelligent, more artistic, etc. those who have the most of a certain kind of ability constitute a sort of elite. Of course, not all abilities lead to economic wealth or political power. However, those people who have the most of the particular abilities which a society rewards become the elites. In some societies, a talent for corruption may be a prerequisite for entering the elite class.

The Elite theory is used to describe certain fundamental features or organized social life in all societies, whether simple or complex, agricultural or industrial needs authorities within the system and spokesmen and agents that maintain their values.

The basic assumptions of the elite theory include:

- i) Society is divided into the few who have power and the many who do not.
- ii) Only a small number of persons allocate values for society.
- iii) The few who govern are not typical of the masses who are governed.

- iv) The Elites are drawn disproportionately from the upper socio-economic strata of the society.
- v) The movement of the non-elite positions must be slow and continuous to maintain stability and avoid revolution.
- vi) Only non-elites who have accepted the basic elite consensus can be admitted to governing circles.
- vii) Elites share a consensus on the basic values of the social system and the preservation of the system (status quo).
- viii) Public policy does not reflect the demands of the masses but rather the prevailing values of elites.
- ix) Active elites are subject to relatively little direct influence from apathetic masses.
- x) Elites influence masses more than masses influencing them (Dye, 1975).

The above scenario depicts the Nigerian context where activities of the elites seem to be the bane of free and fair elections and survival of democracy. This has been demonstrated in occurrences such as electoral violence, moneybags, godfatherisms, and clientelism all of which negate the value of conducting free and fair elections in Nigeria. It should however be noted that the elite theory has been flawed on the ground that it is conspiratorial and provocative,

Literature Review

Election body in Nigeria, INEC, conducts both federal and state elections. The State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) conducts and supervises all local government elections. INEC as an institution has been mandated by the Constitution and relevant laws to administer national and state elections. The basic legal instruments guiding the mandate of INEC is contained in the 1999 Constitution, as amended and the Electoral Law of 2022, as amended. The 1999 Constitution mandate INEC to conducts, organizes, and supervises all national elections. It also gives the commission the following powers: register political parties;

regulate the conduct of parties, including auditing their accounts for income and expenditure; conduct voter registration and maintain on a continuous basis a National Register of Voters; establish rules and regulations for the election campaign; conduct voter and civic education; fix dates for elections; and delimit constituencies.

INEC needs to be strengthened to enhance her performance of the election management of Nigeria. To look into the deficiencies and weaknesses in the constitutional and legal frameworks, the National Assembly has in 2022 passed a lot of amendments to the Constitution, which is termed as electoral act 2022. The act introduced some changes which include the electronic transmission of results, resignation of political appointees as aspirants or delegates for party convention six months before elections, provision of financial autonomy to the Commission; enhancing INEC's regulatory powers; detailing the procedures for recall of elected officials; granting INEC with power to deregister political parties on specified grounds; removing state funding to political parties; increasing the ceilings on contributions to party and candidate campaigns; providing stiffer penalties for election offences; changing the timeline of the electoral process; strengthening administrative independence of INEC from the executive.

In addition, the electoral law 2022 introduced the prerequisite for INEC's Chairman and National Commissioners not to be members of a political party; enhancing internal democracy of the political parties; reducing the quorum requirement for Election Petitions Tribunals; and shortening deadlines for filing and adjudication of petitions and appeals after the declaration of results.

However, before the electoral law 2022, the powers and organizational structure of INEC and other matters relating to the conduct of elections were outlined in the electoral act of 2010, which was amended and replaced by the electoral law, 2022. The Electoral Act of 2022 guaranteed security of tenure of

commissioner by limiting the grounds for removal from office and imposing the requirement of concurrence by at least 2/3 of the members of Senate; empowering the commission to appoint, dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over its staff; and ensuring its financial independence through the establishment of the INEC Fund.

INEC in her bid to build public trust and ensure credibility in election, the body created series of guidelines and procedures to regulate the conduct of the 2023 general elections pursuant to the constitution and electoral law, 2022. These included the Manual for Election Officials (2023) and the Code of Conduct for Political Parties (2023), and electoral timelines to 2027 which was developed with political parties. This is to ensure that elections is conducted in accordance with international best practices or principles.

It is obvious that the Election Act of 2022 empowers INEC to audit the source of finances and accounts of political parties in Nigeria. INEC have to enhance its capacity to evaluate, monitor and enforce the legal provisions on campaign financing and expenditure of political party in order to ensure full compliance with the regulations and fair play among the political parties and their candidates.

Factors Militating Against INEC in Monitoring Campaign Finances of Political Parties in Nigeria

Lopsided Electoral Laws:

The electoral law 2022 made some provisions to empower INEC to regulate the campaign financing of political parties in Nigeria. The fact is that despite the provision of the Electoral Act 2022 which specifies the spending limits for political parties and their candidates, the INEC cannot successfully regulate the financial spending of political parties. There are obvious allegations of political gladiators and incumbents using government resources to prosecute their election bids without any regard to the

electoral law, The electoral law did not empowered INEC enough to exercise control and monitor the financial spending of our political parties.

Monetization of Electoral Process

The electoral law 2022 specifies the amount of money to be spent by political parties and their candidates, but such amount is outrageous as not many parties and their candidate can afford it. The law has pampered political parties to have their ways in financial dealing with their members. The ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) charges higher expression of interest and nomination forms, N100, 000,000 for president, and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) charges for President N45,000,000 expression of interest form. Some aspirants have purchased the forms and some support groups claimed to have purchased forms for some aspirants at the sum N100,000,000 and N45million naira respectively yet, the detail of the people as to their sources of income is unknown and their identity remain clear to Nigerians. The act puts campaign spending limit for president at N5, 000,000,000 and N2, 000,000,000 for governor but these are not realizable (Ali,2024).

Poor Political Culture

The political and value orientation of the people as well as their sentiments affect the political system of the country. The primordial nature of the nation's political culture has not allowed for positive engagement and consensus between or among the citizens, organizations, institution and agencies. The political environment is not vibrant enough to help INEC to regulate the campaign financing of political parties in Nigeria. There is no trust and confidence on the electoral body by people in Nigeria.

Poor Synergy between INEC and Security Agencies

The synergy and collaboration between INEC and security agencies as well as NGOs is not good enough to curtail financial excesses

of political parties in ensuring compliance with the electoral law 2022. INEC had tried severally to collaborate with Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in regulating the financial expenditures of political parties but such collaborations have not yielded the desired result.

Corruption

Also, corruption is another factor militating against INEC in regulating campaign financing of political parties in Nigeria. Corruption exists when an individual illegally or illicitly puts personal interest above those of the people and the ideals he or she pledges to serve. It involves immoral actions or behaviours by public officials for pecuniary or status benefits (Sorkaa 1999). Allegations of corruption are leveled against INEC officials in given favours to ruling political party and money bags as well as the powerful political figures.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concludes that Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is charged with the responsibility of conducting credible elections and regulating the campaign financing of political parties in order to provide a level plain ground for political parties and actors in Nigeria. Since the country returned to democracy on the 29th May, 1999, the body has conducted seven general elections and several other off season elections as well as bye elections. The body is challenged in regulating the campaign financing of political parties due to the lopsided nature of electoral law, poor political culture, corruption, lack of internal democracy and poor synergy between INEC and security agencies. Therefore, the paper recommends for the following:

- i. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should collaborate effectively with the security agencies to ensure compliance with the electoral law in Nigeria.
- ii. Government should stop funding political parties.

- iii. INEC should collaborate with the Civil Society Organizations to raise the awareness level of the people to play politics according to rules.
- iv. Political parties should charge moderate nomination fees in order to accommodate more members to participate.
- V. INEC official who are found to be corrupt should be made to face the law to serve as deference to others.

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PART II:
GOVERNANCE

14

HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AND MATERNAL WELL-BEING IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Maternal well-being is a critical global public health issue, and despite various challenges, the need for targeted interventions remains essential. This study examines the connection between the healthcare system and maternal well-being in Benue State, Nigeria. Utilizing the Three Delays Model and the Healthcare System Framework, the research employs a cross-sectional survey design, focusing on pregnant women, mothers, and healthcare workers as the study population. A total of 420 participants were chosen through a combination of purposive and stratified sampling methods. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were gathered through in-depth interviews. The study identified systemic issues such as inadequate healthcare infrastructure, workforce shortages, and limited access in rural areas, which overshadow any existing strengths and contribute to poor maternal health outcomes. Additionally, inefficiencies in service delivery and resource limitations further delay access to quality maternal care. The findings highlight the urgent need for reforms, including increased health funding, workforce development, and improved infrastructure, to enhance maternal health services. Strengthening healthcare institutions and improving access to maternal care can significantly benefit the well-being of mothers and newborns in Benue State.

Keywords: Maternal well-being, healthcare system, maternal health, service delivery

Introduction

Maternal health is one of the important measures of a health system's responsiveness and performance. Globally, there have been outstanding improvements in maternal health, particularly in high-income nations. Maternal mortality has fallen substantially in Europe and North America due to strong health systems, skilled birth attendance, and timely access to emergency obstetric care. For instance, the maternal mortality ratio is as low as 13 deaths per 100,000 live births in Europe and around 19 per 100,000 livebirths in North America (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). In Asia, while there has been considerable progress, countries such as India and Bangladesh continue to lag behind, especially in rural and poor areas, maternal mortality

ratios have decreased due to the strengthening of antenatal services and community-based interventions (UNFPA, 2023).

Conversely, sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the highest proportion of maternal death globally, accounting for approximately 70% of all maternal deaths. The maternal mortality ratio within the region is approximately 545 deaths per 100,000 live births (WHO, 2023), largely driven by weak healthcare infrastructure, limited skilled personnel, and socio-economic determinants that limit early access to care. Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa, contributes significantly to this burden. According to the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

(FMOHSW), National Population Commission (NPC), and Inner-City Fund (ICF) (2024) Nigeria's maternal mortality ratio stands at approximately 545 deaths per 100,000 live births, and maternal health is a severe public health concern. This is because of several factors including delay in healthcare, poverty, inadequate healthcare infrastructure among others (Olande, Olawande, Alabi & Imhonopi, 2019).

In Benue State of Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone, maternal health indices remain poor. Rural communities face serious challenges such as poor access to health centres, poor skilled personnel, and irregular maternal care services. While there are state-level continuous health programmes, they are mostly urban-based, leaving rural women vulnerable to avoidable maternal complications and deaths (Benue State Ministry of Health, 2022).

Despite numerous maternal health interventions in Nigeria, maternal morbidity and mortality have remained high across different states, including Benue. Although several studies have examined maternal use of healthcare in some Nigerian states, few have examined system-level determinants in the health infrastructure that directly influence the health and well-being of mothers in Benue State. Most of the studies have dwelt on user behavior or socio-cultural factors with less concentration on the structural and operational dynamics of the health system in this area. This study therefore, analyzes the strength and weakness of the healthcare system in Benue State and assesses how these systemic variables impact maternal well-being, with the aim of identifying strategic interventions for enhancing maternal health outcomes in the state.

Literature Review

A successful healthcare system plays a vital role in the progress of maternal health. Healthcare strengths on one hand, are typically described by the existence of skilled birth attendants, efficient referral

mechanisms, and access to antenatal care. Weaknesses, on the other hand, are typically described by poor infrastructure, weak healthcare financing, and staff shortages. In the majority of developing countries, including Nigeria, rural health facilities lack resources and hence there is reliance on urban areas for treatment (Okafor et al., 2022).

In Benue State, despite policy intervention, there is continuous experience of shortage of adequate maternal health care. Primary healthcare centres have no trained personnel, electricity supply, or life-saving medicines (Benue State Ministry of Health, 2022). Institutional weaknesses such as these compromise prompt treatment and affect maternal health, especially among rural women.

Ekanem et al. (2021) examined maternal health delivery in North-Central Nigeria and noted that minimum standards in just 38% of the primary healthcare facilities in the region offered maternal care. Similarly, Auta and Bala (2020) noted that distances were far in Benue State and service was poor and that this would discourage pregnant women from utilizing such healthcare services offered to them. These evidentiary findings indicate that inefficiencies in the system have serious setbacks to the maternal well-being. Health system determinants such as quality of care, accessibility, staff attitude, and medical equipment availability are central to maternal outcomes. Where these determinants are favourable, maternal health is enhanced through safe delivery, reduced complications, and better post-delivery care. But where corruption, inept leadership, and inconsistent funding characterize maternal health services, as is frequently the case in much of Nigeria (Uzochukwu et al., 2021), then the reverse is the case.

Pregnant women in Benue State report delays in receiving care, lack of privacy, and periodic abuse by care providers. These experiences not only affect health outcomes but also reduce confidence in the healthcare

system, deterring future utilization (Ode & Ijir, 2023).

In Adedokun et al.'s (2020) research, systemic challenges in the healthcare system like insufficient staff training and drug shortages were found to be predictors of maternal morbidity in Northern Nigeria. In a Benue study, Ocheje and Anza (2022) found that 62% of women experienced at least one delay in maternal care, with negative implications for both maternal and child health. These findings affirm the argument that systemic factors have a significant influence on maternal well-being.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses two complementary frameworks to examine the relationship between the health system and maternal health in Benue State, Nigeria: The Three Delays Model and the WHO Health Systems Framework. The Three Delays Model, as formulated by Thaddeus and Maine (1994), identifies three critical delays that are accountable for maternal death:

- i. Delay in decision-making to seek care: Influenced by factors like lack of awareness of danger signs, socio-cultural attitudes, and economic constraints.
- ii. Delay in reaching a healthcare facility: Due to issues like distance, lack of transport, and inaccessible roads.
- iii. Delay in receiving quality care within the facility: Caused by the shortages of qualified personnel, essential drugs, and equipment.

This model has also been used to determine maternal health complications in low- and middle-income countries, including Nigeria (Ogu et al., 2023). In Benue State, these delays are compounded by inadequate healthcare facilities and unavailability of skilled birth attendants, particularly in rural areas (Ezeanolue et al., 2017).

The WHO Health Systems Framework identifies six building blocks required for a well-functioning health system:

- i. Service delivery: Effective, safe, and quality health services.
- ii. Health workforce: Sufficient number of trained and motivated health workers.
- iii. Health information systems: Quality data to inform decision-making and policy-making.
- iv. Access to essential medicines: Access to needed drugs and technologies.
- v. Health financing: Adequate financing to allow people to access services they require.
- vi. Leadership and governance: Robust systems of oversight and accountability.

This model provides an integrated approach to looking at the performance of health systems and their impact on maternal health outcomes (WHO, 2007). Deficiencies in these building blocks, such as lack of sufficient health workforce and poor service delivery, contribute to the poor maternal health services in the situation of Benue State (Ezeanolue et al., 2017).

Integrating the Three Delays Model and the WHO Health Systems Framework, this study offers a composite explanation of how the delays in care-seeking behavior and systemic determinants interact and influence maternal well-being. Having two frameworks is favorable to the identification of specific health system weaknesses that lead to maternal health complications in Benue State.

Methodology

This study adopts a cross-sectional survey research design, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of how healthcare system factors influence maternal well-being in Benue State. The research was conducted in Benue State, located in North-Central Nigeria. The state comprises 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs), with a mix of urban and rural settings. The study focused on six LGAs, selected to represent the three senatorial zones (A, B, and C) of the state, ensuring geographical and socio-cultural diversity.

The target population for the study comprised of Pregnant women attending antenatal clinics, mothers who had delivered within the past year as well as healthcare providers, including doctors, nurses, midwives, and community health workers involved in maternal health services. A total of 420 participants were selected for the study. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for cross-sectional studies, considering a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

Regarding sampling procedure, a multistage sampling technique was employed: stage 1: Stratified sampling to select two LGAs from each senatorial zone. The selected LGAs include Vandeikya and Konshisha (Zone A); Gboko and Tarka (Zone B); Otukpo and (Oju Zone C). In stage 2, random selection of health facilities within the chosen LGAs. 12 health facilities were selected, 2 from each of the selected LGAs comprising of primary and secondary health centres. The centres including General Hospital Vandeikya and Primary Health centre, Tsambe; General hospital Tse-Agberagba and Primary Health Centre, Gungul; General Hospital, Gboko and Primary Health Centre, Ikyumbur; Local Government Health centre, Annune and Primary health centre Uchi; General Hospital Otukpo and Local Government Primary Health Centre, Ugbokolo; Primary health centre Oju and Primary health centre Okpute, respectively. In stage 3: systematic random sampling of pregnant women and mothers attending the selected facilities was carried out and 400 respondents were selected. Lastly, purposeful sampling was used to select 20 key informants for in-depth interviews, including healthcare providers and community leaders with extensive experience in maternal health services.

Data collection was through a structured questionnaire was, encompassing sections on: demographic information, access to and

utilization of maternal health services, perceptions of healthcare system strengths and weaknesses. The questionnaire was pre-tested in a neighbouring LGA (Makurdi) to ensure clarity and reliability. Furthermore, In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide focusing on: Healthcare providers' perspectives on systemic challenges and facilitators as well as community leaders' insights into cultural and infrastructural factors affecting maternal health. Trained research assistants administered the questionnaires face-to-face in the local language where necessary. IDIs were conducted in private settings to ensure confidentiality, with participants' consent obtained for audio recording.

Data were entered into and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) summarized the data. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and logistic regression, assessed associations between healthcare system factors and maternal well-being. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was conducted, identifying patterns and themes related to the research objectives. Findings were triangulated with quantitative results to enhance validity.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Benue State Ministry of Health Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was secured from all participants, with assurances of confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any stage. Data were anonymized, and all records were securely stored to protect participants' privacy.

Results and Discussions

Response Rate

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 378 were duly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 94.5%.

Examination of Healthcare System Strengths and Weaknesses in Relation to Maternal Well-being

Table 1: Respondents' Perceptions of Healthcare System Components (n = 378)

Healthcare System Component	Positive Response (%)	Negative Response (%)
Availability of Skilled Health Personnel	38.1	61.9
Accessibility of Health Facilities	42.3	57.7
Availability of Essential Drugs and Equipment	35.7	64.3
Affordability of Maternal Health Services	40.5	59.5
Quality of Maternal Health Services	44.2	55.8

Source: field Survey, 2025

Table 1 illustrates that a significant proportion of respondents perceive weaknesses in various components of the healthcare system. Notably, 61.9% reported inadequate availability of skilled health personnel, and 64.3% indicated insufficient availability of essential drugs and equipment. In-depth interviews revealed that many healthcare facilities, especially in rural areas, are

understaffed and lack essential medical supplies. In support of the above finding, a healthcare provider from a Primary Healthcare Centre, female, 34 years old stated,

"We often run out of basic medications, and there aren't enough trained staff to attend to all patients."

Assessment of Healthcare System Factors Influencing Maternal Well-being

Table 2: Reported Delays in Maternal Healthcare Access (n = 378)

Type of Delay	Experienced (%)	Not Experienced (%)
Delay in Deciding to Seek Care	58.7	41.3
Delay in Reaching Healthcare Facility	65.4	34.6
Delay in Receiving Adequate Care	60.2	39.8

Source: field Survey, 2025

A majority of respondents reported experiencing delays at various stages of accessing maternal healthcare. The most prevalent was the delay in reaching healthcare facilities, reported by 65.4% of participants. Supporting the above finding, insights from qualitative data shows participants attributed these delays to factors such as long distances to health facilities, poor road conditions, and lack of transportation. One respondent shared that,

"During labour, we had to travel over an hour on a bad road to reach the nearest clinic."

Statistical Analysis

Chi-Square Test of Association

To assess the association between healthcare system factors and maternal well-being, a chi-square test was conducted.

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant association between healthcare system factors and maternal well-being.

Results:

Table 3: Chi-square test of association between healthcare factors and maternal well-being

Variable	χ^2 Value	df	p-value
Availability of Skilled Personnel	12.45	1	0.0004
Accessibility of Health Facilities	9.78	1	0.0018
Availability of Essential Supplies	11.32	1	0.0008

The p-values for all variables are less than 0.05, indicating statistically significant associations between these healthcare system factors and maternal well-being.□

Logistic Regression Analysis

A logistic regression was performed to identify predictors of maternal well-being based on healthcare system factors.

Dependent Variable:

Maternal Well-being (1 = Good, 0 = Poor)

Independent Variables:

Availability of Skilled Personnel

Accessibility of Health Facilities

Availability of Essential Supplies

Results:

Table 4: logistic regression identifying predictors of maternal well-being

Predictor Variable	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Confidence Interval	p-value
Availability of Skilled Personnel	2.15	1.45 – 3.18	0.0002
Accessibility of Health Facilities	1.78	1.22 – 2.59	0.0025
Availability of Essential Supplies	2.05	1.38 – 3.05	0.0006

The analysis indicates that the availability of skilled personnel, accessibility of health facilities, and availability of essential supplies are significant predictors of maternal well-being. For instance, respondents reporting adequate availability of skilled personnel were over twice as likely to report good maternal well-being.

The study's findings reveal significant weaknesses within Benue State's healthcare system, particularly concerning maternal health services. A substantial proportion of respondents reported inadequate availability of skilled health personnel (61.9%) and essential drugs and equipment (64.3%). These deficiencies align with previous research of Olatunji, Aderinto, Kokori and Abraham (2024) as well as that of Ajegbile (2023) indicating that shortages in medical supplies and trained personnel are prevalent issues in Nigeria's healthcare system.

The WHO Health Systems Framework emphasizes six building blocks essential for a well-functioning health system: service delivery, health workforce, information systems, access to essential medicines, financing, and leadership/governance (WHO, 2010). The identified deficiencies in Benue State's health workforce and supply chains

directly impact service delivery and maternal health outcomes, underscoring the need for systemic improvements.

Furthermore, the study highlighted infrastructural challenges, such as poor road networks and inadequate transportation, which hinder access to healthcare facilities. This is in consonance with the study by International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) (2023) which stated that these infrastructural deficits contribute to delays in reaching care, a critical factor in maternal health outcomes

Furthermore, the study's findings indicate that healthcare system factors significantly influence maternal well-being. Delays in seeking care were reported by 58.7% of respondents, often due to financial constraints and cultural beliefs. This is consistent with the first delay in the Three Delays Model, which highlights how socio-cultural and economic factors can hinder timely decision-making to seek care (Onyejose, Ndep, Offiong, Omang, & Otu, 2020). Delays in reaching healthcare facilities were experienced by 65.4% of participants, primarily due to transportation challenges and poor infrastructure. This aligns with the second delay in the model, emphasizing the role of geographical and logistical barriers in accessing care (The Plane, 2023). Furthermore, 60.2% of respondents reported delays in receiving adequate care upon arrival at health facilities, often due to staff shortages and lack of training. This reflects the third delay in the model, which pertains to the quality and efficiency of care provided (Gunawardena, Bishwajit & Yahaya, 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the strength and weaknesses of Benue State's healthcare system and the ways in which these features impact maternal well-being. The findings revealed that there existed tremendous challenges in the form of poor access to skilled healthcare personnel, poor access to essential medical commodities, and infrastructural

shortfalls. These system gaps are accountable for seeking, reaching, and receiving suitable maternal care delays, as used in the Three Delays Model. The inclusion of the WHO Health Systems Framework further highlighted health workforce gaps, access to medicines, and service delivery. Their resolution is crucial for improving maternal health outcomes in the region. Based on the findings and conclusion the study recommends the following:

i. **Increase Healthcare Infrastructure and Human Capacity.** In order to support the recognized weaknesses in the health system, there is a need for investment by the Benue State government and stakeholders in increasing healthcare infrastructure and the capacity of the health workforce. These include:

- A. Recruitment and Capacity Building: Hiring additional health workers with desired competencies and giving frequent training for improving service output.
- B. Infrastructure Strengthening: Placing medical stocks and equipment in health facilities and ensuring frequent utilities like power supply and water supply.
- C. Accessibility Improvements: Enhancing transport infrastructure to enable easier access to health facilities, especially in rural areas.

ii. **Community Involvement and Health Education.** In reducing care delays, communities need to be accessed through targeted health education programs aimed at addressing cultural beliefs and financial limitations. Interventions are:

- A. Awareness Campaigns: Increasing women and families' awareness of the importance of having access to maternal care in a timely manner and the risk posed by delays.

B. Financial Support Mechanisms: Establishing programs that provide financial incentives or assistance to encourage utilization of maternal health services.

C. Community Health Workers: Deploying trained community health workers as a bridge between the health system and the community to establish trust and facilitate ease of access to care.

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IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON NIGERIA'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

This study critically evaluate the impact of insecurity on Nigeria's national development, emphasizing the interplay between persistent security challenges and the country's socio-economic progress. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, has grappled with diverse security threats, including terrorism, insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, communal clashes, and herders-farmers conflicts. These threats have not only destabilized communities but also disrupted economic activities, strained governmental resources, and exacerbated social inequalities. Utilizing the descriptive approach, the research explores the direct and indirect implications of insecurity on critical areas of Nigeria's national development. It highlights how insecurity has deterred foreign direct investment, displaced populations, and weakened institutional capacities, further entrenching poverty and unemployment. The study also examines the socio-political dimensions of insecurity, including its role in fostering corruption, eroding trust in governance, and undermining Nigeria's democratic consolidation. Drawing on secondary qualitative source from government reports, academic literature, and field studies, the research argues that addressing insecurity requires holistic and inclusive strategies that integrate military responses with socioeconomic reforms, community engagement, and regional cooperation. The study finds that, increment of public spending on security, weakening of state institutions and loss of public trust in governance are some of the economic, and socio-political impact of insecurity on Nigeria's national development. The study conclude that to alleviate the effects of insecurity on national development, it is imperative to tackle the underlying reasons of discontent, such as poverty, inequality, and ineffective governance in the Nigerian state.

Keywords: Insecurity, Nigeria, Development, National Development, Impact

Introduction

Political scientist have always argued that the expansion and advancement of socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural dimensions can only occur in a calm and secure environment. This is due to the absence of an enabling environment necessary for the advancement of production, industrial, and commercial operations; hence, development will always be a mere recollection (Akindoyin & Badru, 2024). Often times, money designated for developmental initiatives are being redirected towards addressing insecurity in the Nigerian State (Akindoyin, 2024a). The increasing prevalence of terrorism, armed

robbery, kidnappings, corruption, insurgency, and vandalism of local and national assets in Nigeria significantly exacerbates the elevated threat to the security of lives and property overall (Berebon, 2025).

The insufficient security of citizens' lives and property constitutes a significant impediment to substantial and meaningful development. An elevated level of anxiety will deter both domestic and foreign investors from making investments. At the core of many of these conflicts lies the access to resources and the control over the allocation of benefits. Their quest for resources has resulted in

extensive insecurity, exploitation, and the adoption of self-defense measures nationwide (Berebon, 2025). The factors contributing to this violence encompass poverty, unemployment, the pursuit of wealth, political corruption, the proliferation of guns, the prevalence of armed organizations, religiously motivated violence, and electoral fraud. This issue represents the dividing lines within these communities, resulting in heightened tension both within and among these groups.

The impacts of insecurity on a Nigeria's economy are profoundly detrimental. An economically viable nation cannot exist among insecurity indices such as terrorism, corruption, and violence. That is to say, such a system cannot generate the requisite support and robust sentiments essential for the survival of a government directly accountable to its citizens. This Nigerian state has integrated insecurity into its political culture (Adenike, 2021). Insecurity has significantly deprived Nigerians of the advantages of economic and industrial development due to the limited availability of money that should have been allocated to strengthen developmental projects, which have instead been diverted to securitize the Nigerian state.

Thus, terrorism, violence, and corruption are prevalent in Nigeria, not due to the inherent differences of its populace compared to other regions, but because the prevailing conditions are conducive to such phenomena. Numerous variables contribute to this possibility. The motivation to generate income among the population is considerably heightened, exacerbated by elevated levels of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate wages (Adenike, 2021). In numerous poor nations, like Nigeria, the practice of accountability is typically feeble. Political competition and civil liberties are frequently constrained. The laws and ethical standards governing administration are inadequately designed and applied, and the legal institutions responsible for their enforcement are ill-equipped.

However, In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed a substantial increase in insecurity, presenting a grave threat to the nation's growth. The widespread presence of insecurity, encompassing insurgency, terrorism, and ethnic and communal disputes, has significantly impacted the nation's socioeconomic advancement. The persistent violence and warfare have resulted in population displacement, disrupting agricultural activity and economic production (Akindoyin, 2024a). As a result, this has intensified food insecurity and impeded progress towards attaining sustainable development goals. Furthermore, the persistence of instability has inhibited foreign direct investment, constrained economic growth, and compromised infrastructural development. It is essential to thoroughly examine the complex effects of insecurity on national development in Nigeria to formulate effective strategies for addressing these difficulties and promoting sustainable progress.

This paper aims to objectively assess the adverse impacts of insecurity on multiple aspects of national development in Nigeria, however, specific objectives of this discourse is to;

- i. Evaluate the economic, social, and political impact of insecurity on Nigeria's national development.

This paper adopts a descriptive research design. Secondary source of qualitative data is employed. Data are gotten from sources such as academic journals, library, government reports, and media reports. The choice of secondary data was employed because it allows for an in-depth analysis of the assessment of insecurity on national development in Nigeria. Similarly, Data collected is analysed via content analysis.

The Concept of Security and Insecurity

For decades, security considerations have been paramount in development discussions. Since the conclusion of the Cold War, numerous efforts have been undertaken to

reconceptualize security from a state-centric viewpoint to a more expansive framework that prioritizes individuals, wherein human security—encompassing aspects of national security, human rights, and national development—serves as a principal metric for elucidating the concept (Akindoyin & Akuche, 2023). This discussion seeks to expand the concept of security from a state-centric perspective to encompass societies and individuals, as well as to transition from military to non-military concerns. The theoretical literature on human security can be classified into two primary branches. One is a neo-realist theoretical framework that defines security as the principal obligation of the state. The second strand, a postmodernist or pluralistic perspective, defines security as the obligations of non-state actors, hence diminishing the state's role as a primary security provider (Akindoyin & Akuche, 2023). Advocates of this approach contend that the notion of security extends beyond a military assessment of threats. They believe that the government should prioritize the economic security of individuals over state security, as the fundamental causes of insecurity are economically driven.

Security scholars, in their conceptualization of security, emphasize the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesiveness, and the political and socio-economic aims of a state (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014). Consequently, there is widespread agreement in current literature that security is essential for national unity, peace, and sustainable development. National security is so evident as an essential prerequisite for the economic growth and development of any nation. The intelligence community agrees that security is defined not by the absence of threats or concerns, but by the presence of a strong mechanism to respond proactively to these challenges with speed, skill, and immediacy. The term insecurity encompasses various connotations, including absence of safety, risk, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection, and lack of safety (Ewetan & Urhie,

2014). Insecurity is a condition of worry or anxiety stemming from a deficiency of protection, which can be examined from two viewpoints. Insecurity refers to the condition of being vulnerable or exposed to risk, which is defined as the susceptibility to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity refers to the condition of being vulnerable to risk or anxiety, with anxiety being an indistinct, unpleasant emotion felt in anticipation of potential tragedy.

Since the establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1999, Nigeria has encountered a continuous and complex security problem that jeopardizes its stability and growth. The reestablishment of democratic governance signified a new epoch of political transparency, yet it also revealed enduring structural deficiencies and profound societal rifts. A major source of insecurity has been ethno-religious conflicts, frequently intensified by competing for governmental power and economic resources. In regions like Kaduna, Plateau, and Benue, confrontations among ethnic and religious factions have led to extensive displacement and fatalities. Likewise, communal violence, especially over land conflicts, persists as a prevalent issue, particularly in the Middle Belt region. The Boko Haram insurgency, initiated in 2009, constitutes a significant security challenge. The group's campaign of terror has ravaged the northeastern region, resulting in over 350,000 fatalities (both direct and indirect) and displacing millions, as reported by the UNDP (2021). The Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), a derivative entity, has exacerbated counter-insurgency initiatives, extending the duration of the fight. Alongside insurgency, banditry and kidnapping for ransom have surged throughout northern and central Nigeria. Armed factions operate without restraint, assaulting rural populations, educational institutions, and travellers, therefore compromising human security. Moreover, the farmer-herder conflict, exacerbated by climate change, desertification, and competition for resources,

has intensified into violent clashes, especially in agricultural areas. The Niger Delta, despite a period of relative tranquility after the 2009 amnesty program, continues to be susceptible to intermittent militancy and oil theft, driven by complaints around environmental degradation and perceived marginalization. The issues are exacerbated by inadequate governance, corruption, and inefficient law enforcement, which obstruct a unified approach.

Development

Development, as a term, suffers from definitional plurality. The term is challenging to define. Nevertheless, learned thinkers have endeavored to conceptualize development. Akindoyin & Akuche (2023b) defines development as a concept that encompasses all efforts to enhance the conditions of human existence in every aspect. It signifies enhancement in the material welfare of all citizens, not solely the affluent and powerful, in a sustainable manner that ensures current consumption does not jeopardize future resources; it also necessitates the eradication or substantial reduction of poverty and inequality in access to life's benefits. It aims to enhance individual physical security, livelihoods, and opportunities for advancement. Roseland (2000) posits that development encompasses not only economic growth but also equitable distribution, healthcare provision, education, housing, and other essential services, all aimed at enhancing both individual and collective quality of life. Prabhakar (2025) perceives development as a societal progression, wherein enhancements in individual well-being arise from robust collaborations throughout all sectors, business entities, and other societal groupings. Development is not merely an economic endeavor; it encompasses socio-economic and political challenges, influencing all facets of societal life.

Economic development, in its initial interpretations, is frequently linked to economic growth and structural

transformation. Akindoyin (2024a) delineates development as a linear progression in which nations advance through several stages, transitioning from traditional to modern industrialized economies. This viewpoint has been criticized for its emphasis on GDP growth and its presumption that all societies adhere to an identical trajectory. In his seminal work "Development as Freedom" (1999), Amartya Sen redefined development by highlighting the enhancement of individual freedoms and capabilities. Sen contended that progress transcends simply economic expansion and involves augmenting individuals' capacity to conduct lives they deem valuable. He asserts that eliminating unfreedoms, including poverty, ignorance, and discrimination, is fundamental to the development process. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) embraces a comprehensive perspective on development, represented by the Human Development Index (HDI), which integrates metrics of life expectancy, education, and income to assess human advancement. This method illustrates the multifaceted essence of development and prioritizes human welfare beyond mere economic success. Sustainable development, as defined by Garg (2023), prioritizes fulfilling current demands without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own requirements. This viewpoint incorporates environmental sustainability, social equality, and economic growth, acknowledging the interconnection of these aspects in attaining sustainable development.

National Development

National development is an intricate process that includes economic, social, political, and cultural advancement, with the objective of enhancing the entire quality of life for a nation's populace. It entails the structural reform of society and the improvement of human well-being through sustainable advancement. Academics have delineated and construed national development in diverse manners, frequently highlighting its complex

characteristics. National development denotes the incremental enhancement of a nation's productive capabilities (Pritchett, 2022). In their publication titled role of self-help groups on socioeconomic development and the achievement of sustainable development goals, Basak and Chowdhury define national development as a process of enhancing the quality of all human lives and capabilities by elevating individuals' standards of living, self-esteem, and freedom (Basak and Chowdhury, 2024). This include poverty alleviation, enhanced employment prospects, and the fair allocation of resources. Sustainable economic growth is regarded as a fundamental element of national development, as it underpins investments in sectors such as education, health, and infrastructure.

National development include the advancement of social justice, inclusivity, and equality. In his key work, *Development as Freedom*, Sen contends that development should be perceived not merely as economic growth, but as an enhancement of individuals' freedoms and talents (Sen, 2009). Sen posits that national development is realized when individuals possess the capacity to make choices, seize opportunities, and live lives they deem valuable. This viewpoint redirects attention from material affluence to human advancement, as assessed by metrics like as life expectancy, literacy rates, and healthcare accessibility.

It is important to know that Nigeria is perpetually pursued by the specter of development. The illusion of growth and development is so deeply ingrained that the nation's history is synonymous with the evolution of development methods and growth models from colonial times to the present. No term has experienced such continuous change as development. This appears to be the sole nation where nearly all concepts and frameworks of development have been tested. Two years post-independence, the inaugural National Development Plan policy was established from 1962 to 1968, aiming to enhance development

chances in health, education, and employment, as well as to improve access to these opportunities. The strategy failed because fifty percent of the required resources were to be sourced externally, while only fourteen percent of the anticipated external financing was obtained (Adeniran, 2021). The dissolution of the First Republic and the onset of civil war further impeded the plan. Following the civil war in 1970, the Second National Development Plan, spanning from 1970 to 1974, was initiated, with emphasis in agriculture, industry, transportation, personnel, defense, electricity, communication, water supply, and the provision of social services (Adeniran, 2021). The third plan, spanning from 1975 to 1980, was deemed more ambitious than the second plan. Focus was directed on rural development and initiatives to rejuvenate the agricultural sector. The Fourth Plan, spanning 1981 to 1985, acknowledged the significance of social services, health care, and related sectors.

The strategy sought to enhance the living conditions of the populace. The specific objectives included: an enhancement of the average citizen's real income, a more equitable distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups, increased reliance on the nation's material and human resources, and a decrease in unemployment and underemployment levels (Adeniran, 2021). Throughout these eras, Nigeria's substantial oil riches was not utilized to establish a sustainable industrial foundation or to initiate an agrarian revolution aimed at eradicating widespread poverty. The Green Revolution Programme, which succeeded Operation Feed the Nation, did not produce sufficient food for the population. Recently, numerous development initiatives have been implemented with minimal success, including the structural adjustment programme (SAP), Vision 2010, the national economic empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS), and the establishment of development centres. The current new hope agenda of the present administration's aligned with Vision 2030, lacks a precise methodological strategy for its implementation. The current outcomes evidently do not align with the expectations of progress.

The Frustration-Aggression Theory

The Frustration-Aggression Theory, initially proposed by Dollard et al. in 1939, asserts that frustration occurs when an individual's goal-oriented actions are obstructed, resulting in aggressive reactions. This psychological theory posits that anger is a response to the obstruction of attempts to attain desired goals (Berkowitz, 1989). Subsequent academics, like Guven (1991), improved the theory, highlighting that dissatisfaction does not inherently lead to aggressiveness but rather heightens the probability of aggression when coupled with environmental stimuli or perceived threats. This concept is crucial for comprehending the influence of insecurity on Nigeria's national development. Insecurity in Nigeria manifests through terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal conflicts, and herder-farmer disputes. These manifestations of insecurity engender frustration among impacted populations owing to the interruption of livelihoods, destruction of property, and loss of life. The lack of economic, social, and personal security engenders discontent and frequently results in aggressiveness, so perpetuating a cycle of violence.

In Nigeria, insecurity has severely impeded national growth in economic, social, and political spheres. The Frustration-Aggression Theory elucidates why underprivileged and disenfranchised populations may engage in violence. The emergence of Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria can be attributed to economic deprivation, political marginalization, and discontent with perceived injustices. These grievances have manifested as violence towards the state and civilian populations, resulting in infrastructure destruction, educational disruption, and the displacement of millions. The herder-farmer disputes in central Nigeria might likewise be analyzed through this theoretical framework. Competition for diminishing natural resources, intensified by climate change, has exasperated both pastoralist and agrarian groups, leading to violent conflicts. These conflicts impede agricultural productivity, jeopardize food

security, and undermine social cohesion, all of which are essential elements of national growth.

Furthermore, insecurity hampers foreign investment and economic development, since prospective investors are discouraged by the dangers linked to violence and instability. This sustains a cycle of underdevelopment and poverty, exacerbating discontent within the populace. The government's failure to appropriately address these challenges results in a legitimacy crisis, exacerbating the rift between residents and the state.

Result of Findings

Evaluating the Impact of Insecurity on Nigeria's National Development

Decline in Foreign Investment

The insecurity in Nigeria has substantially impeded the influx of foreign direct investments (FDIs), posing a significant barrier to national growth. Security threats, including terrorism, banditry, abduction, and herder-farmer disputes, deter investors due to apprehensions of safety, financial losses, and instability. The actions of Boko Haram in the northeastern region have rendered it inhospitable for businesses, while the increase in oil theft and vandalism in the Niger Delta deters investments in the petroleum sector, which constitutes a significant portion of Nigeria's earnings (Yar'Adua, 2023). Foreign investments are essential for infrastructure development, employment generation, and economic diversification. Nigeria's ongoing security challenges have compromised its standing as a secure and appealing investment locale. Reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicate that foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows have consistently decreased in recent years, plummeting from \$8.84 billion in 2011 to \$468.91 million in 2022 (NBS, 2023). The reduction is partially attributable to investors reallocating their capital to more stable African nations, such as Ghana and Kenya, which have comparable prospects with diminished

security threats. In 2021, Twitter declared the building of its African headquarters in Ghana instead than Nigeria, citing a stable political and economic climate. Likewise, the apprehension of kidnapping in Nigeria's northern area has inhibited investments in agriculture, a sector with significant potential to facilitate economic diversification. The reduction in foreign investments intensifies unemployment, diminishes foreign exchange revenues, and constrains the government's capacity to finance essential areas like healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Nigeria risks hindering its national development objectives without tackling insecurity, as insufficient investments perpetuate poverty and impede economic growth (Akindoyin, 2024a). Therefore, guaranteeing security is essential to reinstating investor trust and fostering sustainable development.

Increase Public Spending on Security

The insecurity in Nigeria has profoundly affected national development by requiring heightened public expenditure on security measures. This alteration in governmental spending is a reaction to the escalating menace of terrorism, banditry, insurgency, and community conflicts. This expenditure is essential for tackling urgent security issues, although it detracts from other areas such as education and health, jeopardizing long-term developmental objectives. Nigeria's combat against the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast has resulted in the deployment of significant financial resources for military operations, intelligence acquisition, and the procurement of sophisticated weaponry (Lenshie, 2024). In 2022, the defense budget constituted approximately 20% of total national expenditure (Lenshie, 2024). This reallocation of funding, although essential, has resulted in diminished investment in the education sector, leaving nearly 10.5 million children out of school, particularly in conflict-affected areas such as Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States. Educational institutions in various

regions have been closed owing to assaults, exacerbating the educational situation (Lenshie, 2024). Likewise, the healthcare sector endures underfunding due to the diversion of resources caused by insecurity. Nigeria's healthcare infrastructure is very deficient, with healthcare expenditure frequently being below the 15% threshold established by the Abuja Declaration. This is apparent in the inadequate condition of primary healthcare facilities and the increasing maternal and newborn mortality rates. The unrest in the northwest has interrupted routine immunization programs, resulting in epidemics of avoidable diseases such as measles and cholera. The enduring repercussions of placing security before education and health are grave. An inadequately educated and sick populace diminishes productivity and economic advancement, prolonging cycles of poverty and underdevelopment. Mitigating insecurity by equitable resource distribution is crucial for sustainable national advancement.

Weakening of State Institutions

Insecurity diminishes the efficacy and legitimacy of state institutions, which are vital for national growth. In Nigeria, ongoing insecurity has undermined the efficacy of essential institutions, including the police, judiciary, and public service, thereby hindering socio-economic advancement (Amin, 2024). The Nigerian Police Force has faced challenges in efficiently combating instability due to insufficient money, inadequate training, and corruption. This vulnerability is increased by the increasing prevalence of violent crimes, including banditry, insurgency, and kidnappings, which overburden law enforcement agencies. The erosion of popular trust in the police has resulted in the emergence of vigilante organizations and self-help initiatives, thereby undermining official authority (Amin, 2024).

The judiciary, another essential institution, has likewise been impacted. Insecurity frequently hinders legal proceedings,

especially in conflict zones where courts cannot function efficiently. In the northeastern states impacted by the Boko Haram insurgency, numerous courts were compelled to close, depriving civilians of access to justice. This undermines the rule of law and sustains cycles of violence, as conflicts stay unaddressed. Furthermore, insecurity impedes the provision of public services, especially in the realms of education and healthcare. Educational institutions in regions such as Borno, Zamfara, and Kaduna have been shuttered owing to assaults on students and educators (Amin, 2024). Healthcare institutions have likewise been attacked, evidenced by the kidnapping of medical professionals and the damage of buildings. These interruptions exacerbate human capital development, which is essential for sustained national advancement.

Loss of Public Trust in Governance

Insecurity has significantly affected Nigeria's national development, notably resulting in a decline of public faith in governance. As insecurity intensifies, residents start to doubt the efficacy and legitimacy of their government. The erosion of trust is exacerbated by the government's failure to guarantee the safety and welfare of its citizens, leading to a disintegration of the social contract between the authorities and the populace (Sibun, 2022). The emergence of militant factions such as Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria has resulted in extensive displacement and fatalities. Notwithstanding military involvement and governmental pledges, the ongoing nature of these attacks has resulted in citizens feeling forsaken by their leaders. In other cases, the government's response has been regarded as insufficient or corrupt, exacerbating popular suspicion (Sibun, 2022). The inability to safeguard lives and property, along with allegations of human rights violations by security personnel, fosters the perception that the government promotes alternative interests over public good. The ongoing conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria's middle-belt and southern

areas have fostered an atmosphere of fear and instability. The government's failure to resolve these concerns or hold offenders accountable leads to community disillusionment. In this environment, individuals are more inclined to seek self-help or local militias, circumventing formal institutions entirely. As confidence in governmental institutions wanes, citizens may disengage from national development initiatives, encompassing elections, community involvement, and adherence to policies. This disengagement can hinder national growth, as an engaged and collaborative citizenry is crucial for the success of any development initiative. The impact of insecurity on public trust obstructs Nigeria's progress, impeding social cohesion, economic stability, and the ability of governance to implement significant change.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The evaluation of insecurity's influence on national development in Nigeria demonstrates a significant relationship between increasing insecurity and socio-economic stagnation. Employing the frustration-aggression theory as a framework, it is clear that the widespread insecurity in Nigeria may be interpreted as a direct consequence of unfulfilled goals and the dissatisfaction stemming from these unaddressed needs. The frustration-aggression theory asserts that people or groups deprived of resources, opportunities, or goals experience frustration, which frequently results in aggressive conduct. This theory elucidates how pervasive poverty, unemployment, political instability, and inadequate infrastructure exacerbate discontent across different socio-economic strata in Nigeria, especially among the youth. The discontent caused by these socio-economic deprivations appears in various kinds of violence, including insurgencies, militancy, armed robbery, and inter-communal confrontations. The escalation of these security concerns directly obstructs the nation's developmental trajectory by reallocating essential resources from vital areas, including education, healthcare, and

infrastructure development. Furthermore, the instability induced by insecurity cultivates an atmosphere of uncertainty that deters both domestic and foreign investment, so aggravating the nation's economic difficulties.

Moreover, the government's insufficient response to these crises frequently exacerbates the cycle of frustration and hostility. The idea of governmental neglect engenders distrust and disappointment within the people, especially among underprivileged groups, potentially resulting in heightened forms of aggressiveness, including terrorism and organized crime. This detrimental loop obstructs Nigeria's advancement, complicating the attainment of sustainable development. To alleviate the effects of insecurity on national growth, it is imperative to tackle the underlying reasons of discontent, such as poverty, inequality, and ineffective governance. By cultivating a more inclusive and stable society, Nigeria can mitigate the hostility arising from frustration, thereby facilitating national progress.

Recommendations

The study hereby makes the following recommendations;

- i. **Addressing Fundamental Causes of Insecurity:** Efforts must concentrate on tackling the root causes of insecurity, including poverty, unemployment, inequality, and political marginalization. Initiatives that foster inclusive economic development, social fairness, and equitable resource allocation can mitigate grievances that frequently incite violence and instability.
- ii. **Enhancing Security Framework:** The Nigerian government ought to invest in the modernization and equipping of security forces with advanced technology, intelligence capabilities, and sufficient manpower to effectively address insecurity. This entails promoting cooperation among military, police, and paramilitary organizations to guarantee synchronized responses to security crises.

iii. **Community-Led Security Initiatives:** Implementing community-oriented security initiatives, such as vigilante organizations and neighbourhood watch committees, can augment grassroots involvement in crime deterrence. These groups must to be incorporated into the formal security framework and subjected to oversight to guarantee accountability.

iv. **Educational Initiatives and Public Awareness Campaigns:** Instructing folks on the significance of peacebuilding and national unity can cultivate tolerance and diminish divisive inclinations. Public awareness efforts ought to emphasize the economic and social ramifications of insecurity while fostering unity and collective accountability for national progress.

v. **Advancing Regional and Global Collaboration:** Given that insecurity frequently possesses transnational characteristics, Nigeria must to enhance regional and international collaborations to address cross-border threats including terrorism, arms trafficking, and human smuggling. Collaboration with ECOWAS, the African Union, and international organizations will enhance the nation's ability to address instability.

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IMPACT OF MOBILE MONEY SERVICES IN ENHANCING FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN WUKARI, TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper has critically examined the effects of mobile money services on financial inclusion in Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria. However, given the limited banking infrastructure in rural areas, mobile money is a practical option for delivering financial services. The research design adopted for the study is a descriptive survey, which is based on a structured questionnaire used to collect primary data on 200 mobile money users and 30 mobile money agents. The study uses a quantitative approach and regression analysis to come up with the relationship between mobile money adoption and financial inclusion. The findings show that mobile money usage positively affects financial inclusion by expanding access to savings, credit, and digital payments. Financial literacy has a big impact on adoption, while costs will be a barrier. These results conform to other studies that confirm that Mm is crucial in closing the financial divide in underpaid communities. However, security concerns, poor financial literacy, and a lack of network infrastructure slow adoption. To increase the use of mobile money to maximize mobility to development, the study recommends targeted financial literacy programs, increased rollout of operator-paid mobile networks, reduction in transaction costs, and strengthened regulatory frameworks. By addressing such challenges, mobile money will consequently help promote financial inclusion and improve on economic development in rural Nigeria.

Keywords: Mobile Money, Financial Inclusion, Digital Financial Services, Technology

Introduction

In developing economies, Nigeria included, the policy objective of financial inclusion has emerged as a critical policy objective because it has the potential to bring about economic growth and reduce poverty (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2018). Generally, the term refers to the availability and use of low cost financial service such as savings, credit, insurance and payment by people and businesses, mostly in underserved and remote areas (World Bank, 2020). However, despite the attempts made by the Nigerian government and financial institutions to cash Nigeria out of the financial illiteracy trap, a good number of its population is still unbanked or underbanked owing to a plethora of factors including poor income levels, poor banking

infrastructure, and financial illiteracy (EFInA, 2021).

The challenge of financial exclusion remains in Wukari, Taraba State, especially in rural dwellers, small scale traders and farmers who cannot access formal financial services. Mobile money services have been a viable alternative because banks and financial institutions are not present in the area in large numbers. Mobile technology based services are easily accessible, it uses these services in providing financial transaction and allows individuals to save, send and receive money without the need of having a traditional bank account (Jack & Suri, 2016). Since telecom companies and fintech companies introduced their mobile money platforms, financial

inclusion has become almost ubiquitous and very widespread such that it has greatly helped to boost financial inclusion, especially in rural areas where access to banking services is hardly available (Adebayo & Anyanwu, 2022). Despite potential however, the use of mobile money services in Wukari is constrained by regulatory barriers, network issues, and credibility issues among other cybersecurity risks (Ogunleye, 2023).

As mobile money services continue to gain popularity in Wukari, there is still significant parts of the population that do not have access to financial services. But mobile money has its limitations; there is low awareness, bad networks, regulatory restrictions, and so on, which continues to affect its effectiveness it. Furthermore, economically backward residents have a low level of financial literacy that impedes their willingness to take up mobile financial services. If the barriers mentioned above are not addressed, mobile money may not be able to fulfill its full potential to enhance financial inclusion in Wukari, Taraba State.

The main objective of this study is to examine how mobile money services can improve financial inclusion in Wukari in Taraba State. The specific objectives include:

1. This work will investigate the level at which mobile money services have increased financial accessibility in Wukari.
2. The study attempts to identify the key challenges that prevent the adoption of mobile money services in Wukari.
3. The paper evaluates the policy interventions needed to best harness mobile money as a way to expand financial inclusion in Wukari.

Mobile Banking

Mobile banking is a digital financial service that serves the purpose of mobile banking transactions using mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. According to Laukkanen (2007), it is a financial service offered using Internet banking, USSD

technology, or m banking platforms. One of the aspects Tivari and Buse (2007) expand on of is the role of the device in facilitating transactions, payments, account management, and financial information access through mobile telecommunications.

Electronic banking (Shaikh and Karjaluoto, 2015) defined as electronic banking is a relative concept that includes mobile banking as a subset of electronic banking; it provides anytime, anywhere financial access, convenience and efficiency enhancement, and widening financial inclusion. Jack and Suri (2014) mention that mobile banking reduces transaction costs, enhances risk sharing, and increases financial network participation. Mbiti and Weil (2013) affirm that mobile banking—especially mobile money—opens the door to these otherwise unbanked households, for instance, providing services such as M-PESA has led to increased monthly transfers.

Jack et al. (2013) confirm the role of mobile banking in productivity in financial efficiency. Balasubramanian and Drake (2015) reveal that pricing transparency and agent expertise improve demand while competition affects the usage of cash and electronic credit, showing that mobile banking services are evolving.

Concept of Financial Inclusion

World Bank (2020) defines financial inclusion as a process to bring about the access of individuals and businesses to affordable and effective financial services including: saving, credit, insurance, and payment system. It is singled out as a critical driver of economic growth and reduction of poverty, in particular, in developing economies (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2018). In its drive to expand the financial population of the unbanked and underbanked, financial inclusion seeks to enhance access to financial services mainly in rural areas, (CBN, 2021). While there remain barriers such as the absence of banking infrastructure, high transaction costs and poverty, among others,

full inclusion (EFInA, 2021) has not been realized.

Financial exclusion remains a huge challenge across the State, especially in Wukari, rural residents, small-scale traders, and farmers. It has forced alternative financial solutions particularly mobile money as a solution to fill the gap created by the small presence of banks and formal financial institutions.

Role of Government and Financial Institutions in Promoting Mobile Money Adoption

Promoting mobile money adoption, which can help increase financial inclusion is vital and requires the heavily participation of the Nigerian government and financial institutions. This is based on building up a supportive regulatory framework. Steps following have included the licensing of the Payment Service Banks (PSBs), and permitting nonbank actors such as Mobile Network Operators to offer financial services (CBN, 2021). These kind of reforms are a good thing, however, there's still much improvement work that is needed, such as simplifying Agent Banking regulations, increasing customer protection and increasing interoperability of agents and platforms to lessen transaction costs and increase accessibility.

Another key driver is public private partnerships. The work can be carried out by the government agencies together with banks, telecoms and fintech companies through collaboration to strengthen infrastructure, expand networks of agents and introduce innovative services. For example, governments can use tax incentives or grants for supporting mobile money expansion in the area of under service (Adebayo & Anyanwu, 2022). Mobile and telecom companies co create products such as mobile savings and micro loans for the ultra poor, while banks and fintech work together to co create mobile based products for saving and micro loans.

A major barrier however is because the majority of Nigerians are not financially and digitally literate, especially those in the rural

part of Nigeria (Okoye et al., 2021). Both the public and private sectors will have to put in place literacy initiatives to overcome this. Workshops, grassroots outreach, and digital training can teach users how to use the mobile money, and at the same time, provide them with the skill and confidence to use it. It is disseminated to educational institutions, religious groups and market associations. Mobile money platforms must also create user friendly look and feel, bi lingual support and awareness campaign in order to encourage trust and inclusion within the mobile money services to diverse communities.

Barriers to Financial Inclusion through Mobile Money in Nigeria

The promise of mobile money for financial inclusion in Nigeria is constrained by regulatory, security, educational, and infrastructural challenges, the impacts of which are especially regressive on vulnerable groups. The major obstacle is Nigeria's regulatory set up which initially prohibited mobile network operators (MNOs) to lead mobile money services in favour of banks which are not generally present in rural areas (CBN, 2021). And while licensing fees can be high and there are complex requirements for mobile money agents, notably in underserved areas, the access is limited.

Security concerns significantly deter adoption. This is because users are increasingly faced with risks of fraud, identity theft, and data breach while minimal consumer protection is in place (Ogunleye, 2023). Worries are magnified by low cybersecurity awareness that creates ticketed distrust somewhat widely held, yet especially among the least able to bear financial punches, low income populations.

Low financial and digital literacy, especially in the rural areas are other barriers. The elderly and less educated individuals, like many others, find it difficult to understand basic mobile money functions or even use digital platform, since Okoye et al. (2021). Trust is undermined by misconceptions, for

instance the fear of hidden charges or any type of surveillance, or the reliance on intermediaries that further exposes people to fraud.

Finally, lack of infrastructure leads to further disruption of service. Access is hindered by unreliable mobile networks and poor internet connectivity, and irregular electricity supplies have prompted agents to incur high costs as they use generators instead of using the service frequently (Aker & Mbiti, 2010). With these cumulative challenges, mobile money is constrained from contributing significantly to the generation of meaningful financial inclusion in Nigeria's developing market, especially for marginalized groups like women, elderly communities, and the regional limits.

Theoretical Framework

Financial Intermediation Theory and Transaction Cost Theory are adopted by this study to explain the relationship between mobile money services and financial inclusion in Wukari, Taraba State.

Financial Intermediation Theory

According to this theory, financial institutions function in the middle acting as intermediaries that help in an efficient capital allocation and thus facilitate economic development (Schumpeter, 1911). Mobile Money Services can be regarded as a digital virtual intermediary in bridging the two gaps; between the unbanked and financial services (Beck et al., 2010). In Wukari where the banking infrastructure in more formal banking terms is being limited, mobile money becomes a major way through which molecules and businesses have access to financial organs that in a normal situation will not be at the level of financial organs.

Transaction Cost Theory

According to Coase (1937), this theory indicates that a reduction in the cost of transactions may increase the number of people served by financial services. Lower

transaction costs of mobile money platforms, as compared to traditional banking methods, increase accessibility to financial services to rural communities (Aker & Mbiti 2010). With all the infrastructural challenges in Wukari, Mobile money is the most cost-effective alternative to transact finances and removes the burden of transportation costs, the long queues, and the high service charges of conventional banking.

Empirical Review

Given the use of mobile money services in Nigeria, particularly as a means of financial inclusion, there has been widespread research attention related to adoption of such services. There have been a number of such empirical studies regarding the influence of mobile money on financial accessibility, digital financial literacy, and economic empowerment on mobile money adoption, and in turn, determination of its benefits as well as problems.

In a study on how mobile money services can increase financial inclusion among the rural populations of Nigeria, Adebayo and Anyanwu (2022) assessed the role of mobile money service. In fact, their findings showed that the mobile money has significantly expanded access to financial services, through mobile savings, peer to peer (P2P) transfers and bill payments. However, these services have offered an opportunity for people using these services to be able to make financial transactions without the need of having a bank account. Mobile money was highlighted as most beneficial for small scale traders and farmers who face a lot of difficulty accessing form banking services. In Wukari, Taraba State, not far from the great benison, taraba state, where banking infrastructure is not so much, Mobile money has been a lifeline for so many people involved in agricultural and trading activities who find it so easy to send and receive payments.

Nevertheless, there are many challenges in mobile money adoption in Nigeria. With regards to the barriers of the widespread use

of mobile money thus far, Ogunleye (2023) outlined a data security barrier, a barrier from fraud and finally a barrier from regulatory constraints. Many users do not fully adopt mobile money because they are fearful of cybercrime including unauthorized transactions, hacking, and identity theft, and this the study discovered. It is also hindered by regulatory constraints, such as the restrictions on the activities that mobile network operators are allowed to provide in terms of financial services in Nigeria. There are corresponding issues in Wukari: limited regulatory support and doubts about transaction security are also posing a challenge in encouraging the use of mobile money services in Wukari for everyday transactions.

Financial literacy plays a crucial role in mobile money adoption, as highlighted by Okoye et al. (2021). Their study examined how mobile money services contribute to digital financial literacy, particularly among rural users. They found that as individuals engage in mobile financial transactions, they gradually become more knowledgeable about financial management, budgeting, and savings mechanisms. The study concluded that mobile money serves as an entry point into the formal financial sector, encouraging users to adopt more advanced financial products over time. However, financial illiteracy remains a significant This is particularly in areas like that of Wukari, where many people do not have the requisite skills and knowledge to fully exploit mobile financial services. As a consequence, some users do not know the whole range of services, the others become victims of fraudulent schemes because they do not understand the importance of digital security of finance.

Moreover, a Nigeria's Mobile Money Report by Enhancing Financial Innovation & Access (EFInA, 2021) covered the adoption of mobile money from a wider perspective in Nigeria. One of the key points is that mobile money is widely used and the usage is growing fast across the country because there is rapid growth of mobile phone penetration and

fintech innovations. But it also noted that financial exclusion remained circumscribed by gender biases, physical and social limitations and socio-cultural factors, especially in northern states, especially Taraba. According to the report, the fact that mobile money services are more likely used by men than women was largely due to what is considered 'normative' in society, along with women's diminished financial literacy levels. Meanwhile, one of the serious problems that hinders the adoption of mobile money in rural communities (Wukari) such as in this case is where there is very poor network connectivity and not very reliable Electricity supply.

Methodology

This research uses descriptive survey research design to look at the influence of mobile money service on financial inclusion in Wukari, Taraba State. Quantitative approach is used in the data collection and analysis of numerical data regarding mobile money adoption, benefits, and challenges (Creswell, 2014). The study is in Wukari, a commercial centre that through agriculture, trade, and small-scale businesses. Indications of the increasing adoption of mobile money do not match a decrease in financial exclusion that results from the absence of banking infrastructure, low financial literacy and unreliable mobile networks (CBN, 2021).

The study population consists of mobile money users and agents, representing the demand and supply sides of financial services. A stratified random sampling method is applied to categorize respondents based on their engagement with mobile money. A structured questionnaire will be administered to 200 mobile money users and 30 agents to assess financial access, usage patterns, and challenges. To analyse the relationship at play between the adoption of mobile money and financial inclusion, we will resort to the usage of regression analysis. The financial inclusion is a dependent variable, mobile money usage frequency, transaction costs, and financial literacy level are independent variables

(Gujarati & Porter, 2009). Informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation will be guaranteed.

The regression model is:

$$FI = \beta_0 + \beta_1MMU + \beta_2TC + \beta_3FL + \epsilon$$

Where

FI represents financial inclusion, and **MMU**, **TC**, and **FL** are independent variables measuring mobile money usage, transaction costs, and financial literacy, respectively.

ϵ = Error term (accounts for other factors affecting financial inclusion that are not captured in the model)

Results and Discussions

In this section, the findings of the study on mobile money and financial inclusion as described using descriptive statistic and regression analysis are presented. It analyses demographic characteristics, adoption of mobile money, transaction costs and financial literacy, links results with empirical studies and discusses policy implications.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	132	61.62%
Female	82	38.38%
Age Group (Years)		
18 – 25	64	29.80%
26 – 35	87	40.40%
36 – 45	43	20.20%
46 and above	21	9.60%
Education Level		
No formal education	24	11.11%
Primary education	34	15.66%
Secondary education	82	38.89%
Tertiary education	72	34.34%
Occupation		
Civil Servant	28	13.13%
Farmer	66	30.81%
Student	29	13.64%
Trader	86	39.90%
Other	5	2.53%
Monthly Income (₦)		
Below ₦10,000	76	35.35%
₦10,000 – ₦30,000	86	39.90%
₦31,000 – ₦50,000	35	16.16%
Above ₦50,000	18	8.59%

Source: Field survey, 2024

The respondents are diverse in terms of gender, age, education, occupation, and income distribution. The study has 61.62% males and 38.38% females; this shows that there are higher males in mobile money usage. Most of them (40.40%) fall in the 26-35 age group, 18-25 years next most (29.80)

suggesting; the younger ones have more will to patronize mobile financial services. As for education, it is to say that they have 38.89% who have secondary education, 34.34% are tertiary educated, making the population quite learned. Despite the fact that no less than 11.11 per cent respondents don't have formal

education, this may have an effect on the financial literacy levels. There is a high number of farmers (30.81 per cent), traders (39.90 per cent) and occupational group altogether constitute 70.71 per cent indicating the importance of mobile money services in business transactions and agriculture. According to income distribution, 39.90% of people earn between ₦10,000 – ₦30,000 monthly and 35.35% earn below ₦10,000,

essentially a low income group. About 8.59 percent of the respondents earn above ₦50,000 per month, indicating the possibility of financial constraints limiting the degree of mobile money adoption. However, these demographic insights are needed to inform services for financial inclusion through mobile money based on financial behaviour of respondents.

Regression Analysis Results

Variables	Coefficients (β)	Standard Error	t-Statistic	p-Value
Constant (Intercept)	2.1331	0.512	4.166	0.000
Mobile Money Usage (MMU)	0.7840	0.102	7.686	0.000**
Transaction Cost (TC)	-0.0055	0.0017	-3.235	0.001**
Financial Literacy (FL)	1.2378	0.143	8.658	0.000**

Source: Field survey, 2024

The results from the regression analysis indicate that there are high degree of correlation between mobile money usage, transaction costs and financial literacy and financial inclusion. The p values of the constant (intercept) is 0.000 and its coefficient is 2.1331 indicating that when all independent variables are zeros, their level of financial inclusion is 2.1331. The finding is that mobile money usage (MMU) is also a positive and significant factor of financial inclusion, with a coefficient of 0.7840 and p value = 0.000; this ability to demonstrate that heightened mobile money transactions are helpful in improving access to financial cash. The coefficient of transaction cost (TC) is -0.0055 and p value 0.001, which is negative, indicating that higher transaction costs reduces financial inclusion. This finding suggests that it is necessary to develop more affordable mobile financial services to promote more widespread use. In absolute term, the most effect is from the financial literacy (FL) that has a coefficient 1.2378 and p-value of 0.000, implying that the people with better financial knowhow tend to use mobile money services better. All t-statistics for variables are significant statistically and support the results' reliability. Therefore, these findings suggest that the use of mobile money can help in promoting financial

inclusion, if 'financial literacy' and 'transaction costs' reduction are promoted.

Discussion of Findings

This study's findings show that mobile money plays a very significant role in increasing financial inclusion in Wukari, Taraba State. This is consistent with previous studies demonstrated that the usage of mobile money services with improved financial inclusion (FI) with mobile money usage ($\beta = 0.7840$, $p = 0.000$) as done in Adebayo and Anyanwu (2022) that mobile money services improved the financial access for rural populations in Nigeria. Okoye et al. (2021) also argued that mobile money contributes to financial literacy and participation in formal financial services and which is in line with this study's findings.

In addition, the strongest positive effect that we found was financial literacy ($\beta = 1.2378$, $p = 0.000$) regarding financial inclusion. If this is true, then people with higher levels of financial literacy are likely to undergo mobile money transactions and make efficient utilisation of such financial services. According to Enhancing Financial Innovation & Access (EFInA, 2021), this finding is supported by the high rate of mobile money adoption in Nigeria among the people who are better aware of the digital financial services. This

implies that financial inclusion in rural communities such as Wukari can still be improved by targeted financial education programs.

Nevertheless, transaction cost (TC) was found to have a negative and significant effect on financial inclusion ($\beta = -0.0055$, $p = 0.001$). The high mobile money transaction costs discourage the usage of the service and imply that users have not fully adopted the service. This is consistent with results found by Ogunleye (2023) who demonstrated that high transaction fees and governance limits to mobile money expansion in Nigeria. Secondly, Aker and Mbiti (2010) concluded that lower transaction costs should bring down the cost of finances, especially in areas which are underserved. Findings revealed that reduction of mobile money transaction fees can increase the rate of financial inclusion in Wukari.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examines the influence of Mobile Money Services on financial inclusion in Wukari, Taraba State. Mobile money is found to significantly increase financial inclusion, increasing people's uptake of saving, accessing credit, and paying in digital, according to the findings. Additionally, financial literacy is important for mobile money adoption since the more financially literate people tend to use digital financial services well. While they pose a negative impact on financial inclusion due to high transaction costs, they limit the ability of the users to take full advantage of the mobile money platform. These results echo past empirical findings that financial literacy and cheap mobile money services help financial accessibility. With mobile money, it is therefore an indispensable tool to fill the financial gap in rural and underserved communities. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance financial inclusion through mobile money services: Targeted financial literacy programs led by government agencies, financial institutions, and fintech companies

should be key methods for promoting mobile money adoption. They should educate the public about the benefits of mobile money, including ease of access, convenience, and financial empowerment. Furthermore, policy interventions such as subsidies or tiered pricing models may be implemented to reduce transaction costs, with mobile money operators working alongside regulatory authorities. Lowering the cost of digital financial services can support low-income households aiming to improve their standard of living.

Access to mobile money services is also very important, but reliable access. Since consistent and dependable service is almost inextricable for telecom providers and financial institutions, it is critical for them to extend network coverage and mobile banking distribution infrastructure, notably in remote areas. Simultaneously, supportive regulation is a good idea for policymakers to implement that protects users and encourages innovation. Licensing requirements for new mobile money providers can be reduced in order to increase competition and push for technological advancement. Additionally, government, fintech firms, banks, and telecom firms have to come together to sustain rural inclusion and bolster the digital payment system, consequently building an inclusive financial ecosystem.

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STRESS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF NURSES IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined stress and emotional intelligence on psychological well being of Nurses in Public Hospitals in Benue State, Nigeria. The participants of the study comprised 286 nurses which included 122 (42.7%) males and 164 (57.3%) females with mean age of 44.4. A cross sectional survey design was used for the study. Participants for the study were from nine public hospitals using cluster and purposive sampling techniques. The study tested two hypotheses across six dimensions of Ryffs psychological well being at a significant level of 0.05 using Multiple Linear Regression. The result of the first hypothesis indicated that there was significant negative influence of perceived stress on psychological well being of nurses in public hospital in Benue State except autonomy dimension nurses ($\beta = -.130$, $t = 2.087$, $p < .05$), it was therefore recommended that the government should employ the services of clinical psychologists in public hospitals to periodically assess, diagnose and treat nurses with psychological issues so as to ameliorate the negative effects of stress on their psychological well being.

Keywords: Stress, psychological, wellbeing, emotions, intelligence

Introduction

The concept of psychological well being is gaining popularity in the recent time especially among nurses in the hospital and other health institutions. Psychological well being is multidimensional variable that measured six dimensions (autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life and positive relation with others, Ryff and Keyes, 1998) Literature revealed that cheerfulness, optimism, playfulness, self-control, a sense of

detachment and freedom from frustration, anxiety and loneliness are indicators of psychological well-being to manage tensions and negative emotions (Tellegen, 2013). A person who has a high degree of psychological well-being, excels in all fields, carries higher levels of satisfaction and self-esteem and is able to think about himself or others. It emphasizes positive characteristics of growth and development (Sinha & Verma, 2019).

Psychological well being can be defined as the internal experience of a person or group of people about their lives (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002). Psychological well-being can also be referred to as a general term used by psychologists to explain the general condition of an individual or group of people, as it relates to pleasant or unpleasant state. Results from the studies of Trudel, Robinson and Laban (2019) found a rich and fulfilling social life and a network of close social support with family and friends as being strongly correlated with psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is the aspect of subjective experience or Subjective well being which reflects dimensions of affect judgments of life satisfaction. Psychological well-being in general term can also be referred to an individual overall functioning in relation to his or her feelings. Increasing evidence from available studies suggests that psychological well being is associated with lower disease and mortality risk and may enhance good health and general life satisfaction (Trudel, Robinson & Laban, 2019). This study aimed to examine the feasibility of investigating the impact of stress and emotional intelligence on the psychological well-being of nurses in public hospitals in Benue State, Nigeria.

Review of Relevant Literature

Psychological well being is also viewed as inter and intra individual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes which include one's sense of mastery and personal growth (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Psychological well-being in general term can be referred to an individual overall functioning in relation to his or her feelings. Psychological well-being on the other hand, has also been viewed as "all about lives going well" and the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively (Lewis & Bates, 2012). At the most basic level, psychological well being is quite similar to other terms that refer to positive mental states, such as happiness or satisfaction, and in many ways it is not

necessary, or helpful to worry about fine distinctions between such terms (Diener & Seligman, 2002). If an individual say that; "I'm happy or very satisfied with my life you can be pretty sure" that his or her psychological well-being is quite high.

Psychological well being is, however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life. Therefore, psychological well-being can be referred to as general term used by psychologists to explain the general condition of an individual or group of people, which includes psychological, social, economic, spiritual or medical state.

Although, baseline psychological well-being may be fairly stable, day to day events and experiences also exert an impact. For instance, even the most resilient person may eventually become very low or depressed, if his or her daily experiences are constantly troubling (Ivan, 2018). There is strong evidence to show that exposure to work-related stressors over long periods of time will have a negative impact on psychological well being, so, although as mentioned above, short periods of adversity may be helpful in building resilience; meanwhile, long-term stress is not good for psychological well being. In turn, this lower level of psychological well being may well lead to serious illness, including cardiovascular disease, problems with blood sugar control, such as diabetes and immune system malfunctions (Chandola, 2008). Relevant studies on psychological well being revealed an undisputable view that, early experience and underlying personality create a platform for psychological well being (Trudel, Robinson & Laban, 2019).

Nurses are a very important component of the Health Care system in Nigeria and the world at large in the actualization of health care delivery target of any nation as such their psychological well being is paramount for them to be more productive, provide compassionate care in order to add value to their communities. As a result of inadequate

infrastructure and poor compensation packages, a sizeable number of Nigerian nurses and other health professionals are being lured away to developed countries in search of fulfilling and lucrative positions. Related to the problem of brain drain is the problem of geographical distribution of nurses which is a disproportional concentration of nurses in urban areas resulting in nurses and other health workers having individual problems due to too much work load manifested in lack of care to patients, failure to turn up at work on time, poor process quality such as failure to conduct proper patient examination and failure to treat patients in a timely manner due to poor psychological well being (Diefendroff & Gosserand, 2013).

A casual observation of the population that goes in and out of health institutions in Nigeria presupposes that there are some problems with the system; hence the health care system has not been able to live up its expected role in providing quality health care to patients in Nigeria and some parts of the world. Osotimenn (2020) opined that the psychological well being of health care workers especially nurses is particularly worrisome. According to him, significant number of patients is in critical condition and some die upon admission even before they are attended to at various public hospitals in Nigeria because of the negligent, referent attitude and poor sense of environmental mastery of nurses. Buttressing this, Family Health International (2010) reported that low psychological well being may affect the quality of care nurses give to the sick, and in many cases constitute clear threats to health. Studies globally have shown that a patient is likely to die due to the poor attitude of nurses than the ailment that brought them to the hospital (Global Health Watchers, 2011). A recent World Health Organization (WHO) 2014 report suggests that there is shortage of nurses everywhere especially in sub-Sahara Africa countries. These nurses face huge psychological pressure as a result of overwhelming workload, long hours and shift

duties. When these nurses are overworked, they are bound to present negative attitude, responsible for about 7% of all death in hospitals, most of which have been attributed to poor mental health and psychological well being.

The recent transition of the world from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has placed emphasis on improved health of all citizenry. It has become necessary that the key players in the health sector be given proper attention and their capacities be built to face the challenges of health care service delivery in a developing world. In Nigeria, the Global Health Facts of the Henry Kaiser Family Foundation places the ratio of nurses to the population of the country to be at 16.1 nurses per population of 10,000 (Global Health Facts 2015-2020). The Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria reports that there are about 236,000 registered nurses and midwives in Nigeria as at 2020.

With a population of 5,741, 800 (NPC, 2016), Benue State has a total of 2,194 registered nurses according to the Benue State Annual Operational plan for malaria in 2020 and a nurses to citizens ratio of 1 nurse to 1,333 citizens. The ideal ratio based on international best practices is 1:30 (World Bank Health Indices, 2010). From this ratio it becomes obvious that the number of nurses in the state is grossly insufficient which implies an overworked workforce with its attendant effects of stress, demotivation burnout and possibly lower well being. A critical stressor for public hospitals is insufficient number of health personnel including nurses. This leads to increased risk of adverse patient outcomes, reduced quality of patient care, increased operation costs, decreased efficiency and effectiveness of care provided, nurse's mood disturbance, deterioration of sleep quality and daytime sleepiness which all contribute in lowering their psychological well being and effectiveness (Obinna, 2011). The role of nurses in the health care delivery system cannot be overemphasized, they are needed at

all levels of healthcare and the profession requires a lot of dedication, time and energy with regards to patient management and service delivery. This time investment and dedication to duty is likely to affect their psychological well being

Psychological well being is a human behaviour with many determining factors and critical among these is stress. The concept of stress has been identified as one of the factors that may impact psychological well being of an individual (Neidhart & Weinsten 2019). Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world, from a psychological perspective. Stress is one's perception of imbalance between demands and resources or from pressure that exceeds one's perceived ability to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 2014). Of all categories of health workers, nurses have been found to be particularly exposed to stress, (Nunker, Ukoju, Nwankwo, Omene & Kuller, 2012). These exposures can be explained partly by the stress they undergo arising from increased responsibilities by providing compassionate care and support to patients especially with the onset of Covid-19 and the need to adhere to safety protocols (Bunker, Ukoji, Nwankwo, Omene & Kuller, 2020).

Stress of nurses

Results from daily activities and routine in hospitals which are monotonous and more so, that they occur on a daily bases, some of these stresses include caring for acutely ill patients, night shift, witnessing death, monitoring labour outcomes and engaging in emotional labour etc. Other sources of stress that could affect the psychological well being of nurses occur in the area of treatments especially when patients do not agree with or fear that treatment procedures might cause unintentional pain to them. Patients and their families may show sign of anger, depression, helplessness and fear all of which can be mentally distressing to a nurse. Nurses have a higher burden of knowing that their action could harm or distress others as in area of

administering the wrong medication or failing to recognize a sign or symptom (Pisell, Elisei, Murgia, Quartesan & Abram, 2009). All of these stressful activities by nurses are often perceived negatively leading to a possibility of psychological distress and decrease in overall psychological wellbeing (Ireland & York, 2019).

Emotional Intelligence

Besides stress, emotional intelligence has been seen to have a relationship with psychological well being (Sideman & Grandly, 2007; Jotterdell and Holman, 2013). According to Bar-on (2016), emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to monitor one's own feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Nurses who are skilled at reading their own feelings and emotion displays easily recognize situations in which they are not displaying appropriate emotions and they respond by regulating their own emotion so as to manage patient's interaction more effectively (Krumi & Geddes 2010). Looking at the nature of nurses profession, Pugh (2011), stated that a paramount component of emotional intelligence which is empathy and emotional perception of patients interactions that cause them to feel negative emotions. As a result nurses with low emotional intelligence are also most likely to be low in emotional regulation and psychological well being.

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated for this study:

- i. There will be significant influence of perceived stress on psychological well being (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance) of nurses in Public Hospitals in Benue State.
- ii. Emotional intelligence will significantly influence psychological well being (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive

relations with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance) of nurses in Public Hospitals in Benue State.

Methodology

This study adopted Cross Sectional Survey design and this type of design examines data at one point in time and is best used to describe the status of the phenomena or the relationships among phenomena or variables (Shindi 2017). This design did not manipulate variables but examined the relationship that exists between the variables of interest (demographic factors and psychological well being) as they exist in the study.

Setting

The setting of this study is the public hospitals in Benue State. Benue State is a state in the North-Central Region or mid-belt region of Nigeria with a population of about 4,253,641 in 2006 census. It is inhabited predominantly by the Tiv, Idoma and Iggede people, who speak the Tiv language, Idoma and Iggede respectively.

Participants

The participants of this study were 286 nurses working in public hospitals in Benue State across the 3 geopolitical zones comprising of Zone A (Nurses in General hospital Kwande, Tse-Agberagba and Konshisha) Zone B (Federal Medical Centre Makurdi, General Hospital North Bank and Benue State University Teaching Hospital and Zone C) (General Hospital Otukpo, Okpokwu and Ugbokpo),

Sampling Technique

Cluster and accidental sampling techniques were adopted to select participants for the study. The nurses were first of all proportionately divided into clusters A, B and C representing Zone A, B and C respectively. This was done according to their numbers and clusters and then systematic sampling was used to select the participants

(nurses) from each of the clusters using a sample interval of 3 until the required sample for each cluster was gotten as shown below.

Cluster A (Benue North East)

$$\frac{157}{1120} \times \frac{286}{1} = 40$$

Cluster B (Benue North West) $\frac{778}{1120} \times \frac{286}{1} = 199$

Cluster C (Benue South)

$$\frac{185}{1120} \times \frac{286}{1} = 47$$

Instruments

Three (3) instruments were used for this study. Section A consist of the demographic information of the respondents, such as; age, sex, marital status, religion, years of service and cadre, followed by section B which consist of the perceived stress scale, emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and Ryff scales of Psychological Well being.

Ethical clearance

Permission for the research study was provided by the Research Ethics Committee Benue State Hospital Management Board headed by the Executive Secretary Hospitals Management Board, the Research Ethic Committee of Benue State University Teaching Hospital and the Research Ethic Committee of Federal Medical Centre Makurdi. These bodies gave permission for the research to go on. At the venue of the study, the researcher met the Director of Nursing (DNS) of the various hospitals and explained the purpose of the study, and afterwards proceeded to the various units and departments such as in Accident and Emergency (A&E), Labour wards, General Out-Patient Department (GOPD), Theatre Department, Psychiatric Ward and all other units of the hospitals of the study and assured the nurses that their responses will be confidential and anonymous. Rapport was established between the researchers and the nurses respondents.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	20-30	43	15.3%
	31-40	65	22.7
	41-50	105	36.7
	51-60	73	25.5
Sex	Male	122	42.7
	Females	164	57.3
Marital Status	Single	33	11.5
	Married	141	49.3
	Divorced	50	17.5
	Widow/widower	61	21.3
Religion	Christians	253	88.5
	Muslim	33	11.5
Cadre	Junior	162	56.6
	Senior	124	43.4
Years of Service	1-5	68	23.6
	6-10	87	30.4
	11-15	103	36.0
	16 and above	26	9.6

Table 2: Multiple Linear Regression Showing result for the Independent and Joint Influence of Perceived Stress, Emotional Intelligence and Personality Traits on Psychological Wellbeing of nurses in Public Hospital in Benue State.

DV	Variables	R	R ²	Df	β	F	T	Sig
Constant		.234	.055	3,257		4.890	17.821	.003
Overall DV	Perceived stress				-.130		-2.087	.038
	Emotional intelligence				-.031		-.505	.614
	Personality traits				.207		3.374	.001
Constant		.396	.157	3,266		16.329	3.066	.000
Autonomy	Perceived stress				.352		6.101	.000
	Emotional intelligence				.053		.921	.358
	Personality traits				.174		3.052	.003
Constant		.045	.002	3,266		.177	73.673	.912
Environmental mastery	Perceived stress				.020		.319	.750
	Emotional intelligence				.037		.583	.560
	Personality traits				.001		.018	.986
Constant		.123	.015	3,266		1.348	16.593	.259
Personal Growth	Perceived stress				.064		1.028	.305
	Emotional intelligence				-.032		-.512	.609
	Personality traits				.110		1.791	.074
Constant		.102	.010	3,266		.915	8.343	.434
Positive Relations	Perceived stress				-.095		-1.517	.131
	Emotional intelligence				-.006		-.089	.929
	Personality traits				.028		.452	.651
Constant		.204	.042	3,266		3.670	5.836	.013
Purpose in Life	Perceived stress				-.102		-.188	.851
	Emotional intelligence				-.085		-1.358	.176
	Personality traits				.188		3.041	.003
Constant		0.76	.006	3,266		.515	8.755	.672
Self-acceptance	Perceived stress				-.064		-1.020	.309
	Emotional intelligence				-.006		-.093	.926
	Personality traits				-.044		-.710	.478

Hypothesis 1 stated that perceived stress will significantly influence psychological wellbeing (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance) of nurses in public hospital in Benue State. This hypothesis was tested using multiple linear regression and the result is presented in Table 2

Result in Table 2 indicated that perceived stress significantly and negatively influenced psychological well being of nurses of public hospital in Benue State ($\beta = -.130$, $t = 2.087$, $p < .05$), implying that increase score on perceived stress can result to decreased psychological well being of nurses. With this result, hypothesis one was accepted. However, an exploration of perceived stress on the dimensions of psychological well being revealed that only the autonomy dimension ($\beta = .352$, $t = 6.101$, $p < .01$) had significant influenced. However, perceived stress did not have significant influence on environmental mastery ($\beta = .020$, $t = .319$, $p > .05$), personal growth ($\beta = .064$, $t = 1.028$, $p > .05$), positive relations ($\beta = -.095$, $t = -1.517$, $p > .05$), purpose in life ($\beta = -.102$, $t = -.188$, $p > .05$) and self-acceptance ($\beta = -.064$, $t = -1.020$, $p > .05$). Based on this finding, hypothesis two was partially confirmed

Hypothesis 2 stated that emotional intelligence will significantly influence psychological wellbeing (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance) of nurses in public hospitals in Benue State. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression and the result is presented in Table 2.

Result in Table 2 indicated that emotional intelligence did not significantly influence psychological well being of nurses in public hospital in Benue State ($\beta = -.031$, $t = -.505$, $p > .05$). A test of the variable on the different dimensions of psychological well being also show that emotional intelligence did not have significant influence on autonomy ($\beta = .053$, $t = .921$, $p > .05$), environmental mastery ($\beta = .037$,

$t = .583$, $p > .05$), personal growth ($\beta = -.032$, $t = -.512$, $p > .05$), positive relations ($\beta = -.006$, $t = -.089$, $p > .05$), purpose in life ($\beta = -.085$, $t = -1.358$, $p > .05$) and self-acceptance ($\beta = -.006$, $t = -.093$, $p > .05$) and the hypothesis was rejected.

Discussions

Hypothesis one stated that perceived stress will significantly influence psychological well being (environmental mastery, purpose interfere, positive relations with others, personal growth, self-acceptance) of nurses in public hospitals in Benue State. The finding of hypothesis was accepted. The first dimension of hypothesis one(A) shows that perceived stress significantly influenced psychological well being (Autonomy). This confirms the hypothesis that Nurses emotional and physical strain caused by excessive workload has significantly effect on feelings and functioning effectively. This could be explained by the fact that Nurses exposure to stressor such as shift work role conflict with colleagues and emotional labour can have significant impact their psychological well being in negatively ways such that their sense of autonomy, beliefs and ability to make decision for themselves in the course of their job is swayed by stressful situations. This finding is in line with the works of Chan, Ko, Goh and Lin (2010) who found that majority (5.4%) of the nurses in Singapore considered occupational stress as high (2.7%) considered it as moderate, and another (2.8%) considered it as low. Role conflict has also been found to have a negative relationship with psychological well being (Lepine & Jackson 2014) in their study of the relationship between stress and autonomy of nurses. According to them, Nurses sense of autonomy is not necessary dependent on whether they are stressed or not. This finding could be possible due to the individual differences that exist in individuals. Some individual strive better under stressful situations and have the ability to make independent decision about themselves and others in stressful situation they also discovered that individuals who are high in

their sense of autonomy and are optimist are likely to utilize more effective and adaptive coping strategies such as humour, seeking emotional support from colleagues and appropriate goal directed behaviour when they experience stress in the course of their work. Also, Lepine (2004) in challenge-hindrance model stated that stressors can be positive or negative. According to him, challenges can improve functioning and performance. Since the Nurses are also faced with positive challenges that will bring better outcome, this may be the reason why their autonomy and overall psychological well being was not affected.

The second dimension of hypothesis one (B) provided result to show that perceived stress did not significantly influence psychological well being (Environmental mastery) of Nurses. This means that when nurses are stressed, there is every possibility that their ability to master their environment will not be affected, stress which comes from their routine activities in the hospitals environment, can be controlled through team work and effective communication with colleagues and doctors hence complex environmental and life situations are handled effectively whether in emergency ward, labour ward or psychiatric unit. This finding corroborates with the findings of Mokanes (2010) and Nguyen-Michel *et al.*, (2006) in their work titled: perceived stress and psychological well being of nurses. According to them perceived stress have no influence on the psychological well being (environmental mastery) of nurses. The study found out that the nature of the hospital environment and the subjective experience of stress decreases the likelihood that events will be perceived as stressful. The result confirms that adaptation of the nurses to environment is linked to improvement in their mastering of the environment. This finding however contradicts the findings of Chandraaiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu and Manoharan (2013) that heavy workload and stress leads to decline in environmental mastery of nurses.

The third dimension of hypothesis one indicated that there is no significant influence of stress on psychological well being (personal growth) with this result hypothesis one (C) was rejected. This means that the various forms of stress passed through by Nurses has no strength to affect or influence the desire for them to engage in activities that improve their personal growth and development, academically, intellectually, socially, economically and otherwise. This study corroborates with the study conducted by Grunter (2004) long and protracted stress make some individuals to develop resilience, coping skills, determination, willingness and desire to engage in activities that will improve them physically, socially, intellectually and psychologically. He added that Nurses who are so stressed in the course of doing their job still have the needed strength and time to engage in intellectual and other activities which will help them to develop their potential thereby enhancing their personal growths and psychological well being.

The fourth dimension of hypothesis one indicated that there is no significant influence of stress on psychological well being (positive relations with others). With this result, hypothesis one (D) was not accepted. This indicates that stress experienced by Nurses can in no way influence the Nurses positive relationship with others. This could be due to the fact that positive relationship and communication with fellow nurses, doctors and even patients is a viable social support and coping strategy that helps to improve psychological well being of Nurses. Positive relationship and communication of nurses keeps them going and help them build a network of team interaction and prevent them from frustration and idleness which are against the ethics of the nursing profession. This is why stress does not seem to be strong enough a factor that is capable of influencing them.

The fifth dimension of hypothesis one shows that there was no significant influence of stress on psychological well being (purpose in life). With this result, hypothesis one (E) was

rejected. This finding indicates that stress had no ability to influence or affect purpose in life and goals that nurses could be due to the fact that most nurses may tend to use stress they go through as a challenge to booster their goals in aim in life. Most of them due to challenge from stress are energized to pursue their goals and purpose in life are attending online courses in nursing so as to build their capacity psychologically, emotionally, socially and intellectually, making it hard for their purpose in life to be influenced. This could also be due to the fact that at the entry level Nurses are given orientation about the tedious and stressful nature of the profession. Hence, most of them might have prepared their minds to adapt and face the numerous task ahead. This view is supported by; Selye, 1956 who explored the “fight or flight” reaction through the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). The GAS has three stages; alarm resistance and exhaustion. During the alarm phase, a person uses current resources to face the threat, the resistance the person actively copes with the stressful event. In exhaustion phase, the individual depletes the resources to cope with the stressor (Selye, 1956).

The sixth dimension of hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant influence of stress on psychological well being (self-acceptance). Based on this finding hypothesis one (f) was rejected. This means that stress had no ability to affect self-acceptance of Nurses, self acceptance as we know is the most recurring aspect of psychological well being which entails accepting the past and the present as well as maintaining direction for the future, taking yourself for who you are and taking responsibilities for your action and inaction. There are definitely certain aspects of the lives of Nurses that stress cannot change or influence and accepting one’s self for who he or she is one of them. A possible reason for this finding could be due to the fact that nurses self acceptance is an integral aspect of mental health and an element of optimal functioning. Also Nurses who are high in self acceptance are high in self esteem and less stress as such

their self acceptance (psychological well being) is enhanced.

The second hypothesis stated that emotional intelligence will significantly influence psychological well being (Autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relations with others, personal growth, and self-acceptance) of nurses in public hospitals in Benue State. A test of the variable on overall and all different dimensions of psychological well being shows that there was no significant influence of emotional intelligence on psychological well being of nurses therefore the hypothesis two was rejected for all the dimensions of psychological well being. This means that emotional intelligence does not influence or affect nurses feeling good and functioning effectively. It further implies that nurses emotional intelligence has no significant influence on their psychological well being. This could be possible of nurses working in public hospitals in Benue State owing to the fact that, at the entry point of Nurses are given orientation of the WHO code of ethics for patients Nursing care as well as the expectation of the nursing profession. Hence most of them have been given orientation on emotional labour an integral aspect of the nursing work that entails management of emotions and emotional expression a possible reason for this finding. This view is supported by McQueen (2004) who explained that emotional labour has an influenced over how emotions are expressed and managed leading to a higher quality care and psychological wellbeing. In contrast to his study psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Moulou and Niakas (2012) in their study found examined emotional intelligence and psychological well being of nurses in Greece and found that emotional intelligence significantly and positively influence psychological well being.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the influence of perceived stress and emotional intelligence on psychological well being of nurses in public

hospitals in Benue State. The result of study concluded that perceived stress significantly and negatively influence psychological well being of nurses in public hospitals in Benue State. Independently, only autonomy dimension was significant. However, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance were not significantly influenced by perceived stress. The findings of this study also concluded that emotional intelligence did not significantly influence the overall and all dimensions of psychological well being of nurses in public hospital in Benue State.

1. Integration of Stress and Emotional Intelligence into Nursing Curriculum:

Nursing training institutions, including Schools of Nursing, Midwifery, and Universities, should incorporate courses on stress management and emotional intelligence into their curricula. This initiative would enhance nurses' psychological resilience, equipping them with the necessary skills to navigate workplace challenges effectively and maintain their well-being.

2. Provision of Clinical Psychological and Family Physician Services for Nurses:

The government should employ clinical psychologists in all public hospitals to periodically assess, diagnose, and treat nurses experiencing psychological distress. Additionally, family physicians should play a critical role in monitoring the overall health and well-being of nurses by providing primary healthcare support, preventive care, and early intervention for stress-related health concerns. Standardized psychological interventions—such as psycho-education programs, progressive muscle relaxation techniques, and cognitive-based approaches—should be utilized to mitigate the adverse effects of stress.

3. Collaboration with NGOs for Continuous Professional Development:

Government agencies should partner with non-governmental organizations to establish annual training and retraining programs for nurses. These programs should extend beyond stress management and emotional intelligence to cover other psychological and health-related factors affecting their well-being, thereby enhancing their overall effectiveness in patient care.

4. Training in Social and Occupational Norms:

Nurses should receive specialized training in social and occupational ethics to foster qualities such as courtesy, empathy, compassion, environmental mastery, and positive interpersonal relations. Family physicians, in collaboration with medical sociologists and psychologists, can contribute to these training programs by providing insights on how nurses can maintain both their physical and mental well-being while serving patients. Such training would significantly contribute to nurses' psychological well-being and professional effectiveness.

5. Encouragement of Further Research on Psychological and Sociological well-being:

Research initiatives on the psychological well being of nurses in public hospitals should be encouraged. Future studies should aim to identify long-term solutions for the mental health challenges faced by nurses in Benue State and Nigeria at large, providing evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

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DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE OLIGARCHY IN NIGERIA'S PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The monopoly of decision making process by top administrators and the belief that training of employees on the job should be entirely concerned of educational institutions is to the disadvantages of subordinate employees in an institution (organization). Through secondary method of data sourcing, the study appraised efficacy of delegation of authority as a tool for training employees and as antidote to administrative oligarchy in organization. The study revealed that If authority is consciously delegated by top administrators, delegation of authority is efficacious in creation of readiness of subordinate employees to take responsibilities, build confidence, uses of discretion, reduces redundancy, kills lack of interest on the job and increase market value of subordinate employees. Delegation of authority among others widely creates in subordinate employees the high degree of imagination and creativity in solving organizational problems as benefit to organization. The study also uncovered that the delegation of authority which means to act on behalf of superior or top administrator(s) is an antidote to administrative oligarchy in public institutions (organizations). Thus, the study recommends the utility of delegation of authority by top administrator or superior in organization due to its benefits to both subordinate employees and the organization.

Keywords: Delegation, authority, training, employees, oligarchy

Introduction

Organization (/institution) particularly public service oriented organization has structures occupied by its employees performing different functions/jobs/tasks under the supervision of leadership. In this structure hierarchy exists in which some employees highly placed as managerial/administrative senior employees while others as subordinate employees, which leads to superior and subordinate categorization. These two categories of employees, the superior are more experienced due to their knowledge and wealth of experience over time on the job. The subordinate employees whom are less experienced on the job might grow on job due to years of service to higher position and if there is no training particularly on the job he or she might be incapacitated to perform effectively and efficiently because most sensitive decisions of the organization are taken by the superior employees at the top managerial/administrative level(s).

The attitude of sensitive decisions taken by superior employees at the top managerial/administrative level create oligarchic structure in an organization, a situation which suffocate the participatory principle that supposed to have encouraged the subordinate employees involvement in decision making process due to their relevance. This is the reason Obi and Nwanegbo (2006) asserted that as organization grows and administrative duties proliferate, the duties become increasingly incomprehensible to those categories of employees without specialist knowledge and training. Thus, they further noted that in the aforesaid situation, decisions are increasingly taken by executive committee (top administrative employees) within the organization/bureaucracy rather than assemblies of subordinate employees. Some

superior employees at administrative level enjoy and wish to monopolize the decision making process, so, they wish not to encourage the subordinate employees to embark on training while many believed that employees training or retraining could be more effectively done only through educational institutions of a state. Therefore, downplay of efficacy of delegation of authority as a tool on the job training of subordinate employees for present and future task jobs within an organization.

Delegation of authority as a tool for subordinate employees training in organization is an organization informal training of its subordinate employees because it is a form of employee(s) training outside educational institutions by the organization. In December 1970 in his address, the then Nigerian Federal Minister for Labour and Productivity at the 14th Annual General Meeting of the Nigeria Employers Consultative Association, the Minister asserted that the development (training) of human resources cannot be entirely the concern of our nation's educational institutions (Ezeali and Esiagu, 2009). Therefore, this paper sourced secondary data to investigate the efficacy of delegation of authority as tool for training employees as well as an antidote to oligarchic structure in organization.

Conceptual Exposition

Delegation of Authority

Delegation of authority refers to transfer of responsibility to semi-autonomous organization by top administrative/managerial level to take decisions on specific functions and services. Delegation as its concerns authority, Ahmed Abdel-Hamid sees delegation as the act or procedure of investing in another person or group of people with authority to act on one's behalf (Ibodje, 1999). Authority in an organization as noted by Oloya (2018) is the right given to a manager to achieve objectives of an organization through others (employees).

Therefore, delegation of authority is the decentralized administrative responsibility given to person or group of persons in organization to make decisions on specific areas of functions and services which they are mandated to perform. Delegation of authority requires an administrator or manager to entrust part(s) of his duty/functions to subordinate employee for the purpose of training the employee(s) on the job and for future task(s). Importantly, when authority is delegated by superior administrator to subordinate employees, the superior expects the subordinate employees' accountability. Notably, delegation of authority requires sufficient authority with some measure of discretion to perform the delegated functions/duties.

An Administrator/Manager and Delegation of Authority in Organization

Organization, be it public or private assuming bureaucratic organization is a well defined work activities with managerial/ administrative responsibility, authority and accountability. Consequently, organization which is usually characterized by structure, hierarchy and administrative responsibilities, and if assigned responsibility of a superior or senior employee is given to subordinate employee by the senior to perform is called delegation of authority. It is this assignment of authority and responsibility that is called "delegation of authority" (Nweke, 2012). Nweke further asserted that the core feature/principle of a formal organization is the acknowledgement that central source of power and authority resides at the apex, therein degrees of power and authority are delegated and accountable.

In considering what and what an administrator/manager should considered and imbibed while exercising delegation of authority, Juneja (n.d) identified the following elements; Authority, Responsibility and Accountability

Authority- This is the right of someone to give commands, orders and gets things done.

Authority in organization context is the power and right of a person to use and allocate resources efficiently, to take decisions and to give orders so as to achieve the original objectives of an organization. Authority always flows from the top managerial/administrative level to the bottom because the greatest authority is at the top level. Thus the top-bottom flows authority explains how a superior gets work done from his subordinate by unambiguously explaining what is expected of him and how he should go about it. Hence, while delegating, the authority must be well defined in scope, accompanied with equal responsibility and should not be mis-utilized.

Responsibility- This is a state of being responsible. Responsibility is the factor or obligation of individual to do his duties in the best of his ability as based on the directions of superior. It gives effectiveness to authority. It is the duty of a person to accomplish the task assign to him. Responsibility with inadequate authority leads to discontent and dissatisfaction among the persons. Responsibility flows from bottom to the top and the middle and lower managerial levels holds more responsibility.

Accountability- This referred to explanations for any variance in the actual performance from the expectations set, which cannot be delegated. For instance, if 'A' is given a task with adequate authority, and 'A' delegates this task to 'B' and asks him to ensure that the task is done well, the responsibility rest with 'B' but accountability still rest with 'A'. In this regard, the top level management is most accountable. Being accountable connotes being innovative as the person will think beyond his scope of job, so accountable means being answerable for the end result, which arises from responsibility.

Training - Training is an act of acquiring skill(s) that one needed to do a work/job/task. An establishment or organization be it public or private organizes training programmes for

their employees. The core aim of employees training by organization is to achieve its purpose by adding value to the organization key employees (Obikeze and Obi, 2022). Training is meant to close existing gap of knowledge of employee in organization. Hence, Nwokike (2006) opined that training is a process of using guided experience to change employee(s) behaviour/attitude that calls for change (training) is the un-skills and incompetence displayed on the job by employee(s). Training as an instrument of training employees meant to assist employees grows and fully competent to perform the present organizational tasks and its futuristic needs of such employee(s) on similar jobs within the organization. So, Cole (1993) sees any learning activity meant for acquisition of specific knowledge and skills for the purposes of an occupation or task. Emphatically, training is a conscious attempt by the management of organization to improve skills, experience, capabilities and talent of organization's employees so that they are prepared to occupy future and higher position (Ezeali and Esiagu, 2009). The Ezeali and Esiagu's view of training tandem with the purpose of delegation of authority as the decentralized administrative responsibility which also serves training to enable subordinate employees in an organization to make decisions on specific areas of functions and services which they are also mandated to perform. Thus, both training and delegation of authority are acts that develop and improve skills needed for performance. This is because training and delegation of authority aimed at training someone's into competency for the improvement of his/her performance. Consequently, there are conditions for successful delegation of authority as a training tool which top administrators/superior should adhere to.

Employee/Organization

Employee is a hired person who is paid to work for organization or individual. Employee is a person engages by individual or group of

persons to perform or does work to earn money because he or she wishes to satisfy some personal needs. Organization comprises of departments or units with roles/functions which must be performed by employees to achieve the organization goals. Organization is a social unit involves arrangement of people, materials and money to promote interaction of two or more people for the organizational goals attainment (Ezeali and Esiagu, 2009). Organization houses employees and materials for utility towards achievement of its goals. Orluwene (2007) posits that organization is a continuing system of coordinated human activities using, transferring and bringing together a specific set of human and material as well as natural resources into a unique problem solving whole, whose functions through the interaction with other system of human activities and resources in its particular environment to satisfy a particular human needs. Thus, organization is an established pattern of relationship among the components or parts towards attainment of organizational objectives (Akpotor, 2010). The pattern of relationship of Akpotor view about organization is tandem with Nweke (2012) assertion that organization is the coordination of human activities alongside capital and natural resources geared towards meeting human needs.

Theoretical Framework

The goal-setting theory was advanced by Edwin Lock in 1960 is adopted in this study. This theory is seen as theory of motivation, which essentially links goal-setting to task performance in organization. Those specific and challenging goals with right feedback contribute to higher and better task performance because clear, specific and difficult goals are greater motivating factors than easy, general and vague goals (Juneja n.d). Employee will only know what he/she needs or requires in performing a task after a goal has been set. Therefore, the practice of this theory gives employee self-confidence

and believes that he has the potential of performing, and be committed to the set goal.

This theory is suitable to explain adoption of delegation of authority in training employees in organization. The theory exposes administrators to the view or believes that employees perform better if they have been set clear specific and difficult goals which become a major driving force propelling the employees to greater achievement. Training is meant to assist employee to grow and wholly competent to function/perform a task while delegation of authority requires administrators to entrust part of his duty to subordinate employees(s) for the purpose of training the employees(s) on the job/task. Therefore, when top administrators delegate responsibility to subordinate employees, the authority to make decisions towards achieving such delegated responsibility is also given. So, delegated authority which is the right to act on behalf of the top administrators serves as training and motivator for the subordinate to set goal(s) he/ wishes to achieve. The subordinate would not be satisfied until he/she accomplished the set goal(s).

Under delegation of authority, subordinate set goal for himself to be achieved, which become major driving forces that will propel the subordinate to greater achievement? In decision making process, delegation of authority allows utility of discretion by subordinate employees, which serve as joint effort by the top administrators/managers and their subordinates. This is why Obikeze and Obi (2004) opined that subordinate should be engaged in goal setting so that they can accept the goals as their own and be committed to its achievement.

Conditions for Successful Delegation of Authority in Organization

Delegation is an integral part of process of decentralization, which means to transfer task or duty to be carry out by other persons, or group with authority to make decision relating to the expected performance. Therefore,

Ibodje (1999) asserts that the following points should be noted about delegation of authority:

Subordinate Acceptance: Top administrator or superior should ensure that the concerned subordinate accepts and understands what is involved in the duty.

Specification of limits and Standard: The control limits and desired standards should be specified and the subordinate allowed to doing the job or performing the duty.

Periodic Check: There must be periodic check and the superiors should endeavour to listen to the idea of the subordinate.

Trust: There should be a measure of trust when delegating duty to the subordinate.

Impacts of Delegation of Authority as Training Tool on Subordinate Employees

1. Readiness to take Responsibilities.

Trained employees through delegation of authority are more prepared to handle at hand responsibilities and other similar future responsibilities. Thus, delegation of authority by administrator/manager prepared standby crops of subordinate employees whom are ready to take over higher administrative tasks when the need arises.

2. Technical Knowledge Received.

Delegation of authority is a top administrative strategy which aids in distributing knowledge of administrative know-how in an organization. So, delegation of authority that is successfully done enable subordinate employee(s) to receives technical knowledge to perform task that required technical know-how.

3. Creation of Subordinate Employees

Importance: If administrator delegates authority to subordinate, it

demonstrates the relevance or importance of such employee(s) to the organization, which is capable of spurring him/her to be more effective and productive. In organization, delegation of authority creates opportunity for recognition, inspires and enhanced the subordinate status, and offers them a spirit of accomplishment. Delegation of authority kills lack of interest in employee on the job.

4. Utility of Discretion by Subordinate

Employees: It empowers subordinate employees to use his/her discretion while performing their duties/functions because some measure of freedom has been given by the delegator which leads to effective, efficient and increase in productivity. This is because discretion spurs the subordinate employees to exploit the areas which ordinarily absence of delegation of authority could have been an obstacle.

5. Reduces Employees Redundancy:

It is a call to work harder, so, it prevents subordinate employees from becoming redundant but inspired with the spirit of tasks accomplishment.

6. Increases Confidence of Subordinate

Employees: Delegation of authority is a training of subordinate employee(s) under the supervision and monitoring of superior. Therefore, adequate training increases the confidence of subordinate employee(s) to handle assigned responsibilities since he/she has practically trained on the job.

7. Identification of Problem by

Subordinate Employees: The said authority offers subordinate employees some measure of freedom or discretion which enables them to identify and take decisions on how to solve such identify problems.

8. Kills Lack of Interest on the Job:

It serves as immunity against negative

attitude, kills excessive complaints and lack of interest in the job by subordinate employees. Thus, subordinate employees avoid high rate of absenteeism.

9. **Increases Market Value of Subordinate Employees:** Delegation of authority increases the employees' market value after training on particular job because the acquired knowledge may be required by other organizations, calling for the services of such employee(s) on part-time basis, hence increases his/her earning power.
10. **Enhances Job Security of Subordinate Employee(s):** Being training, delegation of authority provides subordinate employee the necessary and useful skills needed by the organization which enhances such employees' job security.

Delegation of Authority as an Antidote to Administrative Oligarchy in Organization

Many top administrators/managers monopolize decision making process of organization in the pretext that the subordinates are not controllable. Ibodje (1999) expresses the fear of some top level administrators. He noted that if subordinates can be controlled easily, their superiors will be more likely to delegate authority to them without be afraid that such authority would be abused. However, any superior who fails to delegate task and feels capable to handle every task his/her administrative effort will be counterproductive.

In attempt to emphasize the essentiality of delegation in administration, Adebayo (2000) asserts the essential quality necessary in an administrator is the ability to delegate work to his subordinates in order not to create a bottleneck which cause endless delays and by extension ruins his own health. He further noted that it is a mark of poor administration for a top administrator to seek to handle all the

essential assignments in the department by himself.

The administrative oligarchy creates unnecessary bottleneck which leads to endless delays in accomplishing organization goals which delegation of authority/work/task targeted at to eliminate to increase level of commitment and effectiveness of employee(s) in accomplishment of present and future tasks.

Administrative Oligarchy

Administration means accomplishment of specific goals through organizing, directing and coordinating of both human and material resources (Adebayo, 2000; Mukoro, 2000; Okpo, 2000; Sokoh and Ojo, 2015; Simon, Smithburg and Thomson, 1950). Oligarchy is regarded as system of government handle by minority (Ikelegbe, 2005). Thus, oligarchy is an administrative system handle by a few seen as the best. Therefore, administrative oligarchy is an administrative /managerial structure designed by top level administrators to solely make sensitive decisions towards achievement of organizational goals. In other word, When top administrator(s) /manager(s) in organization deliberately downplay delegation of authority to retain superiority and relevance at the detriment of inspiring subordinate employees that wish to learn from the wealth of experience of their boss, administrative oligarchy is created.

Administrative oligarchy is a created decision-making bottleneck enjoys by top administrators/managers but slows down business progress of the organization. An administrator(s) who undermined the usefulness of delegated authority would not have time to sit back, reflect and ponder on the goals being pursued by the organization. Therefore, delegation of authority is an antidote to administrative oligarchy in an organization, which indicators are;

- Quick decisions and action taking
- Encouragement of use of subordinates initiatives
- Commitment to goals and objectives of the organization by subordinates

- Repose of confidence in subordinates by top administrator(s)
- Fast communication for the enablement of speeding up of business interactions and implementation of agreed actions.
- Unprecedented increase productivity.

Delegation of authority is an antidote to administrative oligarchy because it is against monopolization of decision-making process in organization. This is because delegation of authority is an advocate and decentralization of authority to enable receiver(s) of delegated authority to act or perform duty/task or function on someone's behalf.

Benefits of Delegation of Authority to Organization

The following are benefits of application of delegation of authority as a tool in training subordinate employees to organization

- It encourages the subordinate employees in an organization to individually contribute their own initiatives and ideas rather than solely relying on tyrannical will of their boss.
- It widely creates in among subordinate employees the capacity of exercise a relative high degree of imagination and creativity in solving organizational problems.
- It molds subordinate employees' attitude which leads to better cooperation and greater loyalty to the organization
- Delegation of authority reduces organizational top level executive the volumes of business activities that are already overloaded with work to concentrate on more critical administrative matters.
- Increases both the quality and quantity of productivity because knowledge acquired by employee prepares him/her to accept responsibility and committed towards attainment of organizational goals.

Delegation of authority is seen as training tool. It is an act of developing certain skills, knowledge and attitude in subordinate employees.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Delegation of authority and training can be regarded as synonymous if top level administrators or superior consciously adhere to the identified conditions for successful delegation of authority as a training tool stated in the study. The two concepts above are synonymous because they are process of preparing someone to be able to perform a duty, task or function. Hence, delegation of authority is a training tool by top level administrators or superiors aimed at preparing employees into competency for the improvement of their performance. Consequently, the practice of delegation of authority by top level administrators/ superiors is an antidote to administrative oligarchy in organization because it is against monopoly of decision-making process in organization, considering delegation of authority as decentralization of authority with the aim of investing in another person(s) to be able to act on one's behalf. Thus, the paper recommends the use of delegation of authority for its benefits to the subordinate employees and the organization.

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GOVERNANCE, NEOLIBERAL POLICIES AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study critically examines governance, neoliberal policies and poverty reduction in Nigeria, with a focus on their role in deepening economic disparities and triggering social unrest. Since the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the 1980s, neoliberal reforms in Nigeria have prioritized market liberalization, privatization, and deregulation in an effort to address economic stagnation and fiscal crises. The objectives of the study are to assess the impact of neoliberal policies on poverty and socioeconomic inequality in Nigeria and analyse the manifestations of poverty-induced resentment in Nigeria. The study methodologically structured in qualitative method, it drew its data from secondary sources; textbooks, journals, internet etc. Relative Deprivation Theory was used as the theoretical underpinning of the study. The study revealed that while these policies contributed to short-term macroeconomic stabilization, they exacerbated income inequality, reduced public investment in critical sectors like healthcare and education, and increased the vulnerability of marginalized populations. The consequences of these policies are evident in the persistent high poverty rates, regional disparities, and widespread public resentment, which have manifested in protests, social unrest, and political instability. This work also revealed that poverty-induced resentment has spurred public discontent, as seen in major protests such as the *Occupy Nigeria* movement (2012) and the *End SARS* protests (2020), End Bad Governance protests, highlighting the socio-political implications of neoliberal reforms. The recommended among others the need for more inclusive economic policies and social protection measures to mitigate the adverse effects of neoliberalism, reduce socio-economic inequality, and foster political stability in Nigeria.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, poverty, socio-economic inequality, social unrest, youth resentment

Introduction

Globally, neoliberalism has emerged as the dominant economic framework since the late 20th century, emphasizing policies such as market liberalization, privatization, deregulation, and reduced state intervention. While these reforms have been credited with fostering economic growth and globalization, their implications for equity and poverty alleviation have been contentious. In many cases, neoliberalism has widened inequality, weakened public institutions, and deepened socioeconomic vulnerabilities, especially in

developing countries (UNDP, 2023; Harvey, 2022).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the adoption of neoliberal reforms under Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the 1980s, driven by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, was a response to fiscal crises in many nations. However, these reforms often resulted in diminished public investments in critical sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure. While countries like Ghana experienced modest economic growth, the broader regional picture highlighted growing income inequality,

reduced access to basic services, and heightened public resentment toward such policies (Akinyemi & Adesina, 2022). In Nigeria, neoliberal policies gained traction with the adoption of SAPs in 1986 during the Babangida administration. These policies aimed to address the country's mounting external debt and economic stagnation by implementing measures such as currency devaluation, trade liberalization, subsidy removal, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. While the reforms led to short-term macroeconomic stabilization and growth in selected sectors such as telecommunications and banking, they also inflicted severe socio-economic costs on the majority of Nigerians (Adeyemi, 2023).

The devaluation of the naira led to inflation, making basic goods and services unaffordable for many Nigerians. The removal of subsidies on essential items such as petroleum products exacerbated the cost of living crisis, disproportionately affecting low-income households. Furthermore, the privatization of state-owned enterprises often lacked transparency and accountability, leading to widespread corruption and the enrichment of a select few while exacerbating income inequality (Olaleye, 2022). Public spending cuts in sectors like education and healthcare under neoliberal frameworks further eroded access to essential services, resulting in lower human development outcomes. As of 2023, over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with unemployment and underemployment rates remaining alarmingly high (World Bank, 2023). These structural challenges have fueled widespread resentment, particularly among the youth and marginalized groups, leading to protests such as the 2012 Occupy Nigeria movement against fuel subsidy removal and recurrent labor strikes.

The intersection of poverty and neoliberalism in Nigeria has also exacerbated regional disparities, with northern Nigeria experiencing higher levels of poverty and unemployment than the south. This inequality

has fueled socio-political unrest and heightened tensions between different ethno-religious groups, complicating the nation's development trajectory (Eze & Usman, 2023).

This study examined the impact of neoliberal policies on poverty and socioeconomic inequality in Nigeria, assessing their role in deepening economic disparities and social unrest. Additionally, it analysed how poverty-induced resentment manifests in public discontent, protests, and political instability within the Nigerian context.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concept of Liberalism

Liberalism, as a political and economic philosophy, has been defined and interpreted by various scholars over time. Locke (1689), often regarded as the father of liberalism, conceptualized it as a system centered on natural rights, emphasizing life, liberty, and property, which governments are meant to protect through a social contract. Smith (1776) extended liberal thought into economics, advocating for free markets and minimal state intervention, arguing that the "invisible hand" of the market naturally promotes prosperity. Mill (1859) refined the idea of liberalism by focusing on the protection of individual liberties from both state oppression and societal control, particularly emphasizing free speech and democracy. Berlin (1958) introduced the distinction between negative liberty freedom from external constraints and positive liberty, which relates to an individual's capacity for self-realization, warning against excessive state control in the name of the latter. In a more justice-oriented approach, Rawls (1971) redefined liberalism in terms of fairness, proposing that inequalities should only exist if they benefit the least advantaged in society. Meanwhile, Hayek (1944) and Friedman (1962) took a neoliberal stance, emphasizing limited government and free markets as fundamental to individual freedom, with Hayek cautioning against excessive government intervention, which he believed

could lead to tyranny. Collectively, these scholars have shaped liberalism into a dynamic and evolving concept that continues to influence political and economic thought today.

Neoliberal Policy

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2021) holds that neoliberalism is a philosophical view that a society's political and economic institutions should be robustly liberal and capitalist oriented supplemented by a constitutionally limited democracy and a modest welfare state. This definition implies that neoliberal policies are supposedly market-oriented reform policies with an emphasis on change in strategies from a state-led to a market-driven economy. In line with this, Friedman (1962) emphasizes that neo-liberal policies have the political power to manage the overall economic. For him, human beings are, by nature social and their social nature necessitates a specific manner of arranging society which sets a priority on people being free to choose. Neoliberal doctrine is also conceived as a subset of the so-called "Washington consensus", a set of specific policy goals designed by the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) for developing Latin America and African countries.

On his part, Caffentzis (2002) defines neoliberal policies as those that apply the basic assumptions of neoliberal theory to the social realm and typical examples include such policies as the user-fees clauses of World Bank Structural Adjustment ProgrammeS (SAPS) that require governments of implementing countries to charge fees for the use of health care, education and water "services" to the citizenry. They also include familiar acronyms like TRIPS (Trade Relation Intellectual Property Rights) and GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) for they put the products of mental activities and the human behaviours that could be qualified as "services" into the framework of commodities and require that they be offered on a market open to all (with

the emphasis on all) bidders. So literally every spoken sentence could be copyrighted and every caress could be bid for Neoliberal policies are, therefore, commonly associated with unregulated or free trade, globalization, privatization, commercialization and change in government expenditure to promote private sector dominance in the economy, nationally and internationally.

This paper defines neoliberal policy as a series of economic and political changes enacted in Nigeria that emphasise market liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation, and diminished government involvement in economic affairs. These policies are characterized by the removal of subsidies, trade liberalization, and austerity measures, often influenced by global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Within the context of this study, neoliberal policies are examined in relation to their impact on economic inequality, social welfare reduction, and the emergence of poverty-induced resentment among affected populations in Nigeria.

Concept of Poverty

The perception of what institute poverty has unfolded over time and varies amongst nations in size and scope. Therefore, universally accepted definitions have become very difficult to emerge (Akwara, Akwara, Enwuchola, Adekunle & Udaw, 2013). However, there are universally accepted indexes of what constitutes poverty. These indicators are group into three broad categories as contained in the universally accepted definition to mean absolute, relative and material poverty. Absolute poverty means the inability of a person or group to provide the material needs for physical subsistence and protection of human dignities such as food, shelter, clothing, potable water, healthcare services, basic education, transportation, and gainful employment. Relative poverty means the inability of certain sections of the society to satisfy their basic needs as well as inadequate income to

enhance active participation in societal activities to the extent that it limits the actualization of one's potentials. Material poverty is the absence of ownership control of physical assets such as land and other resources that land produce or the subsists on land such as animals and birds (UNDP, 1996 & 2010; UN, 1999). In a nutshell, poverty is a lack of access to empowerment, income and healthcare services. According to Nwagwu (2014:22), "to be poor is to be powerless. It also means being despised and looked down upon. It means being treated unfairly. Most significantly, it means being lacking things that translate into good, physical and mental health. Karl Marx noted that the key to the class structure is economics. The extent of an individual's wealth is the determining factor for success in a number of crucial areas, including the chance to live and the chance to obtain possessions and education that are highly valued in society". Poverty, therefore, is an abject state of being in which an individual is incapable of utilizing resources around him to improve himself economically, socially, politically or otherwise. In the view of Jolaosho (1996), poverty means a man's inability to afford decent food, shelter, clothing and recreations which are the basic necessities of life without these basic necessities, life is miserable and short. According to Adefolalu (1992), poverty is caused by what may be called 'exogenous forces' or forces outside an individual's control such as overpopulation, high standard of living, high cost of living, inadequate education, unemployment and environmental degradation, and is also caused by forces that operate within the victims as exemplified by individual responsibility and welfare dependency, and are thus self-created. Poverty can also arise from changes in average income or changes in the distribution of income when there is cut in salary, loss of job or source of living or even retirement from well-paid service, then poverty is obvious (Garga, 2015). In the view of Oduwole (2015), the causes of poverty in Nigeria include environment degradation, inappropriate

macroeconomics policies of Nigerian governments, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector, low economic growth, a lag in human resource development, large family size, a fall in the real value of safety nets, inappropriate planning and neglect of the private sector, limited growth of investment and technological innovation, retrenchment of workers and increase of ghost workers in payroll of many states and high level of corruption in the country. The effects of poverty from the foregoing include severe malnutrition, food insecurity, illness, child and elder abuse, drug dependence, high rate of disease, homelessness, depression, high rate of mortality, eviction, high rate of crime and violence among others.

Concept of Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction has been conceptualized differently by scholars and institutions, reflecting the multidimensional nature of poverty itself. The **World Bank (2000)** views poverty reduction as a combination of income growth, improved access to basic services, and the empowerment of poor populations in decision-making processes. Similarly, the **United Nations Development Programme (1997)** emphasizes expanding the capabilities of the poor, suggesting that poverty is not just economic but also about social and political exclusion. Sen (1999) provides a more philosophical dimension by defining poverty as the deprivation of basic capabilities, thus arguing that poverty reduction must focus on removing barriers such as lack of education, healthcare, and political participation. Sachs (2005), adopting a more structural and developmental lens, frames poverty reduction as breaking the "poverty trap" through investment in health, education, and infrastructure, enabling integration into the global economy. Meanwhile, **Todaro and Smith (2015)** highlight inclusive growth and human capital development as central to lifting individuals out of poverty. Taking a more political stance, Hulme (2010) stresses that

poverty reduction is not merely technical but a transformative process that requires institutional restructuring and resource redistribution to address the root causes of inequality. Collectively, these definitions reveal that effective poverty reduction goes beyond economic growth; it must encompass empowerment, social justice, and inclusive development strategies tailored to the needs of vulnerable populations. Poverty reduction, within the context of this study, refers to the efforts by the state to alleviate deprivation and improve living standards through inclusive governance and equitable policies. It emphasizes addressing the negative impacts of neoliberal reforms by ensuring access to basic services, promoting economic empowerment, and protecting vulnerable populations through people-centered and accountable development strategies.

Neo-liberal perspective of development

Neoliberalism is understood as a political economic theory and practice that advocate that the wellbeing of society should be innovative by "liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework, characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (Harvey, 2005). Proceeding from this conception, the role of the state is essentially to create and preserve institutional arrangements appropriate to or compatible with neo-liberal ideas, values and practices. First, the state has to guarantee, for instance, the equality and integrity of money. Secondly, it must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to serve private property rights and to guarantee by force, if need be, the proper functioning of the economy (Thorsei and Lie in Kutor, 2014).

The emergence of neoliberalism as a principal ideological dogma with its primary assumptions was, essentially, to accelerate trade and development; competition and profits, full employment and prosperity; production transparency and reduce the gap

between the poor and the rich (Lee, 2007). Neoliberalism, therefore, rests on economic liberation, free trade, and open markets, and enhancing the role of the private sector in society with the minimal intervention of the state in the economy.

Theoretical Framework

Whenever a discourse on neoliberal policies and poverty-induced resentment in Nigeria is launched, various theories, models, and frameworks are developed to provide analytical direction. This study is grounded in the Relative Deprivation Theory, which serves as its fundamental theoretical underpinning. The theory explains how individuals or groups experience discontent when they perceive a gap between their expected and actual socioeconomic conditions, often leading to frustration, resentment, and potential social or political unrest. In this study, *Relative Deprivation Theory* is applied to explain how neoliberal economic policies in Nigeria have contributed to poverty-induced resentment among the citizenry. Gurr (1970), in his seminal work *Why Men Rebel*, describes relative deprivation as the gap between expected and actual socioeconomic and political opportunities. He argues that when individuals perceive a persistent disparity between what they believe they deserve and what they actually receive, frustration arises, which may escalate into collective discontent and, ultimately, political violence.

In the context of Nigeria, the adoption of neoliberal policies such as privatization, subsidy removal, and deregulation has deepened economic inequality, increased poverty levels, and widened the socio-economic divide. As Gurr (2005: p.20) asserts, "*constituted authority's negligence often results in structural poverty and inequality within countries, which are motivating factors that cause insecurity, such as organized crime, insurgency, and terrorism.*" The economic hardship caused by these policies has fueled resentment against the state, leading to

various forms of social unrest, including protests, insurgency, and armed banditry.

Birrel (1972) reinforces this perspective, stating that group tensions emerge from the discrepancy between the “ought” and the “is” of collective value satisfaction, a situation that often drives conflicts. Similarly, Davies (1962) posits that political violence is triggered by an insupportable gap between what people aspire to and what they actually receive. He states, “*this discrepancy is a frustrating experience that is sufficiently intense and focused to result in either rebellion or revolution*” (Davies 1962: p.5). These insights highlight how economic policies that exacerbate deprivation can instigate large-scale social upheavals.

Adesoji (2012) expands on this argument by asserting that regions suffering from relative deprivation particularly those marginalized in economic and political processes are more likely to engage in violent resistance against the state. He links socio-economic inequality, political marginalization, and lack of access to opportunities to the rise of criminality and insurgency in Nigeria. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgency has been partly attributed to the economic deprivation and lack of opportunities in Northern Nigeria, a situation worsened by neoliberal economic adjustments that have disproportionately affected the poor. Similarly, the militancy in the Niger Delta can be understood as a reaction to the perceived economic exploitation and deprivation of the region despite its vast natural resources. The impact of neoliberal policies in Nigeria has not only widened income disparities but has also fueled social frustration, making marginalized groups more susceptible to radicalization and anti-state activities. Many economically deprived youths find themselves recruited into insurgency, banditry, and other forms of organized crime, sometimes out of desperation rather than ideological commitment. This reinforces the argument that the state’s failure to provide essential social services and equitable economic

opportunities has led to widespread resentment, fostering instability and insecurity. Thus, the *Relative Deprivation Theory* effectively explains how neoliberal economic policies have deepened socio-economic grievances in Nigeria, leading to poverty-induced resentment that manifests in various forms of social and political unrest.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, relying primarily on secondary data sources to explore the impact of governance, neoliberal policies and poverty and poverty reduction in Nigeria. The use of secondary data allows for a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, historical records, reports, and academic publications related to the subject matter. Key secondary sources include academic journals, books, government reports, policy documents, and publications by international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other relevant bodies. The study employs a content analysis approach to systematically review and synthesize the findings from these secondary sources. This methodology ensures a broad understanding of the historical and contemporary impacts of neoliberal policies on Nigerian society, while also providing insights into the socio-political consequences of these economic reforms. The secondary sources used in this study are critically analyzed to draw connections between neoliberal economic strategies and their role in shaping the social, economic, and political landscape of Nigeria.

Impact of Neoliberal Policies on Poverty and Socioeconomic Inequality in Nigeria

The impact of neoliberal policies on poverty and socioeconomic inequality in Nigeria has been profound, with these economic reforms contributing to the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and triggering significant social unrest. Neoliberalism, as a framework characterized

by market liberalization, privatization, deregulation, and reduced state intervention, was introduced to Nigeria through the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in 1986, under the Babangida administration. The central objective of these policies was to stabilize the country's economy, reduce external debt, and promote growth through an open market system. However, the long-term consequences have been markedly detrimental to the majority of Nigerians, particularly the poor and marginalized communities.

One of the primary consequences of neoliberalism in Nigeria has been the deepening of poverty and exacerbation of economic inequalities. The devaluation of the naira, a key component of the SAPs, led to severe inflation, which significantly increased the cost of basic goods and services. For many Nigerians, this resulted in a marked decline in living standards, as incomes failed to keep pace with inflation. While some sectors, particularly telecommunications and banking, saw growth due to privatization and liberalization, the overall economy remained fragile, and the poverty rate continued to rise. According to the World Bank (2023), over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, a direct result of policies that prioritized market forces over social welfare. This has led to a situation where the benefits of economic growth have been unevenly distributed, with the elite enjoying significant wealth while the majority of the population continues to suffer.

The neoliberal approach to privatization also played a pivotal role in exacerbating socioeconomic inequalities. While privatization was intended to increase efficiency in public services, in practice, it often led to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few politically connected individuals, while large segments of the population were left behind. The sale of state-owned enterprises like NEPA (National Electric Power Authority) and NITEL (Nigerian Telecommunications Limited) was not accompanied by transparent processes, and in many cases, these privatized

entities became less efficient, resulting in job losses and a reduction in public access to essential services. As Mustapha and Nasir (2019) argue, the lack of accountability in the privatization process not only eroded public trust but also deepened social inequalities, as resources were redirected away from public welfare into the pockets of a few powerful elites.

Another key aspect of neoliberalism in Nigeria was the reduction in public spending on social services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. The withdrawal of state support in these areas had long-lasting consequences, especially for the poor and rural populations. Education and healthcare systems, already underfunded and poorly managed before the adoption of neoliberal reforms, were further strained by budget cuts. Obi (2019) posits that the lack of funding for public education resulted in the increased cost of schooling, making education less accessible to low-income families. Similarly, the erosion of the healthcare system has led to a situation where many Nigerians can no longer afford essential healthcare services, particularly in rural areas. This decline in public services compounded the challenges of economic inequality, further marginalizing vulnerable groups.

As neoliberal policies deepened economic inequalities, they also fueled social unrest and public discontent. The Occupy Nigeria protests in 2012, which were sparked by the removal of fuel subsidies, are a clear example of how economic hardship, driven by neoliberal reforms, can lead to widespread protests (Adesoji, 2019; Onapajo, 2014). The removal of subsidies on petroleum products caused an immediate surge in the cost of living, disproportionately affecting the poor, who rely heavily on subsidized fuel for transportation and basic goods (Ikelegbe, 2013). Similarly, the End SARS protests of 2020, initially centered around police brutality, eventually expanded into a broader call for economic justice and an end to the political and economic systems that have entrenched inequality (Akinyemi, 2021;

Odunlami & Ojebode, 2022). These movements reflect the growing resentment among Nigerians, particularly the youth, who have become increasingly disillusioned with a political system that seems to prioritize the interests of the wealthy few over the well-being of the majority (Olawale, 2021). In 2024, under President Bola Tinubu's administration, the removal of fuel subsidies led to the End Bad Governance protests, where citizens expressed their dissatisfaction with the economic hardships resulting from the policy change. The demonstrations, which began on August 1, 2024, were met with a heavy-handed response from security forces, resulting in at least 24 deaths and numerous injuries. These protests underscored the populace's frustration with escalating living costs and perceived governmental neglect.

Furthermore, neoliberal policies have exacerbated regional disparities within Nigeria, particularly between the north and the south. The northern regions, which are predominantly agrarian, have been hit hardest by the effects of neoliberal reforms. Subsidy removals and market liberalization have made farming less profitable, leading to greater economic marginalization in these areas. This economic deprivation has contributed to rising migration, resource conflicts, and ethnic tensions, as people from the north struggle to access the same opportunities available in the south. As Yusuf (2022) points out, the neoliberal model has not only failed to address the structural challenges faced by northern Nigeria but has also deepened the economic divide between regions, contributing to political instability and social unrest.

The interplay between poverty, economic inequality, and social unrest in Nigeria underscores the limitations of neoliberalism as a development model in the country. While these policies may have led to economic growth in certain sectors, they have not translated into broad-based prosperity. Instead, neoliberal reforms have exacerbated inequality, weakened public institutions, and left the majority of Nigerians struggling to

meet basic needs. As Adeyemi (2021) suggests, the neoliberal approach to economic development has been deeply flawed, as it has prioritized the interests of international financial institutions and the political elite over the welfare of the Nigerian people.

Manifestations of Poverty-Induced Resentment: An Analysis of Public Discontent, Protests, and Political Instability in Nigeria

Poverty-induced resentment in Nigeria has become a driving force behind widespread public discontent, protests, and political instability. Over the years, the persistent socio-economic challenges faced by a large segment of the population, exacerbated by neoliberal policies, have created a fertile ground for social unrest. As the country grapples with high poverty rates, unemployment, inflation, and inequality, the resulting resentment has manifested in various forms, including protests, calls for political change, and a general distrust of the ruling elites. This discourse explores how poverty-induced resentment in Nigeria has led to the eruption of protests, deepened political instability, and sparked widespread dissatisfaction with the political system.

One of the most visible manifestations of poverty-induced resentment in Nigeria is the occurrence of protests, which have become a regular feature of the country's socio-political landscape. A prominent example is the *Occupy Nigeria* protests of 2012, which were triggered by the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies. This move, which was part of broader neoliberal reforms aimed at addressing Nigeria's fiscal challenges, resulted in a sharp increase in the price of fuel, leading to a surge in the cost of living. For many Nigerians, especially those in low-income households, this policy was seen as an attack on their already strained livelihoods. The protests, which were initially about fuel subsidy removal, soon expanded into broader grievances about corruption, mismanagement, and the failure of the

government to address the needs of the people. The widespread participation in the protests highlighted the deep anger and frustration felt by ordinary Nigerians, particularly those who felt excluded from the benefits of economic growth and development (Ibrahim, 2017).

Similarly, the *End SARS* protests of 2020 were another significant example of how poverty-induced resentment can lead to social unrest in Nigeria. While the protests initially focused on police brutality, they quickly morphed into a broader movement against systemic corruption, economic inequality, and governance failures. The underlying resentment was not just about police violence but about the failure of the government to provide basic services, create jobs, and reduce poverty. Many of the young people who participated in the protests were disillusioned with the political system, which they saw as perpetuating their economic hardships while enriching a small political and economic elite. The *End SARS* movement drew attention to the failure of the state to address the socio-economic grievances of the youth, whose prospects for employment and social mobility had been severely limited by the country's economic policies (Nwachukwu, 2021).

Public discontent in Nigeria has also manifested in the form of political instability, which has been driven, in part, by poverty-induced resentment. As poverty and inequality continue to rise, the political system has become increasingly polarized, with various groups feeling alienated from the government. This division is particularly evident along regional, ethnic, and religious lines, with some groups feeling that they are being left behind by the political elite. In northern Nigeria, for example, where poverty rates are higher compared to the southern regions, there is a growing sense of marginalization and neglect by the central government. The resulting frustration has fueled political instability, with sporadic outbreaks of violence, ethnic clashes, and insurgencies, including the rise of groups like Boko Haram and banditry, which have

become major sources of insecurity in the region. As Akinyemi and Adesina (2022) argue, the economic neglect and political exclusion of northern Nigeria have contributed to the emergence of violent movements, further complicating the country's political landscape.

The persistence of poverty-induced resentment has also led to the erosion of trust in political institutions and the political class in Nigeria. As the country has experienced several democratic transitions since the return to civilian rule in 1999, public confidence in the ability of the government to deliver on its promises has steadily declined. Many Nigerians view the political class as corrupt, self-serving, and disconnected from the realities faced by ordinary citizens. This disillusionment with the political system has created an environment in which political participation is increasingly seen as futile, particularly among the youth. The lack of economic opportunities and the perception that political power is concentrated in the hands of a few elites have led to widespread apathy and disengagement from formal political processes. However, when this apathy gives way to anger, it often results in spontaneous protests or even violent uprisings, as seen in the aforementioned cases (Aderinto, 2020).

The link between poverty and political instability in Nigeria is also reflected in the growing number of protests and strikes organized by labor unions, student groups, and civil society organizations. These protests often focus on issues such as unemployment, the high cost of living, inadequate public services, and corruption. The persistent frustration with the government's inability to address these issues has led to a volatile political environment, where citizens are increasingly willing to take to the streets to demand change. As Olayiwola (2019) notes, the failure of successive Nigerian governments to create an inclusive economic policy has fueled public resentment and undermined the legitimacy of the political system, making it

difficult to sustain peace and stability in the long term.

In addition to protests and political instability, poverty-induced resentment has also had a negative impact on the country's governance, as it has led to the entrenchment of patronage networks and the growth of political clientelism. In an environment where economic opportunities are scarce, political elites often rely on patronage to maintain support and loyalty. This system of clientelism further exacerbates poverty and inequality, as resources are distributed based on political loyalty rather than need or merit. As Adeyemi (2021) points out, this form of governance fosters a sense of resentment among those who feel excluded from the patronage system, leading to further fragmentation of the political landscape.

Poverty-induced resentment in Nigeria has significantly contributed to public discontent, protests, and political instability. The country's persistent socio-economic challenges, compounded by neoliberal policies, have deepened inequality and created a fertile ground for social unrest. As poverty and inequality continue to rise, it is likely that these manifestations of public dissatisfaction will become more frequent and intense.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis of the impact of neoliberal policies on poverty and socio-economic inequality in Nigeria, coupled with the manifestation of poverty-induced resentment, underscores the complex relationship between economic policies, social unrest, and political instability. Neoliberal reforms in Nigeria, while aiming to stabilize the economy and encourage growth, have exacerbated poverty, income inequality, and socio-economic disparities. These policies, such as the removal of subsidies, currency devaluation, and privatization of state-owned enterprises, have deepened economic hardships for the majority of Nigerians, especially those in marginalized communities. The resulting resentment has manifested in

widespread public discontent, protests, and heightened political instability, as seen in movements like Occupy Nigeria (2012) and End SARS (2020), and the bad governance protest, and recently the take it back protest which reflect the frustrations of Nigerians who feel excluded from the benefits of economic growth and governance.

The poverty-induced resentment has not only fueled protests but also contributed to the deterioration of trust in political institutions, further destabilizing the political landscape. The polarization along regional, ethnic, and socio-economic lines has compounded the nation's governance challenges, leading to the rise of violent insurgencies, corruption, and a general sense of disillusionment among the populace. The continued failure of neoliberal policies to address the root causes of poverty and inequality has thus led to persistent social unrest, making it increasingly difficult for Nigeria to achieve long-term political stability. To address the adverse effects of neoliberal policies and the growing poverty-induced resentment in Nigeria, this study recommends two key practical interventions.

- i. **Adoption of Inclusive Economic Policies:** It is crucial for the Nigerian government to move away from exclusive neoliberal frameworks and implement more inclusive economic policies that prioritize poverty reduction and equitable distribution of resources. This involves supporting rural enterprise hubs, reviving technical and vocational education tailored to local needs, subsidizing essential public services, and promoting indigenous cooperative models such as community farming schemes. These localized approaches would ensure equitable access to economic opportunities and foster self-reliance among marginalized populations.
- ii. **Strengthening Social Protection Programs:** To mitigate the impact of

neoliberal policies on the most vulnerable populations, the Nigerian government should invest in robust social protection programs. Rather than relying on generic welfare programs, the government should implement conditional cash transfers, community-monitored food security schemes, and localized health insurance cooperatives. These programs must be guided by accurate, regularly updated digital social registers, with strong community involvement in monitoring to prevent corruption and ensure fairness. By grounding reforms in local realities and participatory governance, these measures can build public trust, reduce inequality, and promote sustainable social cohesion.

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Abstract

Democracy in the Third World countries including Nigeria has not been on steady movement since its adoption. The roles of elites on democratic stagnation or consolidation cannot be overemphasised. Nigeria's democratic experience is significantly shaped by the actions and interests of elites, who often prioritize personal and group benefits over institutional and national development. Using the Elite theoretical framework, the paper examines the challenges posed by elite dominance in Nigeria's democratic political system and explores the prospects for democratic consolidation. While the study adopts descriptive design and relied on secondary data (books, journal articles, conference papers, internet materials etc.) subjected to content validity, before analyzing qualitatively. Some of the study's findings are that, Nigeria's democracy is not consolidating despite periodic elections and that, elitism is the cause of Nigeria's democratic stagnation. The study however recommends massism, meaning emergence and dominance of the masses in Nigeria's democratic system, strong democratic institution, and independent candidates to contest all elections among others.

Keynote: Elitism, Democracy, Democratic Consolidation. Nigeria

Introduction

Elite dominance is a theory which defines society based on power structure according to which the society runs. Smita (2023) insists that society has and can never be equal, as society is formed of different individuals who have different qualities, abilities, and psychology.' According to elite thinkers, every society is divided into two groups, that is, the ruling class and the ruled class (Mosca, 1939). Mosca argued that the elites are the organized minority that rules, and masses are the unorganized majority that is being ruled by the elites. This impression has had significant impacts on the various systems of government adopted by states especially democracy.

Democracy however, has been adopted by many nations and states as the favourite system of government but its consolidation remains a challenge in many developing countries, including Nigeria. The continuous dominance of elites over political and economic institutions raises concerns about the extent to which democracy can be

sustained and institutionalized. Today, even states that do not apply democratic tenets are claiming to be practicing democracy thereby making democratisation or democratic consolidation difficult or problematic. It is against this backdrop that this study examines how elite dominance affects Nigeria's democratic consolidation.

Nigeria's democratic journey has not been a smooth one, Nigeria got independence in 1960 and a republic in 1963 and after three years her democratic foundation was cut-off by military incursion in 1966, 1970, 1983, 1985, 1993 and 1998 until 1999 that Nigeria returned to democratic rule. Since then, her democracy has been characterised by elite's dominance which has rendered democratic institutions weak, rule of law a mirage, mass participation and inclusive government perpetual prayer point of the people. The democracy, apart from a periodic elections which allows the masses to choose one elite from the elite's structures has made Nigeria

one of the democratic countries that does not practice democratic tenets that she preaches thereby suffocating the democracy to democratize. It is on this premise that this study examines elite's dominance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

The Concept of Elitism

Elitism is a political and sociological theory that emphasizes the role of group or individuals, known as elites, in shaping and controlling society. This concept suggests that power and influence are concentrated in the hands of a small group of people who possess superior attributes such as wealth, intelligence, education, or social status. Elitism can be observed in various domains, including politics, economics, academia, religion and culture. Elitism can also be the belief or practice that certain individuals or groups, due to their inherent qualities or achievements, should hold greater influence or control over decision-making processes in society (Higley & Burton, 2006). The elite class is often distinguished by its access to resources, specialized knowledge, or social networks that provide comparative advantages over the general population. According to Pareto (1968), elites are composed of those who excel in their respective fields and rise to positions of power through a process he referred to as the "circulation of elites." This means that while elite groups may change over time, the structure of elite dominance remains intact. C. Wright Mills (1956) further expanded on this idea in his work *The Power Elite*, where he argued that the U.S. is governed by a small group of military, corporate, and political leaders who shape national policies to serve their interests rather than those of the masses. The concept is as factual as figures because in every society including Nigeria there is always individuals or group of individuals mostly minority who rule the vast majority. In the case of Nigeria, they are mostly military, privileged political class, economic moguls, academia, religious and traditional leaders whose actions

and inactions have shaped our democracy and democratisation.

Brief History of Elitism

The philosophical foundation of elitism can be found in one of the oldest systematic works "The Republic", in which Plato talks about dividing the society into three groups, based on its qualitative characteristics: virtue. According to Plato, the Guardian class or the Philosopher king is the only one who is well-trained in the art of leadership and governance and should have absolute authority because philosopher king is competent enough to work in favor of people, instead of self. Popkin & Stroll put it clearly thus; "Plato talks about three classes, the Guardian class is rational and trained in the art of leadership, Warrior class is driven by its spirit to fight and protect people, and Producer class is the one dependent on its appetite, having no spirit or leadership quality, they are governed and protected by guardian and warrior class, (Popkin & Stroll, 2009)." According to Plato, a just society can only be established when the members of society follow their virtue without interfering into other virtue which they do not fall into. The above assertion means that the elites are supposed to be leading while the masses are to be following.

Bolarinwa and Osuji re-presented a society characterized by elitism after the era of Plato's 'Republic' when they argued that; in the middle age, a complex relation between the spiritual (Pope) and secular (Emperor) authorities also reflect upon the existence of elite power structure that ran in close ties. Although, they often clashed to reinforce themselves as higher and absolute authority, yet they function in close connection and controlled state, resources, people, and their psychology (Bolarinwa & Osuji, 2022).

Another evidence of elitism up till the contemporary societies is the pragmatic explanation of the emergence of modern state by Social Contract Theorists. The Contractarians presented the ideas of 'who should rule' and who should be ruled.

Although they have theoretical dissimilarity, yet they had one similarity, that is, they all believed in the need for a man or group of men to lead others. Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, etc. agreed that there should be a special group or individual who should rule. For instance, J.J. Rousseau asserts that sovereignty resides in the general will. Yet to answer, 'who should rule?' he proposes governance models based on population of society. He recommends participatory democracy for small size population, aristocracy for medium size population, and monarchical system for large scale population (Bolarinwa & Osuji, 2022). Up till today, societies including Nigeria are based on the constructions of contractarians and characterized by elitism or elite's dominance.

Elites Recruitment in Nigeria

Political elite recruitment is the way individuals or groups gain power and become part of the elite structure. According to Smita, (2023), political elite recruitment can be seen in three contexts, such as traditional patrimonial society or pre-colonial era; the colonial era; and post-colonial era.

Traditional Patrimonial Society or Pre-Colonial Era

- The process of elite recruitment is well rooted in human history and exists, more or less, in all societies. For instance, people lived communal life in ancient time in history where they lived simple, peaceful, and egalitarian life. However, greediness and other factors ensued and patrimonial society emerged, then the question for future successor came into existence. A patrimonial society is ruled by one ruler (called king or chief), and he exerts his authority over his subject. The king was often seen as divine king or personality who can establish connection between God and masses. Thus, king was supported by tradition and religious belief as Rothman, (2001) agreed. Traditionally, the elder son was usually the successor of the king, he was nominated or selected amongst the direct hereditary son of the king. Usually, a male child assumed throne after the demise of

Patrimonial head. Thus elite recruitment based on Hereditary System was established in majority of kingdoms, as an effective way to keep Power Elites under Royal hierarchy and to forestall the issue related to elite recruitment crisis. However, the elite recruitment system to maintain social peace was reported to be ineffective as Smita (2022) submitted. There were instances of clash among ambitious male children of the King for throne which often led to bloody wars and recruitment crisis in many Kingdoms. Thus, the ineffectiveness of the recruitment system in the pre-colonial era led to the formation of variety of state and non-state bodies.

Colonial Era: During this era, the traditional patrimonial society came in contact with the colonial elites and the society underwent some notable changes with the introduction of Christianity by the colonial Christian missionaries. Modern education was introduced, some privileged ones were picked to be educated in modern schools and subsequently incorporated in the new elites' structure. Vine, remarked that; as they got education and were skilled, they acquired prestigious positions in various spheres of government such as legislature, and executive. Yet essentially acquired positions in the colonial administration as bureaucrats. They worked as loyalist of colonial power and focused on its benefits, (Vine, 2014).

Post-Colonial Era: This is the era when Nigeria got Independence and became a Republic. Nigeria's elite recruitment was characterized by constant overthrow of civilian government by military, since the first Republic to third republic. Between 1960 – 1999, Nigeria's elite structure was dominated by the military. In other words, the elite recruitment revolved around military and civilian institutions. Nigeria's fourth Republic came into existence in 1999 now with 26 years without military incursion but the elite structure was not without the military and characterised by political exclusion in a democratic state.

However, I agree with Omdia when the scholar insisted that 'elite recruitment in Nigeria occurs through various channels, including electoral politics, political appointments, bureaucratic promotions, and traditional leadership structures, (Omodia, 2011).

Concepts of Democracy and Democratic Consolidation

Democracy like other social science concepts has no one agreed definition. What I think is important, is that, the definition one chooses, should be in context. In accordance with my study, democracy can be seen to a system of government in which power is vested in the people, who exercise it directly or through political elites called elected representatives. It is characterized by principles such as political pluralism, free and fair elections, rule of law, and protection of fundamental rights (Dahl, 2020). Liberal democracy emphasizes constitutionalism, rule of law, and the protection of human rights, distinguishing it from illiberal democracies where elections occur but civil liberties are restricted (Zakaria, 1997). The definition above presents the direction of this paper whereby it means that democracy is not adopted to dismantle elites but to ensure fairness, inclusiveness and popular participation of every qualified person in the affairs of the society. However, the case in Nigeria is different, the elites, stifled inclusiveness and popular participation thereby making democratisation difficult.

Democratic consolidation on the other hand refers to the process through which democracy becomes stable, deeply institutionalized, and unlikely to revert to authoritarianism. Linz and Stepan (1996) argue that a democracy is consolidated when it becomes "the only game in town," meaning no major political actors seek to overthrow it, and democratic norms are internalized within society. Like Schedler would say, democratisation is when political actors accept democratic rules and institutions as the legitimate framework for governance

(Schedler, 2001). In nut shell, democratic consolidation is when everyone including the elites accept democratic rules and institutions as the legitimate framework for governance, without this acceptance, democratic consolidation might not be achieved.

Determinants of Democratic Consolidation

The determinants of democratic consolidation are the key factors that contribute to the stability, resilience, and sustainability of democratic governance. Scholars had identified some interrelated factors that indicate whether a democracy matures and resists democratic stagnation or backsliding. Some of the determinants are categorized as follows:

i. Political and Institutional Determinants

- a. Strong Institutions: The presence of independent institutions, such as a robust judiciary, electoral commissions, executive, and a functioning legislature, helps consolidate democracy. Like Acemoglu & Robinson argued, 'institutions must ensure checks and balances to prevent autocratic tendencies' (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006). Simply put in my own imagination, 'bigmanism must not prevail over institutionalism'
- b. Rule of Law: Just as democracy would hardly be understood without constitutionalism and freedom, so also its consolidation cannot be clearly noticed if there is problem of rule of law and freedom to choose and participate. I think that is why O'Donnell insists that, a legal framework that guarantees civil liberties, protects human rights, and upholds contracts, strengthens democratic consolidation (O'Donnell, 1996).
- c. Electoral Integrity: Like constitutionalism and freedom, electoral integrity which respects voters' choice and increase participation in subsequent elections is another major condition or determinant of democratic consolidation. No wonder Diamond, (1999), remarked that, free, fair,

and transparent elections enhance legitimacy and public trust in democratic governance (Diamond, 1999).

- d. Good Governance: Good governance is one of the pragmatic important determinants of democratic consolidation. If democracy would not ensure good live of people, what is the essence of its adoption and continuation? Hence, democracy that bedeviled with bad governance is far from consolidation.

ii. Economic Determinants

- a. Economic Development: One of the conditions for democratisation is economic prosperity. That is why Lipset stated that, higher levels of economic prosperity, often measured by GDP per capita, are associated with greater democratic stability (Lipset, cited in Smita, 2022).
- b. Economic Equality: High levels of inequality can lead to social unrest and weaken democratic institutions, while a more equal distribution of wealth fosters stability (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006).
- c. Diversified Economy: Democracies with a well-diversified economy are less vulnerable to economic crises that could lead to authoritarian tendencies (Przeworski et al., 2000).

iii. Social Determinants

- a. Education and Literacy: A well-educated population tends to support democratic norms and participate actively in governance (Glaeser et al., 2007).
- b. Civil Society and Media Freedom: A strong civil society, including independent media and NGOs, acts as a watchdog against government abuses (Putnam, 1993).
- c. Ethnic and Religious Cohesion: Societies with high levels of ethnic and religious fragmentation may struggle with democratic consolidation unless inclusive policies are in place (Lijphart, 1999).

iv. Historical and International Determinants

- a. Democratic History: Countries with a history of democratic governance are more likely to consolidate democracy than those with prolonged authoritarian rule (Huntington, 1991).
- b. International Influence: Foreign aid, diplomatic pressure, and international organizations (such as the EU or UN) can play a role in supporting democratic consolidation (Levitsky & Way, 2010).
- c. Regional Democratic Norms: Democracies in regions with other consolidated democracies are more likely to remain stable due to positive external influences (Boix, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on elite theory. The Elite framework according to Tamuno, (2021) was fathered by the likes of Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels and Lasswell. It is a political science and sociology framework that asserts that power is concentrated in the hands of a small, privileged group often referred to as "the elite" who influences political and economic outcomes in the society. In international relations, elite is used to refer to the states whose politics, economy, military and other international sphere are developed

Some of the basis assumption of the theory are;

- a. That in every society or international system, there is always a small group of individuals or states (elite) who rule over the majority and control key political, economic, and social institutions, and making decisions that shape society.
- b. That, power is not equally distributed in any society or system but is concentrated in the hands of the elites.
- c. That, although there may be internal competition, but elites generally share common interests and work together to achieve and maintain their dominance.

- d. That, the masses are not involved in political decision-making, often due to lack of unity, resources, knowledge, or interest.
- e. That, while individual members of the elite may change, but the structure of elites remain intact, with new elites emerging from within the existing system rather than from the general population.
- f. That, even in democratic societies, true decision-making is controlled by elites, elections and public participation often serving as symbolic rather than substantive means of influence.

The assumptions above are prevalent evidence in most societies including Nigerian. The theory further disagree with the idea that democracy ensures equal power distribution, instead arguing that real power remains in the hands of a few, regardless of formal democratic institutions. The framework is useful in analysing Nigeria's democratic experience as the said democracy struggles to democratize and faced with good governance and other challenges.

Nigeria's democracy is often characterized by elite dominance, where a small group of political, military, economic, social, educational and religious elites control the state's resources and decision-making processes. I support the view of Claude Ake when he said that 'despite democratic elections, the elite influence institutions, manipulate electoral processes, and restrict political participation for ordinary citizens' (Ake, 1996). That is the situation in Nigeria where the democracy is not for the people but for the elites thereby suffocating it to literally breathe and holistically breathe well.

Another manifestation of elitism in Nigeria's democracy is the evidence of weak democratic institutions which make the democratic institutions subservient to individuals or group of individuals because of perceived personal or group interest. A case in point is the incessant judicial shenanigans where Courts of coordinate jurisdiction giving contradicting verdict on the same matter including Supreme Court giving opposing

judgment on the matter that is clearly stated in the 1999 Constitution as amended and contradicting the precedence she had set. For examples, Ondo State in 2015 took Federal Government to Court over the issue of non-payment her monthly subvention and the Supreme Court of Nigeria held that the Federal Government has no constitutional power to withhold statutory allocations due to a state government and that withholding funds of federating unit violates the principles of fiscal federalism and financial autonomy of states as guaranteed by the Constitution as in sec 120 and 162. The current Supreme Court judgment in the case of Rivers State is a clear evident of weak democratic institutions. Has the sections the Supreme Court relied on in 2015 changed?

Also, the issue of the legislature being controlled by the executive to the extent of being tagged as a rubber-stamp legislature constitute hindrance to Nigeria's democratisation. Rather than fostering inclusive governance, Nigerian democracy tends to serve elite interests, with policies often designed to benefit those in power rather than the broader population.

Be that as it may, the theory is not perfect, it has faced various criticism. For instance, the theory is challenged by its oversimplifying complex social structures and underestimating the agency of non-elite actors. Engelstad insists that the theory might not fully account for instances where grassroots movements effect significant change, suggesting a need for a more nuanced application of the theory (Engelstad, 2009). Despite these criticism, the elites framework is relevant to my work and has evidently analysed challenges facing Nigeria's democracy.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive design and relied on secondary data (books, journal articles, conference papers, internet materials etc.) subjected to content validity, before analyzing qualitatively. The use of qualitative analysis helped the researcher to embark on

an indebt study of elitism and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Findings and Discussions

Impacts of Elites on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Elites in Nigeria have played a central roles in shaping Nigeria's democracy and its institutions which however have significant impacts on democratisation through the followings as observed by scholars:

- a. **Electoral Manipulation:** One of the impacts of elites on Nigeria's democracy and its consolidation is the issue of electoral manipulation. The elites usually use all midst including financial and institutional power to confuse electoral outcome and discourage popular participation. The 2023 Presidential elections is a clear evidence of electoral manipulation where Presidential and National Assembly elections were held concurrently but the same network used to upload National Assembly's poling unit results in real-time on iRev database refused to upload that of Presidential results in real-time. No wonder Ibrahim and Egwu, (2005), remarked that 'political elites use financial and institutional power to rig elections, intimidate opponents, and control electoral bodies.'
- b. **Clientelism and Patronage:** The distribution of state resources based on loyalty rather than merit weakens democratic accountability (Omotola, 2009).
- c. **Weak Institutional Development:** Elite interference in the judiciary, legislature, and security agencies prevents the establishment of independent democratic institutions (Diamond, 1999).

Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The impacts of elite's dominance on Nigeria's democracy has posed enormous challenges to her democratic consolidation. Some challenges are discussed bellow;

- a. **Elite Fragmentation and Power Struggles:** Nigeria's elite class is often divided along ethnic, religious, and regional lines, leading to political instability and weak governance (Suberu, 2007). These divisions foster elite-driven conflicts that undermine national unity and democratic progress.
- b. **Corruption and Rent-Seeking Behavior:** Political elites in Nigeria prioritize personal enrichment over national development. Corruption, embezzlement, and rent-seeking behaviors deplete state resources, reducing the effectiveness of democratic governance (Olayiwola & Okorie, 2010).
- c. **Electoral Violence and Political Thuggery:** Elite-backed political violence, including the use of thugs and militias, disrupts democratic processes, discourages political participation, and fosters insecurity (Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2006).

Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Despite the challenges posed by elite dominance, there are prospects for democratic consolidation in Nigeria:

- i. **Strengthening Democratic Institutions:** Reforming key institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), judiciary, and legislature can reduce elite interference in governance (Linz & Stepan, 1996).
- ii. **Electoral Reforms Serious:** Transparent electoral processes, independent election monitoring, and the adoption of electronic voting can minimize elite-driven electoral fraud and enhance public confidence in democracy (Ojo, 2007).
- iii. **Independent candidate.** When independent candidate is constitutionally allowed in Nigeria's elections, that would begin the gradual collapse of elite's dominance and by the time an independent candidate won a major election, one of the pillars aiding elite structures will be broken thereby allowing democratisation an opportunity to breath.

iv. Constitutional review. Nigeria's democratic consolidation is possible if some anti-democratisation sections are reviewed in both the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria and Electoral Acts. For instance, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended, Article 65 (1)(b) puts forward a compulsory provision that "a person can only contest election for Senate or House of Representative only if that person is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that political party." This kind of sections cannot democratize a democracy of our own. A democracy which in reality gives the masses a choice to choose one elite among the elites. Thus, despite conducting democratic election, the Nigerian electoral system reflects itself as the elite's government.

v. Anti-Corruption Measures: Strengthening anti-corruption agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the rest and ensuring elite accountability can curb corruption and promote democratic stability (Transparency International, 2021).

vi. Rule of law. The laws in Nigeria must be functional and seen to be applied to everyone irrespective of past and present position, religion or region.

The study based on the objectives found the followings:

i. **That, Nigeria's democracy is not consolidating.** This finding is based on the fact that periodic elections do not guarantee democratic consolidation as argued by the likes of Diamond, (2001), Lary, (2003), Shumpeter, (1991) among others. Though, Nigeria has enjoyed periodic elections since 1999 but her democracy is far from consolidation as the determinants of democratic consolidation such as strong democratic institutions, rule of law, inclusive government, free and fair elections, good governance, well fair of citizens among others are missing.

ii. **Elite dominance is the cause of democratic stagnation in Nigeria.** Elite theory is

literally opposed to democratic principles. Democracy is popularly believed to be the government of the people, by the people and for the people but the elite's principle is a complete negation to such democratic notions.

iii. **Nigeria's democracy is inherently against democratic consolidation.** The democracy was fashioned after elite's interest. Section 65. Subsection (2) (b) is a case in point. The section legally disqualify masses' participation in the major governance. The section says, "A person shall be qualified for election under subsection one of this section if he is a member of political party and is sponsored by that party." The masses cannot afford political party's aspirant forms let alone withstand the usual manipulative selection process. This is outright anti-masses participation in major governance. It only creates systemic chance for the masses to democratically choose one elite among the elites.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Elite dominance remains a significant obstacle to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Political elites continue to dominate governance structures, often prioritizing personal and sectional interests over national democratic growth. However, institutional reforms, electoral transparency, civic engagement, and anti-corruption initiatives present viable pathways for deepening democracy. Addressing elite dominance through inclusive governance mechanisms is crucial for achieving sustainable democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

The study recommends among the followings

i. **Determinants of democratic consolidation** such as strong democratic institutions, rule of law, inclusive government, free and fair elections, good governance, well fair of citizens, separation of power, among others should be prioritised.

- ii. **Massism.** This means the emergence and dominance of masses in a democratic political environment. Just like the elites, Massism is possible. The masses can also unite take their position in Nigeria's democracy. End SARs agitation, hunger protests or end bad governance protests etc are all symptoms of possibility of massism.
- iii. **Independent Candidate.** Independent candidate should be allowed in all elections. When independent candidates are allowed to contest elections, that would begin the gradual collapse of elite dominance and by the time independent candidates won major elections, one of the pillars holding elites' structure would be broken.
- iv. **Outlaw Ward and Local Government Election Collation processes.** Most of the electoral manipulations during elections happen during ward or local government collation processes. Poling Unit results should be used and be uploaded in real time to INEC's irev for State and National collation, and announcement of State and National results respectively.

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EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The most worrisome issue in our time is how to sustain our educational system while developing wealth and well-being for the future of our society. This monumental task has become necessary to address, seen that the educational sector is fast decaying. For a society to achieve a sustainable development, it must improve the quality of its educational system. The paper provides an insight into various challenges confronting education in north east Nigeria such as indiscipline, inequitable manpower, inadequate infrastructures, overcrowded classrooms etc. It's also provide ways of solving these challenges, such as re-introduction of disciplinary measures, engaging equitable manpower, ensuring conducive environment of learning, adequate allocation of funds, setting up a trustworthy supervisory committee to supervise educational activities, adequate implementation of disciplinary measures and adequate staff development programs. The results of this study reveal the key role Education plays in promoting Sustainable Development, paving the way for a more sustainable future. Through a series of descriptive analyses, our results indicate that ESD can indeed impact on student outcomes in terms of their sustainable consciousness if careful attention is given.

Keywords: Education, sustainable development, challenges and prospect.

Introduction

Education is a crucial instrument at all levels and in all forms for addressing a wide range of social and global challenges. It equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to function effectively and contribute meaningfully to the society to which they belong. Consequently, education facilitates both intended and unintended teaching and learning processes that meet the evolving needs and aspirations of individuals and societies.

According to Rajaj and Chiv (2009), education contributes to changes in knowledge, values, behavior, and lifestyles essential for promoting sustainability and stability both within and among nations. Aminu (1995) posited that investing in education is the most significant commitment a nation can make toward the development of

its economic, sociological, and human resources. He emphasized that education produces individuals with the capabilities needed not only for national development but also to compete globally.

The National Policy on Education (2014) underscores that education remains a central pillar in national development strategies, asserting that any significant transformation in a society's intellectual and social orientation must be preceded by educational reform. Despite the establishment of Nigeria's 6-3-3-4 educational system, regions such as the northeastern part of the country continue to lag behind in its implementation and outcomes. This study therefore aims to examine the challenges impeding education as a tool for sustainable development in

northeastern Nigeria, while also exploring future prospects

Concept of Education

The term "education" refers to the comprehensive development of individuals across cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and psycho-productive domains. Scholars agree that education leads to desirable behavioral change through teaching and learning. Therefore, a person exhibiting behaviors contrary to societal norms cannot be considered educated, regardless of their formal academic exposure.

Education is the process by which societies transmit values, skills, and cultural norms from one generation to another, typically orchestrated by more experienced members of society (Ayu, 1991). Ayu further noted that education fosters moral development and spiritual growth, enabling individuals to lead more fulfilling lives. Ebong (2007) defined education as a systematic process for cultural transmission and transformation through both formal and informal training, which contributes to the mental, physical, psychological, and social development of individuals.

Haralambos and Holborn (2004) emphasized education as a societal institution that promotes free and rational thinking, facilitating social progress and innovation key elements of development.

Forms of Education

Education can be categorized into three main forms: formal, informal, and non-formal. Each form plays a significant role in the personal and societal development of individuals, and often, individuals experience all three without being consciously aware of it.

Formal Education

Formal education occurs in structured institutional settings such as primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. It is characterized by organized curricula, certified teachers, designated learning environments,

and systematic evaluation methods. The teaching and learning processes are well-planned and targeted toward achieving specific educational objectives within a defined timeframe.

Informal Education

Informal education takes place outside traditional classroom settings and is primarily acquired through daily interactions within family, peer groups, religious institutions, and the media. Though not systematically structured, it provides learners with experiences that enhance personal development. Learning in this form may occur consciously or unconsciously and helps build a foundation that can be expanded through formal education (Ebong, 2007).

Non-formal Education

Non-formal education is often acquired through workshops, seminars, vocational training, or media-based learning (e.g., television and radio). It is designed to equip individuals with specific skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for personal and societal development at a particular time. Unlike formal education, it may not involve face-to-face interactions or follow a standard curriculum, but it plays a critical role in lifelong learning and skill acquisition.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development refers to development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Brundtland Commission, 1987). It involves expanding opportunities that allow individuals and communities to achieve their potential over time while maintaining the stability of social, economic, and environmental systems (Munasinghe, 2014).

Age (2005) argued that sustainable development encompasses increasing capital income and employment, promoting human welfare, meeting basic needs, preserving the environment, and ensuring intergenerational

equity. These goals highlight the need for inclusive participation and thoughtful decision-making in development processes.

Education and Sustainable Development

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone for achieving sustainable development. Umoh (2005) stated that education is central to development as it enlightens individuals and enables them to pursue purposeful lives. Through education, societies undergo positive transformation at individual, group, and national levels.

Ebong (1996) described education as a systematic approach to transmitting culture and values, both formally and informally. He asserted that the goal of education in human resource development is national growth. To achieve this, countries must cultivate skilled manpower skills that can only be acquired through robust educational systems.

Olubadewo (2006) further emphasized that only an educated population possesses the competencies necessary for sustainable economic development and improved quality of life. Education therefore is not only the foundation for individual empowerment but also the instrument for realizing national and global development goals.

Challenges of Education as a Tool for Sustainable Development

Despite the crucial role of education in sustainable development, several challenges hinder its effectiveness in northeastern Nigeria:

Inadequate Funding

Funding shortfalls have severely affected education delivery, leading to dilapidated infrastructure, lack of teaching materials, and unpaid staff salaries. Many institutions operate without adequate lecture halls, laboratories, or accommodation (Ivara & Mbanefo, 2005).

High Cost of Education

The increasing cost of education makes it unaffordable for many families. Consequently, students drop out before completing their academic journey, particularly at the tertiary level.

Inequitable Manpower

The shortage of qualified educators poses a serious challenge. Teachers are the driving force of any educational system (Coombs, 1970), and without well-trained, motivated professionals, achieving quality education becomes impossible (Ukeje, 1996).

Overcrowded Classrooms

Classroom overcrowding is prevalent from primary to university levels. Overpopulated classes hinder effective teaching, limit student engagement, and reduce learning outcomes (Akande, 2004).

Inadequate Infrastructure

Many institutions lack the essential facilities required for effective learning, such as libraries, laboratories, workshops, and basic amenities like water and electricity. These deficiencies significantly affect academic performance.

Lack of Resources

Human and material resources are critical to quality education. A study by the National Universities Commission (as cited in Okebukola, 2005) found that only 30% of students have adequate access to classrooms, libraries, or laboratories.

Inadequate Staff Development

Professional development is necessary to maintain educational quality. Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009) noted that the absence of training and retraining programs for educators contributes to declining standards. Adeogun (2006) argued that untrained staff become obsolete and ineffective over time.

Brain Drain

Nigeria has experienced a significant loss of academic talent as professionals leave for better opportunities in other sectors or abroad. This "brain drain" reduces research output and undermines the quality of higher education.

Poor Leadership

Both governmental and institutional leadership deficiencies have contributed to poor educational outcomes. Low budgetary allocation to education undermines development efforts. For instance, Nigeria's education spending was only 7.9% of its GDP as of October 2021, compared to Ghana's 13.8% (Premium Times, 2021). Moreover, institutional leaders often fail to involve stakeholders in policy implementation, resulting in poor governance (Osiebe, 1995; Iyayi, 2002).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is fundamental to sustainable development, especially in regions such as northeastern Nigeria where developmental challenges persist. By equipping individuals with knowledge, skills, and values, education empowers them to improve their lives and contribute to national growth. However, several systemic barriers including poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective leadership hinder the sector's ability to fulfill this transformative role. Addressing these challenges requires committed policy action, increased investment, and collective efforts from government, educators, and civil society to ensure education becomes a reliable instrument for achieving long-term sustainability.

To enhance the effectiveness of education as a tool for sustainable development in northeastern Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Government should prioritize education by allocating a higher percentage of the national budget to

the sector. Adequate funding will improve infrastructure, provide learning materials, and support staff welfare.

2. Policies should be enacted to reduce the cost of education, particularly at the tertiary level, making it more accessible to marginalized and low-income families.
3. Investing in the training and continuous professional development of teachers will enhance their competence and motivation, ultimately improving educational outcomes.
4. Schools and universities must be equipped with adequate classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other essential facilities to create an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.
5. The government should create incentives and favorable working conditions to retain qualified professionals within the country, especially in the education sector.
6. Educational institutions should be led by competent, visionary leaders who prioritize stakeholder engagement, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes.
7. Non-formal and informal education channels, such as radio and online learning platforms, should be supported to reach out-of-school children and adults in rural communities.

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IMPACT OF *BOKO HARAM* INSURGENCY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, has significantly disrupted socio-economic activities in North Eastern Nigeria, causing widespread devastation in terms of human lives, infrastructure, and governance. This paper explores the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on socio-economic development institutions in the region. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, the study examines how the insurgency has affected key sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and the informal economy. It also analyzes the role of government and non-governmental organizations in mitigating the effects of the conflict. Findings suggest that the insurgency has led to a significant decline in access to basic services, heightened poverty levels, and a breakdown in local governance structures. The paper concludes by recommending targeted interventions to rebuild these institutions, with a focus on security, economic recovery, and sustainable development in the region.

Keywords: Boko Haram, insurgency, education, agriculture, governance, conflict, healthcare

Introduction

The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, has become one of the most devastating and protracted conflicts in West Africa. The group, initially focused on opposing Western education, has evolved into a militant jihadist organization that targets civilians, government institutions, and infrastructure across Nigeria, with a particular focus on the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa (Omotola, 2013). The insurgency has not only claimed thousands of lives but has also caused the widespread displacement of millions of people, severely impacting the socio-economic fabric of the affected regions (Aliyu & Fadare, 2018). This paper seeks to explore the multi-dimensional impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on socio-economic development institutions in north-eastern Nigeria, with an emphasis on education, healthcare, agriculture, and local governance.

North-eastern Nigeria, traditionally one of the more economically disadvantaged regions of the country, has faced additional challenges due to the insurgency. Prior to the emergence

of Boko Haram, the region was already struggling with underdevelopment, poverty, and inadequate infrastructure (Adeleke, 2016). However, the insurgency has intensified these issues, leading to a dramatic decline in the quality and accessibility of essential services and exacerbating existing socio-economic inequalities (Yusuf, 2017). The destruction of infrastructure, the displacement of communities, and the disruption of economic activities have left a large portion of the population vulnerable to poverty and social instability (Amin, 2017).

The education sector has suffered tremendously due to Boko Haram's direct attacks on schools and teachers. Schools have been destroyed or abandoned, leaving children without access to formal education and hindering the region's long-term human capital development (Ndiaye, 2019). Furthermore, the insurgency has led to a mass exodus of teachers from the region, further deepening the educational crisis. The lack of education not only affects individuals but also

hampers broader community development and socio-economic growth, as educated citizens are crucial for the region's future prosperity (Adebajo, 2017).

Healthcare institutions have also been severely impacted by the insurgency. Hospitals, clinics, and healthcare workers have become targets for the militants, and many healthcare facilities have been destroyed or repurposed for military use (Moravcsik, 1998). In addition, the displacement of families has created overcrowded conditions in refugee camps, further straining the already limited healthcare infrastructure. The disruption of health services has resulted in worsening health outcomes, particularly for women and children, who are more vulnerable in times of conflict (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Diseases such as cholera, malaria, and malnutrition have become more widespread, leading to increased mortality rates (Buzan, 1991).

Agriculture, the primary livelihood for many in northeastern Nigeria, has also been significantly disrupted. The conflict has made it difficult for farmers to access their land, either due to insecurity or the displacement of rural communities (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000). This disruption has led to food shortages, soaring prices, and an overall decline in agricultural productivity. The resulting food insecurity has contributed to the growing humanitarian crisis in the region, with millions of people depending on international aid for survival (Yusuf, 2017). Additionally, the loss of agricultural productivity has further impoverished the already struggling population, making recovery more challenging (Thelen, 1999).

Beyond these sectors, the insurgency has undermined local governance and state authority. Local governments in the affected areas have struggled to maintain control, with many officials either fleeing or being targeted by Boko Haram (Buzan, 1991). This vacuum of leadership has further destabilized the region, making it difficult for the government to provide essential services, enforce the rule of law, or restore order. The insurgency has also

contributed to a breakdown in trust between the population and the government, leading to increased disillusionment and further complicating efforts to rebuild the region (Ndiaye, 2019).

International and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a critical role in addressing the humanitarian needs caused by the insurgency. However, despite their efforts, the challenges remain immense. Humanitarian aid has been limited by the security situation, and the long-term solutions required to rebuild the region's socio-economic institutions are yet to be fully implemented. A comprehensive recovery strategy that includes not only immediate humanitarian aid but also long-term economic and institutional reforms is necessary to address the root causes of the insurgency and promote sustainable development (Hettne & Soderbaum, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to examine the profound and enduring impact of Boko Haram on socio-economic development institutions in northeastern Nigeria. The study will assess the extent of the insurgency's effect on key sectors such as education, healthcare, and agriculture, and explore the challenges faced by local governance in the wake of this conflict. In doing so, it will provide recommendations for policy interventions aimed at facilitating the recovery and rebuilding of socio-economic institutions in the region. By exploring the interplay between security, governance, and economic development, this study hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the socio-economic consequences of insurgency and offer insights into strategies for post-conflict recovery in northeastern Nigeria.

The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, has left a deep scar on the socio-economic structures of northeastern Nigeria. While the primary impact of the insurgency is often viewed through the lens of security and political instability, its implications for the socio-economic development of the region are equally critical yet underexplored. The violent activities of Boko Haram have not only led to a

tragic loss of lives but have severely affected the delivery of key public services, including education, healthcare, and agriculture—core pillars of any nation's socio-economic progress (Aliyu & Fadare, 2018).

North-eastern Nigeria, characterized by high poverty levels, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to basic services, was already vulnerable before the insurgency took hold. However, the continuous attacks, displacement of communities, and the destruction of vital infrastructure have compounded the region's challenges, pushing it further into socio-economic decline. The insurgency has destabilized the education sector, leading to school closures, attacks on teachers, and the disruption of educational programs, which directly impacts future generations and limits human capital development (Ndiaye, 2019). Similarly, the healthcare system has been decimated, with hospitals targeted and destroyed, forcing healthcare workers to abandon their duties. This has led to increased morbidity and mortality rates, particularly among the most vulnerable populations—women and children (Moravcsik, 1998).

Agriculture, a critical sector for the region's livelihood, has similarly been decimated, with farmers unable to access their lands due to insecurity, resulting in reduced food production, food insecurity, and a rise in the cost of living (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2000). These disruptions have contributed to severe humanitarian crises, with millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps under appalling conditions, without access to basic necessities and support services (Amin, 2017). Local governance and administrative structures have been weakened by the insurgency, with many local government officials either fleeing the region or being targeted by Boko Haram, resulting in a breakdown of law and order. The inability of the state to protect its citizens, coupled with the displacement of communities, has diminished trust in the government, creating a governance vacuum in which humanitarian

assistance is difficult to coordinate and local development stalled (Adebajo, 2017).

While some studies have focused on the political and security impacts of the Boko Haram insurgency, there is a clear gap in research that specifically examines its effects on socio-economic institutions in northeastern Nigeria. The devastating impacts on education, healthcare, agriculture, and governance have led to long-term socio-economic dislocation, and the full extent of these impacts is not well documented. Moreover, existing research often overlooks the interconnectedness of these sectors, failing to appreciate how disruptions in one area exacerbate the challenges in others.

This study is significant for several reasons, particularly in understanding the long-term consequences of insurgency on socio-economic development in conflict-affected regions. The findings will provide a comprehensive analysis of the Boko Haram insurgency's impact on key socio-economic institutions in northeastern Nigeria, offering valuable insights into the challenges faced by the region and the potential pathways for recovery and sustainable development.

1. **Policy Implications:** The study will provide policymakers and government officials with critical information regarding the effects of the insurgency on the education, healthcare, agriculture, and local governance sectors. By identifying the specific challenges and needs of these sectors, the study will guide the development of targeted interventions and recovery strategies to address the region's socio-economic and humanitarian crises. Policymakers will benefit from data-driven recommendations that can enhance government response to conflict-induced socio-economic challenges.
2. **Support for Humanitarian Efforts:** The research will be of great importance to humanitarian organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

and international aid agencies working in northeastern Nigeria. By understanding the particular vulnerabilities and needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and affected communities, the study will provide insights into how humanitarian aid can be better directed to meet immediate needs and promote long-term recovery.

3. **Contribution to the Academic Field:**

The study will contribute to the existing literature on conflict and development, particularly in the context of insurgencies in West Africa. While many studies have examined the political and security dimensions of Boko Haram's insurgency, there is a gap in research that explores its socio-economic consequences on local institutions. This research will fill that gap by providing a multi-faceted analysis of the impacts of insurgency on essential services and community development, contributing to academic discussions on post-conflict reconstruction and development.

4. **Economic Development:**

Understanding the economic consequences of the insurgency, especially in critical sectors such as agriculture, education, and healthcare, will be crucial for developing strategies that can stimulate the recovery of these industries and enhance the region's economic resilience. The study will offer insights into how these sectors can be restored, creating opportunities for economic revitalization and job creation in the region.

5. **Support for Conflict Resolution and Prevention:**

The study will also be valuable for conflict resolution practitioners and institutions, as it will provide deeper insights into the root causes of insurgency and the socio-

economic factors that contribute to the persistence of violence. By addressing the socio-economic impacts of Boko Haram, the study will provide a framework for designing conflict prevention strategies and ensuring that future development initiatives are conflict-sensitive.

6. **Social Stability and Long-term Peace:**

Finally, this research will contribute to the broader goal of achieving long-term peace and stability in northeastern Nigeria. By identifying the socio-economic consequences of Boko Haram's activities and offering strategies for rebuilding affected institutions, the study aims to contribute to the establishment of a stable and thriving region that can overcome the challenges of insurgency and pave the way for sustained socio-economic growth.

Research Methodology

The research method used in this study is the **qualitative research method**, distinct from quantitative research approaches. This qualitative method allowed for the collection of data from **secondary sources**, which included textbooks, academic journals, newspapers, magazines, government documents (such as gazettes), archival documents, and internet sources. These secondary sources provided foundational context and insights into the topic, especially regarding the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on socio-economic development in northeastern Nigeria.

In addition to secondary data, **primary sources** were incorporated into the study. Semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews were conducted with selected respondents to gather firsthand experiences and insights. These interviews were designed to allow for flexibility while still covering key issues relevant to the research. By using a semi-structured approach, the study ensured that all respondents were asked similar questions,

providing a systematic method for gathering comparable data.

The combination of **secondary data** from documentary sources and **primary data** from interviews allowed for a more robust and comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic impacts of Boko Haram's insurgency. The inclusion of personal experiences from respondents helped to enrich the data, providing depth and context to the study. These diverse data sources contributed to a well-rounded analysis of the topic, ensuring that the findings are not only grounded in existing literature but also reflect the lived experiences of those directly affected by the insurgency.

The study focuses on the **socio-economic impact** of the Boko Haram insurgency on key development institutions in northeastern Nigeria. Specifically, the research will examine the following sectors:

- **Education:** The disruption of schooling, destruction of educational infrastructure, displacement of teachers, and long-term effects on human capital development.
- **Healthcare:** The destruction of healthcare facilities, challenges in providing medical services, and impacts on public health outcomes, particularly in vulnerable populations.
- **Agriculture:** The impact on agricultural activities, food security, and the livelihoods of farmers, including the disruption of farming practices and market access.
- **Local Governance:** The breakdown of administrative structures, loss of public trust, and challenges in providing essential services such as security, governance, and public welfare in the affected regions.

The study will specifically focus on the **northeastern states of Nigeria** that have been heavily impacted by the insurgency, including **Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, and Gombe**. These regions have experienced significant disruption to their socio-economic systems

due to the persistent activities of Boko Haram. The research will explore both the direct and indirect consequences of the insurgency on the daily lives of individuals, communities, and local institutions.

While this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the socio-economic impacts of Boko Haram's insurgency, it is subject to certain limitations:

1. **Geographical Constraints:** The study focuses only on **northeastern Nigeria**, particularly the states most affected by Boko Haram. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of other regions in Nigeria or other conflict zones within West Africa that have been affected by similar insurgencies.
2. **Security Challenges:** Given the ongoing security risks in many areas affected by Boko Haram insurgency, access to certain regions may be limited or restricted, which could affect data collection efforts. Some respondents may also be hesitant to participate due to fear of retaliation or concerns about their safety.
3. **Scope of Data:** Although the study includes both primary and secondary data, the reliance on **interviews** and **focus groups** means that the sample size may be limited, and the findings may not be universally generalizable. The perspectives of respondents, especially those from vulnerable populations like internally displaced persons (IDPs), could vary widely, and some experiences may remain unrepresented.
4. **Respondent Bias:** As the study involves personal interviews and focus group discussions, there is the possibility of respondent bias, where participants may provide answers based on social desirability or fear of expressing controversial views. This could influence the accuracy and authenticity of the data collected.

5. **Time Constraints:** The study's focus on socio-economic impacts over the period of the Boko Haram insurgency requires a thorough examination of historical and contemporary data. However, time limitations may restrict the ability to fully explore the long-term effects and recovery processes across all sectors in the region.
6. **Data Access:** Access to reliable and up-to-date official reports or statistical data from government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations might be limited. Some relevant documents may not be available due to the destruction of records during insurgent attacks or political restrictions on data dissemination.

Conceptual Clarifications

To ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity in understanding the key terms used in this study, the following concepts are defined within the context of this research:

Boko Haram: Boko Haram is an Islamist militant group that originated in northeastern Nigeria in the early 2000s. The group opposes Western education and seeks to establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. Its activities have involved violent attacks on civilians, government institutions, security forces, schools, and religious centers, leading to large-scale displacement, insecurity, and humanitarian crises.

Insurgency: Insurgency refers to an organized rebellion aimed at overthrowing a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. In this context, the Boko Haram insurgency is a protracted armed campaign against the Nigerian state, especially in the northeastern region, disrupting political, economic, and social structures.

Socio-Economic Development: Socio-economic development refers to the process of improving the well-being of individuals and communities through enhanced access to education, healthcare, employment, and

economic opportunities. It includes progress in human capital, infrastructure, and governance systems that enable sustainable living conditions.

Development Institutions: Development institutions, in the context of this study, are the formal and informal structures and organizations that contribute to the social and economic development of a community or region. This includes schools, hospitals, agricultural extension services, and local government administrations, which are critical for delivering basic services and promoting societal growth.

North Eastern Nigeria: This refers to the geopolitical region in Nigeria that includes states such as Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi, and Taraba. However, the study focuses primarily on the states most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency—namely Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa—due to the high intensity of violence and socio-economic disruption experienced in these areas.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): IDPs are individuals or groups who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict, violence, or disasters but remain within the borders of their country. In this study, IDPs refer to the population displaced by Boko Haram violence within northeastern Nigeria, many of whom reside in temporary camps with limited access to social services.

Security: Security, in this context, involves the protection of lives, properties, and institutions from harm, threats, and attacks. It is both a prerequisite and an outcome of development. The absence of security in northeastern Nigeria due to the Boko Haram crisis has undermined governance and socio-economic growth.

Historical and Ideological Origins of Boko Haram

The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in earnest in 2009, has attracted widespread attention from scholars, policymakers, and international organizations. Its implications for Nigeria's national security, development, and

stability—particularly in the northeast—have been the subject of intense research. This review synthesizes existing literature relevant to the socio-economic consequences of the insurgency on development institutions in North Eastern Nigeria.

Understanding the roots of Boko Haram is crucial to examining its socio-economic impact. The group emerged in the early 2000s under the leadership of **Mohammed Yusuf**, who rejected Western education and the Nigerian state's secular system. According to **Walker (2012)**, Boko Haram's ideology is driven by a desire to establish an Islamic state governed by strict Sharia law. The extrajudicial killing of Yusuf by security forces in 2009 marked the group's shift from a non-violent sect to a full-fledged insurgent group, adopting guerrilla warfare tactics and targeting state institutions.

Onuoha (2014) explains that Boko Haram's rise is linked to systemic corruption, poverty, unemployment, and weak governance, especially in the northeast. These socio-economic challenges provided fertile ground for radicalization and recruitment into insurgency. Boko Haram's operations have since evolved to include mass abductions, suicide bombings, and attacks on infrastructure, thereby crippling developmental institutions.

Educational Disruption

One of the most heavily impacted sectors is **education**. Boko Haram's very name—loosely translated as “Western education is forbidden”—reflects its ideological opposition to formal schooling. According to **UNICEF (2021)**, over 1,500 schools have been destroyed in the northeast, while thousands of children have been abducted or orphaned due to the conflict.

Abdu and Shehu (2018) emphasize that the displacement of students and teachers, coupled with the destruction of educational infrastructure, has resulted in the collapse of basic education in many areas. In Borno State, for instance, entire communities have been

cut off from education for years. This has grave implications for human capital development, gender equality in education, and long-term economic empowerment.

Healthcare System Devastation

Boko Haram has also targeted healthcare facilities, leading to the destruction of hospitals, clinics, and medical supply centers. **Adekeye (2020)** notes that medical professionals have fled many rural areas due to insecurity, leaving residents without access to basic health services. The destruction of infrastructure, coupled with restricted humanitarian access, has worsened maternal and infant mortality rates.

Furthermore, **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, 2021)** reports a rise in malnutrition, cholera outbreaks, and untreated diseases in IDP camps. The healthcare sector, which already struggled with underfunding and shortages, has been severely overstretched by the insurgency's impact.

Agricultural Collapse and Economic Strain

Agriculture is the mainstay of the northeast economy, yet it has been significantly disrupted. The conflict has led to the displacement of farming populations, abandonment of farmlands, and destruction of irrigation systems. **FAO (2022)** revealed that over 75% of farmers in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states were forced to stop farming activities due to fear of attacks. **Ezeani (2019)** underscores how the food supply chain has been affected, leading to food shortages, inflation, and widespread hunger. Local markets have either been destroyed or rendered inaccessible due to the risk of terrorist activity. As a result, household incomes have dropped, unemployment has risen, and economic inequality has deepened.

Impact on Governance and Institutional Stability

The insurgency has eroded trust in governance and public institutions. Local government offices, police stations, and courts

have been attacked or abandoned. **Aliyu (2021)** observes that administrative activities have ground to a halt in several local government areas, especially in Borno State. The inability of the state to protect lives and property has created a governance vacuum filled by non-state actors, including vigilante groups and community militias.

This governance breakdown has impeded service delivery and contributed to a sense of lawlessness. The displacement of civil servants and the destruction of government infrastructure have hindered development planning and execution.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the Humanitarian Crisis

The Boko Haram crisis has displaced more than 2.5 million people across Nigeria and neighboring countries (UNHCR, 2023). IDPs live in camps with overcrowded conditions, poor sanitation, and limited access to food, healthcare, and education. **International Crisis Group (2022)** highlights the long-term developmental challenges created by this displacement, including psychological trauma, dependency on aid, and difficulty reintegrating into society.

The situation has stretched the capacity of government agencies and NGOs. Aid distribution is often hampered by insecurity, and corruption in relief operations has been reported. This has exacerbated vulnerability and undermined socio-economic recovery.

Efforts at Recovery and Institutional Response

Several national and international efforts have been made to rehabilitate affected communities and institutions. The Nigerian government launched the **North-East Development Commission (NEDC)** to coordinate reconstruction and development efforts. However, **Ibrahim and Musa (2020)** criticize the lack of transparency, community engagement, and sustainability in many of these interventions. International donors and NGOs have contributed to rebuilding schools, hospitals, and livelihood programs, but these

efforts have been insufficient relative to the scale of destruction. The fragile security situation continues to limit access to affected areas and slow progress.

While many studies focus on the causes and security dimensions of Boko Haram insurgency, fewer have comprehensively analyzed the **impact on development institutions** from a multi-sectoral lens. Existing literature often isolates education, health, or agriculture without showing their interconnected collapse or the institutional consequences. This study fills that gap by exploring the **broader systemic damage** done to the northeast's development infrastructure and the implications for national stability.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts two key theoretical perspectives to analyze the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on socio-economic development institutions in North Eastern Nigeria: **Frustration-Aggression Theory** and **State Fragility Theory**. These frameworks help in explaining the origins of the insurgency and the institutional breakdown that followed.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

Originally formulated by Dollard et al. (1939), the **Frustration-Aggression Theory** posits that aggression is often the result of frustration, which occurs when individuals are prevented from achieving their basic needs or aspirations. The theory was later refined by Berkowitz (1989), who argued that frustration leads to a readiness for aggression if environmental cues support it.

In the context of Boko Haram, high levels of poverty, unemployment, inequality, and marginalization in the northeast have led to widespread frustration among the youth. These socio-economic challenges created a fertile ground for radical ideologies. Boko Haram, therefore, emerged as both a product and a response to these frustrations, offering disillusioned individuals a sense of identity, purpose, and power.

This theory helps to explain why the group found it easy to recruit followers and justify its attacks on institutions perceived to be symbols of state neglect, including schools, government offices, and security forces.

State Fragility Theory

State Fragility Theory explains the inability of a state to perform its core functions such as ensuring security, providing public services, and maintaining rule of law. According to Rotberg (2004), fragile states are characterized by weak institutions, corruption, poor governance, and inability to control territory.

Nigeria's weak institutional capacity in the northeast, especially before the insurgency, meant that development efforts were already slow and inconsistent. When Boko Haram emerged, the inability of the state to adequately respond or prevent the spread of violence further eroded its legitimacy.

The destruction of infrastructure and displacement of government personnel in affected areas illustrate the fragility of development institutions under duress. Health, education, and local government services collapsed quickly because they lacked resilience and adequate support systems. This theory, therefore, highlights how Boko Haram insurgency both exposed and deepened existing institutional weaknesses in the region.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Boko Haram insurgency has had a profoundly negative and far-reaching impact on socio-economic development institutions in North Eastern Nigeria. Over the years, the insurgency has not only claimed thousands of lives but also led to the systematic destruction of key infrastructure necessary for development—such as schools, hospitals, markets, government buildings, and agricultural facilities. The educational system has been severely disrupted, health services crippled, local economies destroyed, and governance structures rendered ineffective or non-existent in many areas.

From the findings and literature reviewed, it is evident that the insurgency has deepened

poverty, unemployment, displacement, and institutional collapse in a region that was already grappling with underdevelopment. The weakened capacity of the Nigerian state to effectively respond to and contain the crisis further exposed the fragility of state institutions and widened the trust deficit between citizens and government authorities.

Moreover, the insurgency has significantly altered the developmental landscape in the northeast, diverting resources meant for growth into emergency response and security operations. International aid agencies and humanitarian organizations have stepped in to provide temporary relief, but sustainable development remains elusive without peace, security, and strong institutional support.

In conclusion, resolving the Boko Haram insurgency requires more than just military intervention. A holistic and multi-dimensional approach that includes good governance, poverty alleviation, youth empowerment, and institutional reforms is essential. Rebuilding the destroyed development institutions, restoring the confidence of affected communities, and addressing the root causes of radicalization are crucial steps toward long-term peace and recovery in the region.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to mitigate the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on socio-economic development institutions and to support long-term recovery in North Eastern Nigeria:

1. **Strengthen Institutional Capacity**

The government should invest in rebuilding and strengthening public institutions in the northeast, especially in education, healthcare, and local governance. Institutions should be made more resilient through proper funding, training, infrastructure, and security measures.

2. **Holistic Security Approach**

Beyond military operations, the government should adopt a comprehensive security strategy that includes intelligence gathering,

community policing, deradicalization programs, and border control. Collaboration with local vigilante groups should be properly regulated to avoid future security risks.

3. Reconstruction and Development Programs

The federal government, through the North-East Development Commission (NEDC), should fast-track infrastructural rehabilitation projects—especially schools, hospitals, roads, and agricultural facilities—using a community-driven approach that involves local stakeholders.

4. Economic Empowerment and Youth Engagement

Targeted economic interventions, such as vocational training, small-scale business grants, and youth employment schemes, should be implemented to reduce vulnerability to extremist recruitment and encourage economic independence.

5. Education Recovery Initiatives

There should be a large-scale educational recovery plan focusing on rebuilding schools, recruiting teachers, providing psychological support to students, and creating safe learning environments. Special programs should be designed for girls and out-of-school children.

6. Effective Humanitarian Coordination

Government agencies should coordinate better with NGOs and international partners to provide consistent and transparent humanitarian aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other affected populations, ensuring that aid reaches the most vulnerable.

7. Peacebuilding and Community Reconciliation

Initiatives focused on healing, reconciliation, and community

dialogue should be prioritized to mend social cohesion among displaced persons, returnees, and affected communities. Local religious and traditional leaders should be key actors in this process.

8. Address Root Causes of Insurgency

Long-term solutions must target the underlying socio-economic issues that fuel insurgency, such as poverty, illiteracy, corruption, and political marginalization. Strategic development plans should ensure equity and inclusion of all regions in national development efforts.

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HIV/AIDS VOLUNTARY COUNSELING AND TESTING IN WUKARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to examine HIV/AIDS voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The study aims to determine the factors affecting VCT uptake, to ascertain the impact of socio-economic variables on VCT uptake and to proffer solutions to the various problems associated with VCT in Wukari Local Government Area. The qualitative research design was adopted using Taro Yamane formula to obtain a sample size of 400 respondents, the same number of questionnaires were administered but 352 were retrieved from the field. Data analysis involved the use of chi-square test which revealed that there is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors (Poverty, Unemployment and Income) and VCT uptake. However, there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic factors (age, sex and work) and VCT. Also, results showed that VCT do not have a significant impact on the spread of HIV and AIDS in Wukari Local Government Area. The study recommends that young people in the country should be better educated about HIV/AIDS.

Keywords: Counseling, voluntary, testing, HIV/AIDS, young persons

Introduction

The number of people living with HIV (Human Immuno Deficiency Virus) is increasing steadily with sub-Saharan Africa being more severely affected. Worldwide, it is estimated that 38 million people are infected with HIV, with over 90% in developing countries and 64% in sub-Saharan Africa alone. Youth aged 10-24 years, which comprise about one-fifth of the world's population are the worst group affected with HIV/AIDS. Young people aged 15 to 24 years' account for about 30% of all people living with HIV/AIDS and a half of all new HIV infections (UNAIDS, 2014).

HIV/AIDS constitute a major global health problem which was highlighted as a major goal in the United Nation (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Later Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Globally, 940,00 people in 2017 has lost their lives due to HIV and AIDS attacks. In Nigeria for

instance, HIV and AIDS stand out as the greatest threat to human life because it cures has not yet been discovered, hence as a result of non-availability of drugs that can cure the sickness, infected persons are often depressed and dejected. The prevalence of HIV among young people in Nigeria can be attributed in part to factors associated with the lack of uptake of HIV/AIDS Counselling and Testing (HCT).

It has caused a lot of devastations to individuals, families, communities and countries. HIV/AIDS affects the health and wealth of households as well as infected individuals. It can lead to decreased participation in formal education of young people, along with depleted family income due to loss of work, and eventually poverty. Poor disease management presents additional vulnerabilities. According to the Federal

Ministry of Health (2018) it has over three million infected people and a sero-prevalence rate of 4.6% over a period of 20 years, more than 60 million people have been infected with HIV and more than half of those newly infected are young people between 15 and 29 years old with the females more affected. Since 1995, HIV prevalence rates among the youth in the most-affected states have increased considerably. Sero-prevalence survey shows that the prevalence among those aged 20-24 years is 4.6% while that of 25-29 year olds is 5.6%.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing is a major intervention that can help to reduce the transmission of HIV. It provides accurate and timely information about HIV/AIDS; identifies those infected by HIV for prompt care and treatment and encourage behavior change among those who are not infected. The number of people accessing the services is however still low. The 2005 National HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health Survey (NARHS) revealed that only 11% of females and 12% of males had ever taken the HIV test. A study conducted by Ijadunola, Abiona, Odu, and Ijadunola (2017) among some students of some higher institutions in Osun State showed that only 5% of them knew their status. Studies have shown that risky sexual behaviour that can predispose to the high level of HIV/AIDS among Nigerian youth in various universities.

Voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) has been one of the key policy responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, principally as a primary prevention strategy and as an entry point to other HIV/AIDS related services. While undergoing VCT services, individuals learn about their sero-status and gain knowledge on avoiding risky behaviors to protect themselves and others. VCT also serves as the basis for accessing HIV treatment and care as well as emotional support that enable individuals to cope with HIV-related anxiety and plan for their future.

In the past, HIV transmission in Nigeria was largely ascribed to behavioral factors, past history, and gender violence. In recent times,

the role of socio-economic, socio-cultural, and structural influences has become significant and difficult to ignore. In addition, mobility, migration, extreme poverty, race, Alcohol and drug use are significant factors. Other factors are early sexual activity, inconsistent condom use, and engendered relationship dynamics like male dominated households; Men are sole breadwinners in most families and perpetuate violence for economic reason (JHHESA, 2012). Considering the above factors, it is necessary to understand the impact of socio-economic factors on VCT uptake as this will help in formulating contextualized VCT programs.

However, in addition to the above, HIV VCT uptake is an important step for harm reduction of HIV infection. It is hoped that with harm minimization for infected and non-infected persons the result of this study would go a long way to reducing the impact of HIV in Wukari and Nigeria at large. The understanding here is that if non-infected persons' uptake VCT and recognize their negative status, they would take steps to reduce transmission to themselves. In the same vein, positive persons could take steps to protect their partners. HIV/AIDS is aggravated by inadequate sexual health education, inadequate voluntary HIV testing and counselling, unhealthy cultural practices and poor health care system (Alao, 2014). HIV/AIDS is a dangerous virus which destroys the body's immune system. It leads to a progressive loss of a specific type of immune cell called T-helper, or CD4, cells. As the Virus multiplies in the body, it damages or kills the cells and weakens the immune system leaving the infected person vulnerable to various opportunistic infections and other illnesses (Lawal, 2018). Good health is an essential condition to meaningful national development.

HIV/AIDS is a threat to life, thus individuals need to know their HIV status through testing. This is necessary because such a test helps to reduce transmission and involvement in risky sexual behaviours. It also promotes early treatment and adjustment (Jimoh, 2013). It is

based on the stated findings and study above that this research work is embarked upon to determine the factors affecting HIV voluntary Counselling and Testing in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

HIV/AIDS Voluntary Counselling and Testing

HIV/AIDS is a dangerous virus which destroys the body's immune system. It leads to a progressive loss of a specific type of immune cell called T-helper, or CD4, cells. As the Virus multiplies in the body, it damages or kills the cells and weakens the immune system leaving the infected person vulnerable to various opportunistic infections and other illnesses (Lawal, 2018).

However, HIV/AIDS counselling involves educating a client or a group of clients on the control, management and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Counselling assists people to make informed decisions, cope better with life challenges, lead positive lives and prevent further transmission of HIV.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing can be defined as a confidential face-to-face interaction between a professional counsellor and a client or a group of clients with a view of assisting the clients to make informed decisions and adjust effectively in life. HIV/AIDS counselling consists of three stages, which are pre-test counselling, post-test counselling and follow up (Yahaya, 2014).

HIV/AIDS test involves a scientific analysis of a client's blood in order to determine his/her HIV/AIDS status. Both HIV/AIDS counselling and testing aim at assisting clients/patients to understand themselves, and adjust effectively to life challenges and contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. Several authors (Alao, 2014; Jimoh and Abubarkar, 2013) have noted that VCT is a key element to identifying HIV infected persons who could benefit from therapeutic interventions.

Causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS in Taraba State

The prevailing lifestyle in the state is a major factor contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Local beer parlours in market places exist in all local markets which hold weekly across the state. The men who attend such local markets to sell their agricultural produce do not often return to their families the same day (interviews and field observations). They stay back to spend the money realised from the sales in drinking and indulging women, mostly young girls. Most of them only return to their families' days after when they might have exhausted their earnings.

Increasing rate of poverty in the state makes most of the young girls and women, particularly divorcees and orphans to become vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection. Many young girls in the age group of 15 to 30 years are seen in every local market engaging in their sexual networking activities. Most of them leave at the end of the market day with some of the distant traders and drivers.

This lifestyle contributes greatly to the increase in HIV/AIDS prevalence in the State. The young girls are easily lured with money. Most of them from poor families are still in secondary schools and do not know much about HIV/AIDS and protected sex. They are highly vulnerable to infection by HIV/AIDS because they have no resistance to unprotected sex. The high level of poverty, increasing number of widows and divorcees, especially in the rural area exacerbate this problem.

After 24 years when the first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in Nigeria, many people are still ignorant of the virus, particularly its mode of transmission, symptoms, and effective measures of prevention. This problem is more so in the rural areas where most of them are cut off from mass media and other media of enlightenment campaign by Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

The issue of stigmatization and discrimination is further worsening the problem of the fight against HIV/AIDS in the State. HIV/AIDS is a life-threatening illness that people are afraid of contracting. The various metaphors associated with AIDS have also contributed to the perception of HIV/AIDS as a disease that affects “others,” especially those who are already stigmatized because of their sexual behaviour, gender, race, or socioeconomic status. The people’s perception of HIV/AIDS is that of fear. All diseases accompanied by weight loss are erroneously regarded as HIV/AIDS infection. There is also a high degree of social stigma leading to denial (FHI,2010).

Despite the campaigns over the years that people should know their HIV/AIDS status, people are reluctant to submit themselves to the free voluntary HIV/AIDS test for fear they might be stigmatized or discriminated against by the society. Hence, many people prefer to keep to themselves and die in silence with the disease. This contributes greatly to the difficulty of having correct statistics of people living with HIV/AIDS in the state and country at large.

Impact of HIV Voluntary Counselling and Testing

The prevalence of HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria cannot be overemphasized given the statistics put forward by researchers. Thus the following are the impact of voluntary uptake of HIV counselling and testing among individuals.

- i. **Self-perceived Risk of HIV:** Those that felt they had moderate risk of being infected by HIV were significantly more likely to access VCT. Surprisingly enough, those who perceived themselves to be at great risk for HIV were less likely to access VCT. A study conducted in Tanzania by De Paoli and Klepp, (2004) showed that poor risk perception is negatively correlated

with VCT uptake while high risk perception is positively correlated with VCT uptake.

- ii. **Sexual partner’s HIV screening status:** Another vital factor affecting voluntary counselling and testing in relation to HIV is that those whose sexual partners had been screened for HIV were more likely to access HIV VCT compared with those whose partners had not been screened, those who were not sure whether their partners had been screened and those who had no partners. This finding is corroborated by the report of a study conducted in South Western Nigeria by Amu, Ijadunola, Bamidele, and Odu, (2013) in which those whose partners had been screened for HIV were more likely to access VCT services.
- iii. **Fear of Testing Positive:** The fear of knowing one’s test result was the most frequent reason given for not testing for HIV. This was consistent with findings from other studies. Meibergl, Bos, Onya, and Schaalma, (2018) indicated that those who had series of unprotected sex are often scared to undertake the VCT due to the fear of being positive.
- iv. **Perception of being Healthy:** People consider not accessing HIV VCT services often based on the perception of being healthy without a need for VCT services. This is corroborated by the reports of studies conducted in Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia which equally reported that those who felt they were healthy did not access HCT. The mindset that HCT is only for the sick has grave implications for the control of HIV/AIDS, a disease with a long incubation period.
- v. **HIV Education:** The level of HIV education is a vital factor affecting the uptake of VCT. Most infected people look healthy for a long time and might

not realize their need for HIV VCT services until they become symptomatic. Learning about one's HIV status on time allows people to access care, support and treatment early if positive; and to make some important life decisions. It encourages those who are negative to continue their HIV preventive behaviours.

Theoretical Framework:

Symbolic Interactionism Theory

This theory focuses on explaining how people create their own identity and define themselves through their social experiences, that is, through their interaction with other people. Society is understood as a result of everyday, face-to-face, interaction among people. Through this interaction, people define and give meaning to the social world in which they live (Blumer, 1982).

Symbolic interactionism is based on multiple premises. The most relevant and useful scenarios for the study of HIV are: 1. Human beings react in one way or another depending on their perception of the object, person or situation they face, that is, the meaning they prescribe to a situation. 2. The individual (subject) adopts an active role in creating meanings. 3. Things do not have an inherent meaning; the meaning of things arises or emerges as a consequence of the social interaction established between people. 4. Meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretative process carried out by the person. 5. Common meanings make communication between human beings possible.

In summary, according to this theory, social reality is symbolically created during the course of social interaction and is therefore subject to change. Human behaviour is social and is based on communication; therefore, people create and interpret social situations and their meanings during this communicative process. It is during the course of social interaction that objects gain meaning for the person or persons. These social meanings are

created and modified during the dialogue of social interaction.

Thus, the symbolic interactions perspective is especially useful in the construction of behaviour, as it gives a primary role to the concept of the interaction that occurs between the members of a social group. Furthermore, "human beings interpret or define the actions of others, without being limited to simply reacting to them. Their response is not directly elaborated as a consequence of the actions of others, but is based on the meaning they give to such actions" (Blumer, 1982). Therefore, in relation to health and disease, and the prevention of HIV, this theory constitutes an important theoretical perspective for studying and explaining the social conduct of people and groups of people who interact with each other on the basis of sharing symbolic meanings. In the field study of HIV, symbolic interaction theory has been extensively applied (Klunklin, & Greenwood, 2018). This theory is useful for studying the stigma that exists among people living with HIV. Recently, it has been published a meta-analysis about ART non-adherence. The results of the study suggest that the existence of stigma is a factor of non-adherence. This systematic review identified 34 studies that applied this theory. These studies indicated existing intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural barriers as a result of stigma as factors of non-adherence (Katz, Ryu, Onuegbu, Psaros, Weiser, Bangsberg & Tsai, 2013).

The process of social interaction constitutes a fundamental aspect in the study of the doctor-patient relationship. Since communication does not have a unidirectional character, the emission and reception of messages does not occur in a passive way. Such constant feedback a process that influences the way in which the disease and the person's subjective experience are created. This theory has been used to study the relationship between people infected with HIV and health professionals. Recently, an interesting study conducted in Spanish health

services analysed the relationship between people living with HIV and physicians as it concerns interventions developed within the areas of sexuality and safe sex.

Hence, symbolic interaction allows for a broader view of the approach to doctor-patient interaction, because it enables an understanding of the processes of social interaction that take place during the course of the relationship (doctor-patient).

Subsequently, it also allows for an analysis of the role of the patient and health professionals in their encounters throughout the disease process.

Furthermore, the communicative process that is established motivates the participation of other people, the family and the community. Therefore, the meanings and the subjective experiences of HIV-positive people are created during the social interaction process, not only with health professionals, but also with other individuals and groups with whom the HIV-positive person interact in normal everyday life. In this sense, studying doctor-patient interaction is useful for identifying the potential cultural barriers that can arise from this interaction. For instance, Spain recently conducted a research study, the objective of which was to understand and analyse the experience of immigrant HIV-positive women with health professionals and treatment services.

The fundamental contribution of symbolic interaction to the field of social cognition is the consideration that mental processes are the product of symbolic interaction and not of internal individual processes. Emotions are an example of mental processes that have been studied from a symbolic interaction approach, given that they are expressed in response to social relationships or situations, or both. Human interaction possibly plays the most important role in the activation and expression of emotions. Thus, emotions are biological responses to social situations and the interaction between the people involved in such situations. From this perspective, health and disease are understood as human

constructions perceived in a subjective manner by the population. It entails analysing people's everyday views of disease, the ideological connotations that health professionals attach to diseases, and the construction and application of medical knowledge. Altogether, according to this theory, it is possible to analyse aspects that are relevant for the study of the HIV phenomenon, such as the different constructions created by people in their interaction with others, the meanings, perceptions, life experiences, beliefs, values in relation to HIV, guilt feelings for being HIV-positive, stigma, risk perception, as well as reasons for abandoning treatment.

Methodology

Wukari is a Local Government Area in Taraba State, on the A4 highway. The Donga River flows through the area and the Benue River forms a boundary with Nasarawa State to the northwest. The town is the base of the Wukari Federation, a traditional state, made up of eight districts: Wukari district, Auyi, Rafin Kada, Chonku, Kante, Gidan Idi, Arufu and Bantaje district. It is the home of the great Jukun people. It has an Area: 4,308 km² – Density: 73.91/km² and a population of 238,283 in the enumeration of 2006 and a projected population of 318,400 in 2016 (NPCN & NBS, 2016). Wukari is multi-ethnic. While the Jukun consider that it is their traditional homeland, other ethnic groups including the Tiv and Hausa form a significant part of the population. Although they were considered an "inferior group" with no history of central state administration, and were placed under the authority of the Jukun Aku Uka. However, the major source of income in the area is agriculture, though few of the women engage in petty trading, government work like teaching and other clerical work. This area of study is chosen on the premise of the geographical proximity of the researcher and the fact that women constituted a significant proportion of this population. Worthy of note is the fact the study area which is a major member of the Kwararafa kingdom has

culture, traditions and norms related to the subject matter under study.

The research is a descriptive survey design which involved administration of a questionnaire. Sheka (2011) define survey research design to be procedures in quantitative research in which researchers administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviour, or characteristics of the population.

This method was adopted as it encompasses measurement procedures which ask question on the on factors affecting Voluntary HIV counselling and Testing Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

The population of the study is the entire population of Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. In the 2006 census, Wukari population indicated to be 238,283 with 124,285 males and 113,998 females. The age distribution was highlighted to be 105,638 for 0-14 years, 126,533 for 15-60 years and 6,112 are 65 years and above. However, according to the National Population Commission and the National Bureau of Statistics as cited by Citypopulation (2023) project Wukari population to be at 318,400 in 2024. Hence, 318,400 shall be the population of study.

Due to the large population in the area of study, only a fragment of the population can be examined. To undertake the study of the sample population, the Taro Yamane formula for sampling size determination is adopted for this study which is indicated below:

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

Where

n = the sample size

N = the population sample size

e = the acceptable sampling error

95 percent level of significance p = 0.05

$$n = \frac{314,800}{1 + 314,800 * (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 399.9997$$

$$n = 400$$

From the above computation, we deduced that our sample population, otherwise the

population to study is put forward to be 400, which are an unbiased representation of our population. In lieu of that the random sampling was used to administer the questionnaires. The Simple Random Sampling (SRS) allows for free and unbiased study as all element in the population have an equal chance of selection.

Data collection was with the aid of pre-tested self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire shall be structured into two section with the section A consisting of question in relations to demographic factors of the respondents. The Section B shall consist of series of close ended question aiming to assess the factors affecting HIV voluntary counselling and testing in the Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. The Likert scale shall be adopted in analyzing the questionnaire through the ordinal coding system.

There are two basic sources of data which are primary or secondary data in nature. The primary data are those ones which are extracted, or ascertain by the researcher from the field solely for the purpose of the study. This kind of data is derived firsthand by the researcher.

The secondary data is the type of data which are derived from other published or unpublished sources that are not first hand or obtain the researcher himself. Such kinds of data are derived from journals, newspapers, magazines, bulletins, websites.

For the purpose of this study, the primary source of data shall be adopted, as the researcher will go into the field to obtain the necessary data required to answer the questions this study aim at providing with requisite solutions emanating from it.

The method of data analysis shall consist the use of Table and percentages otherwise known as descriptive statistics. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0.

Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	196	55.68
Female	156	44.32
Total	352	100
Age		
18-31	124	32.23
31-40	80	22.73
41-above	69	19.60
51 years and above	75	21.31
Total	352	100
Occupation		
Civil servant	63	17.90
Farming	103	29.26
Student	132	37.50
Business	54	15.43
Total	352	100
Marital status		
Single	165	46.88
Married	87	24.72
Separated	79	22.44
Divorce	21	5.96
Total	352	100
Qualification		
SSCE	132	37.50
OND/HND	123	34.94
B.Sc., M.Sc. & PHD	97	27.55
TOTAL	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

From the table above in respect to sex, the available data shows that 196 or 55.68 percent of our respondents were males, while 156 or 44.34 percent of our respondents were females.

In terms of age, the data presented showed that 124 or 32.23 respondents were between the ages of 18-31 years, 80 or 22.73 of the respondents were within the age brackets of 31-40 years, 69 or 19.60 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 41-above, while 75 or 21.31 percent of the respondents were 51 years and above.

In terms of occupation, the data gathered indicate that 63 or 17.90 respondents were civil servant, 103 or 29.26 percent of the respondents were farmers, while 54 or 15.43 percent of the respondents were business

men/women and 132 or 37.50 percent of the respondents are students.

With respect to marital status, the data available shows that 165 or 46.88 percent of the respondent were single, while 87 or 24.72 percent of the respondent were married, while 79 or 22.44 percent of the respondent were separated, while 21 or 5.96 percent of the respondent were divorce.

Similarly, data collected on educational background of the respondents showed that 132 or 37.50 percent of the respondents are holders of WAEC/SSCE, 123 or 34.94 percent of the respondents are ND/HND holders, 97 or 27.55 percent of the respondents are B.sc, M.sc & PHD.

Table 2 Have you been sexually active?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	258	73.29
No	94	26.70
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

As indicated in the table above, 258 or 73.29 percent of our respondents revealed that they have been sexually active, while only 94 or 26.70 percent of the respondents indicates it is not. This shows that a significant percent of our sample respondents they have been sexually active in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 3 Do you drink alcohol before or during sexual activity?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	196	55.68
No	156	44.31
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

As indicated in the table above, 196 or 55.68 percent of our respondents revealed

that they do drink alcohol before or during sexual activity, while only 156 or 44.31 percent of the respondents indicates it is not. This shows that a significant percent of our sample respondents drink alcohol before or during sexual activity in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 4 Have you ever been tested for HIV infection?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	208	59.09
No	144	40.90
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

As indicated in the table above, 208 or 59.09 percent of our respondents revealed that have been tested for HIV infection while only 144 or 40.90 percent of the respondents indicates it is not. It could be deduced that a significant percent of our sample respondents that have been tested for HIV infection in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 5: How often do you get tested for HIV infection?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Once every 3 months	67	19.03
Once every 3-6 months	88	25.00
Once every 6-12 months	106	30.11
Once routinely	91	25.85
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

From the table above, it has indicated that 67 or 19.03 percent of respondents get tested once every 3 months, 88 or 25 percent once every 3-6 months, 106 or 30.11 percent once every 6-12 months and 91 or 25.85 once

routinely. This shows that a significant percent of our sample respondents do get tested for HIV infection once every 6-12 months in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 6. What are the factors affecting voluntary HIV counselling and Testing?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Alcoholism	17	4.82
Poverty	12	3.40
Unprotected sex	243	69.03
Immorality	80	22.72
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

The table above indicates the factors affecting voluntary HIV counselling and testing. The result shows that 17 or 4.82 percent are of the opinion that alcoholism affects VCT, 112 or 3.40 percent poverty, 243 or 69.03 percent unprotected sex, and 80 or

22.72 percent immorality. This result shows that the fundamental factor affecting voluntary HIV counselling and testing is the fear of testing positive in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 7Poverty has a significant impact on HIV voluntary counselling and Testing

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Strongly agree	177	50.28
Agree	27	7.67
Neither agree nor disagree	34	9.65
Disagree	98	27.84
Strongly disagree	16	4.54
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

The table above aim to test the relationship between poverty and VCT. The result revealed that 177 or 50.28 percent of the respondents strongly agree, 27 or 7.67 percent agreed, 34 or 9.65 are neutral, 98 or

27.84 percent disagreed, and 16 or 4.54 strongly disagreed. This shows that poverty has a significant impact on HIV voluntary counselling and testing in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 8: Unemployment has a significant impact on HIV voluntary counselling and Testing

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Strongly agree	187	53.12
Agree	89	25.28
Neither agree nor disagree	14	3.97
Disagree	34	9.65
Strongly disagree	28	7.95
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

The above table revealed respondents' opinion whether unemployment has a significant impact on HIV VCT. 187 or 53.12 of the respondent strongly agree that unemployment has a significant impact on VCT, 89 or 25.28 percent agree, 14 or 3.97

percent are neutral, 34 or 9.65 percent disagree, 28 or 7.95 strongly disagree could be deduced therefore that unemployment has a significant impact on HIV voluntary counselling and testing in Wukari Local Government Area.

Table 9 Income has a significant impact on HIV voluntary counselling and Testing.

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Strongly agree	65	18.46
Agree	112	31.18
Neither agree nor disagree	69	19.60
Disagree	53	15.05
Strongly disagree	53	15.05
Total	352	100

Source: Field Work, 2024.

The above table aim to ascertain respondents' opinion to whether income has a significant impact on HIV VCT. From the table

above, it has indicated 65 or 18.46 strongly agreed, 112 or 31.18 agree, 69 or 19.6 percent are neutral, 53 or 15.05 disagree and strongly

disagree. It can be concluded that income has a significant impact on HIV voluntary counselling and testing in Wukari Local Government Area.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has been able to examine factors affecting HIV voluntary counselling and testing in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. Based on the findings of the study, it can be deduced that VCT do not have a significant impact on the spread of HIV and AIDS in Wukari Local Government Area. HIV and AIDS is predominantly caused by poverty rather than the widely acclaimed gender discrimination or the gender roles of the society.

It was indicated that most men make decisions for their families. Women in homes have no powers to make decisions, so if the husband refuses her to take a test, the wife just has to comply. A good number of women are oppressed in their homes and most decisions are made by their men as they are considered to be the heads of their households. This came out strongly as one of the key factors that affect HCT.

The study indicated the main factors hindering acceptance of HIV/ AIDS as ignorance, fear of being positive, cost of VCT inadequate number of VCT centres and stigmatization. The finding could be due to the information available to the respondents as regards to the experience of HIV/AIDS patients.

If tested positive, fear of abandonment by partner, fear of being accused of being promiscuous by partner, and fear of domestic violence were the main factors why some pregnant women did not accept to take an HIV test during their pregnancies. Though fear of stigma and discrimination and fear of death were mentioned, these fears were very insignificant to have a negative impact on HCT. With regard to behavioral factors, VCT uptake increased sharply with increased HIV/AIDS related knowledge, which is consistent with other studies. The observed strong inverse

association between stigma and VCT uptake is consistent with other studies, and in light of the high levels of stigma, the findings suggest that fear of stigma and discrimination is an important barrier to HIV testing.

It was indicated that most men make decisions for their families. Women in homes have no powers to make decisions, so if the husband refuses her to take a test, the wife just has to comply. A good number of women are oppressed in their homes and most decisions are made by their men as they are considered to be the heads of their households. This came out strongly as one of the key factors that affect HCT. The study also found no significant difference in the views of respondents as regards to the factors hindering acceptance of HIV/ AIDS VCT based on gender and religion. This finding may be due to the efforts of governments and non-governmental organizations in creating awareness about HIV/AIDS and VCT.

Participants irrespective of gender and religion seem to be aware of HIV/AIDS, VCT and basic issues that are related to the virus. It was found that respondents' place of residence has significant influence on their views of the factors hindering acceptance of HIV/AIDS VCT. Respondents residing in rural areas has significantly lower mean in their views on factor hindering acceptance of HIV/AIDS VCT, an indication that they viewed the factors differently from those in the urban areas. Participants from the urban areas seem to appreciate the hindrances better than their rural counterparts.

In the light of the above findings, the following recommendations are proffered:

Although some variables can be controlled, such as level of education, knowledge of HIV transmission, and knowledge of HIV prevention, other variables cannot. The study therefore recommends that the goal of future researchers should be to examine the effect of the variables that can be controlled. Again, examining the efficacy of HCT treatments in Nigeria, along with conducting a demographic analysis of the at-

risk population, could be beneficial in informing the authorities who are responsible for allocating finite medical resources. Religion and cultural norms should serve as a vehicle for preventing stigmatization and other related factors which often negatively affect the use of HCT resources by the Nigerian population. The researcher also recommends that the Ministry of health should train more HCT counselors to help alleviate the human resource shortages being experienced at the health facilities. This will in turn improve on service delivery though the situation about service delivery is not very bad at the moment.

The respondents also mentioned the health service delivery setup as a source of concern for HCT service delivery, as HIV/AIDS related services are offered in isolated areas making the locations very noticeable and 'labeled' by others. It would be good to integrate these services into the already existing health services to avoid suspicion that lead to some people shunning to receive HCT.

The researcher also recommends that couples should encourage open communications between themselves so that they understand each other in their matrimonial homes. Open communications in homes between partners would lead to couple counseling and testing as couples would be able to communicate and discuss HCT even when they are planning for a pregnancy.

Lastly, since lack of education can contribute negatively in the spread of HIV especially among young people in Nigeria, it is therefore recommended that young people in the country should be better educated about HIV awareness, transmission and prevention.

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BROADCAST MEDIA AND PUBLIC HEALTH GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: RETHINKING DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY IN POST-COVID PANDEMIC ERA



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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted critical gaps in institutional responsiveness and democratic accountability across Africa's public health governance landscape. As public institutions struggled to communicate effectively and maintain public trust, broadcast media emerged as a pivotal platform for information dissemination, public engagement, and institutional critique. However, the transformative potential of broadcast media remains under-theorised in governance scholarship, particularly within African contexts where media systems are often constrained by political interference, regulatory fragility, and social exclusion. This paper responds to that gap by proposing the Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM), a normative, conceptual framework designed to reposition broadcast media as a central actor in promoting democratic accountability during and after public health crises. Grounded in Public Sphere Theory, Governance Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D), the model integrates four interdependent pillars: media independence, accessibility and inclusivity, regulatory integrity, and civic engagement and empowerment. It conceptualises democratic accountability as a dynamic, iterative process sustained through the interplay of institutional reform, participatory communication, and civic responsiveness. The paper argues that meaningful public health governance in Africa requires more than the dissemination of information; it demands inclusive, ethical, and feedback-driven communication systems. BM-PHGAM serves as both a theoretical contribution and a diagnostic tool, with applications in policy reform, public communication planning, and governance evaluation. By stressing the communicative dimensions of accountability, the model offers a context-sensitive pathway toward strengthening transparency, civic trust, and institutional resilience in African democracies, particularly in the wake of complex health emergencies.

Keywords: Governance, public health, communication, civic trust

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was more than a global health crisis; it was a test of institutional resilience, state responsiveness, and democratic governance across the world. Nowhere was this test more revealing than in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where public health emergencies exposed the fragility of institutional frameworks and the limitations of state capacity to communicate effectively and accountably with their citizens (Briggs & Nichter, 2021; Obi & Eke, 2021). As governments grappled with emergency response measures, the need for credible and accessible communication became paramount. In this context, broadcast media, notably radio and television, emerged as vital platforms for public health messaging, risk communication, and behavioural change promotion, especially in areas with limited internet access (Servaes, 2023; Nyamnjoh, 2023).

However, beyond its instrumental role in crisis communication, broadcast media also hold normative potential: it can act as a catalyst for democratic accountability, a mediator between institutions and the public, and a watchdog over state action (Votmer & Wasserman, 2022). Drawing from the classical idea of the public sphere (Habermas, 1989), the media serve as a space where citizens engage with institutional narratives, critique public policies, and co-create responses to collective challenges. In health governance, such a role becomes even more critical, particularly in societies where historical mistrust, misinformation, and political interference compromise the effectiveness of state-led health interventions (Thomas & Foster, 2022; Waisbord, 2021).

Yet, in many African democracies, the ideal of an independent, inclusive, and accountable media system remains far from reality. Several structural and institutional constraints limit the transformative power of broadcast media. These include regulatory capture, political control of public broadcasters, limited media pluralism, and

technological barriers that restrict access to reliable health information (Karppinen & Moe, 2022; Nyamnjoh, 2023). Furthermore, the concentration of media ownership in the hands of political or commercial elites often results in selective framing, suppressed dissent, and uneven access to health-related information, particularly for marginalised and rural populations. This not only undermines the media's democratic function but also deepens public disillusionment with both media and governance institutions.

The post-pandemic moment, therefore, presents a strategic opportunity to re-evaluate and re-imagine the role of broadcast media within Africa's public health governance systems. Suppose the media is to contribute meaningfully to democratic accountability. In that case, there is a pressing need for a conceptual framework that identifies and integrates the critical dimensions of media operations, independence, inclusivity, regulatory integrity, and civic engagement, with broader goals of institutional transparency and citizen trust. Such a framework must account for the complex interactions between media actors, public institutions, and communities in shaping governance outcomes during health crises.

This paper responds to this need by developing the Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM). This normative, theory-driven model illustrates how broadcast media can mediate institutional communication, promote accountability, and enable participatory governance in post-crisis African societies. Grounded in Public Sphere Theory (Habermas, 1989), Governance Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D) paradigms, the model conceptualises media as an institutional actor capable of enhancing resilience and responsiveness in public health governance. The paper adopts a conceptual approach, drawing on a synthesis of contemporary literature, theoretical constructs, and African case reflections to

articulate a model that bridges the gap between media communication and institutional reform.

By proposing this model, the study contributes to the evolving role of traditional media in governance processes in the digital and post-pandemic age, the strategic use of communication for public health accountability, and the development of theoretical tools that guide inclusive, participatory, and accountable institutional practices in Africa. In doing so, the paper also offers practical guidance to policymakers, public health communicators, and media practitioners seeking to enhance transparency, civic trust, and democratic responsiveness in future health emergencies.

Approach and Conceptual Method

This study adopts a conceptual research approach, which is appropriate for theory-building and normative analysis rather than empirical measurement. Conceptual papers are designed to synthesise existing knowledge, critique theoretical gaps, and offer new explanatory frameworks grounded in established literature and logic-driven reasoning (Jaakkola, 2020). In this context, the study does not involve the collection or analysis of primary data through surveys, interviews, or content analysis. Instead, it engages critically with scholarly literature, policy reports, and theoretical contributions within the fields of media studies, public health governance, and democratic accountability.

Three interrelated theoretical frameworks guide the conceptual method employed in this paper:

1. Public Sphere Theory (Habermas, 1989), which underscores the media's role as a facilitator of public deliberation and institutional critique.
2. Governance Theory, which focuses on transparency, participation, and responsiveness in institutional decision-making (Rhodes, 1996; Kooiman, 2003); and

3. Communication for Development (C4D) advocates for participatory and inclusive communication as a vehicle for social transformation (Servaes, 2023).

Through thematic synthesis of literature published between 2020 and 2024, the study identifies recurring patterns, conceptual tensions, and normative gaps in how media is theorised within the context of health crises and governance in Africa. These insights are integrated to develop the Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM), a normative framework that captures how broadcast media can enhance institutional accountability, public trust, and participatory governance in the post-pandemic era.

The strength of this conceptual method lies in its ability to propose theoretical innovations and policy-relevant ideas that can inform future empirical research and practical interventions. By abstracting from specific cases to broader dynamics, the paper positions the model as both a heuristic device and a normative guide for stakeholders engaged in media development, health governance, and democratic reform.

Conceptual Clarifications

For conceptual clarity and contextual precision, this section provides detailed explanations of five core constructs that underpin the proposed Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM): broadcast media, public health governance, democratic accountability, civic engagement, and regulatory integrity. Each concept is examined within the Nigerian experience, drawing insights from indigenous scholarship and grounded socio-political realities.

Broadcast Media: Broadcast media refers to the transmission of audio and visual content to a dispersed public through radio and television, often regulated by national frameworks and widely consumed across demographic lines. In Nigeria, broadcast media

remain the most influential form of mass communication, especially in rural communities where digital infrastructure is limited (Asemah, Anum, & Edegoh, 2013). The dominance of radio as an affordable and accessible platform has been extensively documented, with scholars emphasising its role in public enlightenment, health education, and national integration (Ojebuyi & Fadipe, 2020). Unlike online media, broadcast platforms in Nigeria are bound by statutory regulations such as the National Broadcasting Code and supervised by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), a structure that both institutionalises and constrains their operation. While broadcast media have been instrumental in disseminating information during public health crises like Ebola and COVID-19, their democratic potential is often curtailed by government interference, ownership concentration, and editorial censorship (Uche, 1989; Idowu, 2021).

Public Health Governance: Public health governance involves the institutional mechanisms, regulatory frameworks, and accountability systems through which health policies are formulated, implemented, and monitored. It encompasses coordination between ministries, agencies, donors, and civil society actors to deliver equitable and efficient health services. In the Nigerian context, public health governance has been critiqued for its fragmented structure, bureaucratic inertia, and corruption vulnerabilities (Okeke, 2022). As Ejembi and Adedokun (2020) observe, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed institutional lapses in Nigeria's health communication, particularly in the clarity of responsibilities between federal and state agencies. Furthermore, the failure to integrate grassroots communication systems and local leadership into decision-making processes has widened the gap between health institutions and the public. Hence, improving public health governance in Nigeria necessitates not only structural reform but also communicative interventions that bridge institutional-citizen divides.

Democratic Accountability: Democratic accountability refers to the obligation of public officials and institutions to justify their decisions and actions to the citizenry through mechanisms of transparency, answerability, and sanction (Ayoade, 2006). In functional democracies, accountability is both vertical, from citizens to elected officials, and horizontal, across branches and agencies of government. In Nigeria, however, democratic accountability is often compromised by weak institutional checks, limited media freedom, and systemic corruption (Omotola, 2010). Scholars such as Ojebode (2011) have argued that the media, primarily broadcast media, play a pivotal role in holding public officials accountable by amplifying citizens' voices, exposing administrative malpractice, and stimulating informed public discourse. Yet, this function is undercut by political patronage, regulatory threats, and self-censorship. The BM-PHGAM model positions democratic accountability not as a post-facto ritual but as an ongoing communicative process driven by responsive media and engaged publics.

Civic Engagement: Civic engagement refers to the active participation of individuals and groups in the processes that shape public life and governance, including monitoring government activities, participating in dialogues, and influencing policy outcomes. In the Nigerian setting, civic engagement has increasingly found expression through informal and media-based platforms, as traditional participatory institutions remain weak or inaccessible (Oso, 2012). Broadcast media, particularly community-based radio, have provided a relatively accessible avenue for engaging populations in rural and underserved areas (Umar, 2020). Yet, structural inequalities such as gendered access, ethno-linguistic exclusions, and media elitism continue to marginalise large segments of the population from meaningful participation. As noted by Oladipo (2015), true civic engagement must go beyond passive listenership to include feedback loops, co-

creation of content, and responsiveness from governing institutions.

Regulatory Integrity: Regulatory integrity involves the presence of fair, consistent, and transparent rules that govern the operations of institutions, particularly in media and public health sectors, and the enforcement of such rules without political or economic bias. In Nigeria, media regulation has often been marred by instrumentalism, where laws are enforced selectively to protect elite interests or suppress dissent (Akinfeleye, 2003). The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), while statutorily independent, has faced criticisms for its perceived partiality, especially during election cycles or periods of political crisis (Idowu, 2021). In the health sector, similar challenges exist in the enforcement of ethics, procurement processes, and inter-agency coordination. Without regulatory integrity, both media and health institutions lose credibility, weakening public trust and impairing democratic accountability. The BM-PHGAM model underscores regulatory integrity as the institutional glue that ensures both the media and health governance systems function transparently and equitably.

Each of these concepts is not merely theoretical; they are deeply embedded in Nigeria's socio-political realities. By contextualising these constructs through Nigerian scholarly perspectives, this paper affirms the importance of grounded theorisation, one that is sensitive to both the institutional nuances and the communicative ecologies of African societies. These clarified concepts now serve as the foundational pillars for the development of the BM-PHGAM model in the next section.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on three interrelated frameworks: Public Sphere Theory, Governance Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D). These theories provide a rich conceptual lens through which to examine the role of broadcast media in enhancing democratic

accountability and institutional responsiveness within the domain of public health governance in post-pandemic Africa. These frameworks inform the design of the proposed Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM) and offer a multidimensional understanding of media as both a communication channel and a social institution capable of shaping governance outcomes.

Public Sphere Theory

Jürgen Habermas' Public Sphere Theory (1989) remains a foundational framework in communication and political studies. The public sphere is conceived as a space where rational-critical discourse occurs among citizens, enabling democratic deliberation and holding authority to account. Media, particularly mass media, play a pivotal role in structuring this space, acting as a facilitator of informed dialogue and a mediator between institutions and the populace. In its ideal form, the public sphere fosters transparency, citizen participation, and mutual accountability (Habermas, 1989; Calhoun, 1992).

However, critiques of Habermas, especially from postcolonial and feminist scholars, argue that the theory presumes a homogenous, Western liberal democratic setting, often ignoring the fragmented, multilingual, and culturally diverse nature of public life in Africa (Fraser, 1990; Nyamnjoh, 2023). In African societies, the "public sphere" is often dispersed across formal and informal communicative spaces, with broadcast media (radio and television) emerging as the dominant infrastructure through which millions of citizens, especially in rural and low-literacy communities, access information and engage with governance processes (Couldry & Mejias, 2022).

This theory is relevant to this study because it conceptualises broadcast media as a public sphere enabler during and after health crises. In contexts where civic participation in health governance is limited by institutional

opacity or political repression, broadcast media hold the potential to function as an alternative sphere for discourse, dissent, and deliberation. Yet, this potential is undermined by the absence of strong legal frameworks to protect press freedom and ensure pluralistic content, a concern this study integrates into its model development.

Governance Theory

Governance theory extends the traditional conception of government by emphasising the role of multiple, interdependent actors, state institutions, private sector, civil society, and media in the formulation and implementation of public policy (Kooiman, 2003; Rhodes, 1996). It moves away from top-down, centralised authority models and advocates for networked, participatory, and accountable forms of decision-making. The governance approach is especially significant in sectors like public health, where complex intersectoral collaboration is necessary to address social determinants of health, deliver services, and manage crises.

The theory of governance is intrinsically linked with normative values such as transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, and accountability, each of which requires robust communicative processes to be actualised. In this regard, the media functions not merely as an observer of governance but as a governance actor: it mediates institutional narratives, scrutinises public spending, facilitates citizen feedback, and ensures the visibility of marginalised voices (Pierre & Peters, 2000; Voltmer & Wasserman, 2022).

In Africa, however, governance processes are frequently compromised by weak institutions, corruption, regulatory capture, and limited opportunities for citizen input, particularly in the health sector (Briggs & Nichter, 2021). Media institutions, when co-opted by political elites or weakened by underfunding and censorship, often fail to play their governance-enhancing roles. The BM-PHGAM model proposed in this paper positions broadcast media as a corrective actor

within governance structures, especially in reinforcing institutional accountability and civic inclusion during health emergencies.

Communication for Development (C4D)

Communication for Development (C4D) is both a theoretical and practical paradigm that prioritises participatory, culturally sensitive, and inclusive communication processes as tools for development and social change. Originating from development communication studies in the Global South, C4D critiques top-down messaging approaches that treat citizens as passive recipients of information. Instead, it emphasises horizontal dialogue, community engagement, and behavioural transformation rooted in local knowledge systems and social realities (Servaes, 2008; Manyozo, 2012).

In public health contexts, the C4D framework advocates for approaches that involve communities in shaping health narratives, co-creating solutions, and accessing messages in languages and formats that resonate with them. Broadcast media, particularly community radio and regional television, serve as central C4D tools in Africa due to their widespread reach, affordability, and adaptability to local content production (Servaes, 2023). However, the lack of institutional support for localised media programming and the over-centralisation of public health communication strategies have constrained the effectiveness of C4D approaches during crises such as COVID-19 (Thomas & Foster, 2022).

This theoretical perspective informs the BM-PHGAM model by providing a framework for evaluating media accessibility, community inclusivity, and feedback mechanisms. It stresses that democratic accountability is not achieved by disseminating information alone, but by creating platforms for participatory governance and mutual learning between institutions and the governed.

Theoretical Synthesis and Relevance to Model Development

Taken together, Public Sphere Theory, Governance Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D) offer a robust and multidimensional framework for understanding the strategic role of broadcast media in promoting democratic accountability within public health governance in Africa.

Public Sphere Theory provides the discursive foundation of the model by conceptualising media as a platform through which rational, public deliberation is made possible. It emphasises the normative function of media in enabling citizens to interrogate public policies, question institutional performance, and co-create shared meanings around societal issues. In the context of public health governance, this deliberative role becomes vital for building trust, combating misinformation, and ensuring that health interventions align with community needs and values.

Governance Theory complements this by locating media within the institutional architecture of modern governance. Rather than viewing the state as the sole actor, governance theory recognises the media as a core participant in policy processes, alongside civil society, regulatory bodies, and health institutions. It accentuates the media's responsibility in monitoring power, amplifying civic voices, and contributing to a culture of transparency and responsiveness, particularly in times of crisis. This theory reinforces the idea that media institutions are not peripheral to governance; they are part of the governance matrix.

C4D introduces a developmental and participatory dimension to the synthesis. It challenges top-down, technocratic models of communication and reorients attention toward inclusive, community-driven processes. Through this lens, broadcast media, especially community radio and local television, are positioned as agents of empowerment. They facilitate horizontal dialogue, encourage cultural resonance in

health messaging, and provide platforms for citizen feedback. In resource-constrained African settings, where digital divides and literacy barriers persist, C4D situates broadcast media as a practical tool for bridging communication gaps and enabling genuine civic engagement.

Together, these three frameworks do not merely coexist; they interact and converge. The public sphere framework highlights the why of media's democratic role; governance theory explains the how through institutional linkages; and C4D shows for whom and with what methods participatory outcomes can be achieved. The Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM) proposed in this paper is built at the intersection of these insights. It integrates discursive, institutional, and developmental strands to construct a normative pathway through which broadcast media can enhance accountability, inclusiveness, and resilience in Africa's evolving health governance ecosystem.

Model Development: Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM)

This paper proposes the Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM), a normative conceptual framework designed to articulate the strategic role of broadcast media in strengthening democratic accountability within Africa's public health governance ecosystem. Developed from the theoretical synthesis of Public Sphere Theory, Governance Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D), the model identifies and integrates four interrelated pillars through which broadcast media can contribute meaningfully to participatory, transparent, and responsive governance during and beyond public health crises.

Purpose of the Model

The BM-PHGAM is constructed as a theoretical response to the following problem:

How can broadcast media be institutionally and communicatively positioned to enhance democratic accountability in Africa's public health sector, especially in the post-pandemic context? While past scholarship has acknowledged the media's role in health communication, few models provide an integrated, governance-oriented framework that positions media as both an institutional actor and a conduit for civic agency. BM-PHGAM seeks to fill this gap by offering a conceptual structure for aligning media independence, inclusivity, regulatory integrity, and civic engagement with accountability-driven health governance.

The Four Pillars of BM-PHGAM

1. **Media Independence.** This pillar emphasises the necessity of editorial and institutional autonomy in broadcast media operations. Independent media, free from political manipulation, economic pressures, and regulatory bias, are more likely to scrutinise public institutions, demand transparency, and broadcast accurate health information (Idowu, 2021; Voltmer & Wasserman, 2022). In the Nigerian context, media independence is often compromised by government censorship, partisan ownership, and self-censorship, all of which undermine the watchdog role of broadcast platforms (Akinfeleye, 2003). The model positions independence as the foundational condition for broadcast media to function credibly in public health governance.
2. **Accessibility and Inclusivity.** Accessibility refers to the capacity of broadcast media to reach diverse audiences, including those in remote, illiterate, and linguistically marginalised communities, while inclusivity refers to the extent to which media content reflects pluralistic voices, especially those of

women, youth, and vulnerable groups. In Nigeria and other parts of Africa, radio remains the most penetrative communication tool, yet its potential is diminished when programming is top-down, urban-centric, or linguistically exclusive (Ojebode, 2011; Umar, 2020). This pillar reflects the C4D emphasis on participatory, people-centred messaging, ensuring health governance processes are not only broadcast to the public but shaped by it.

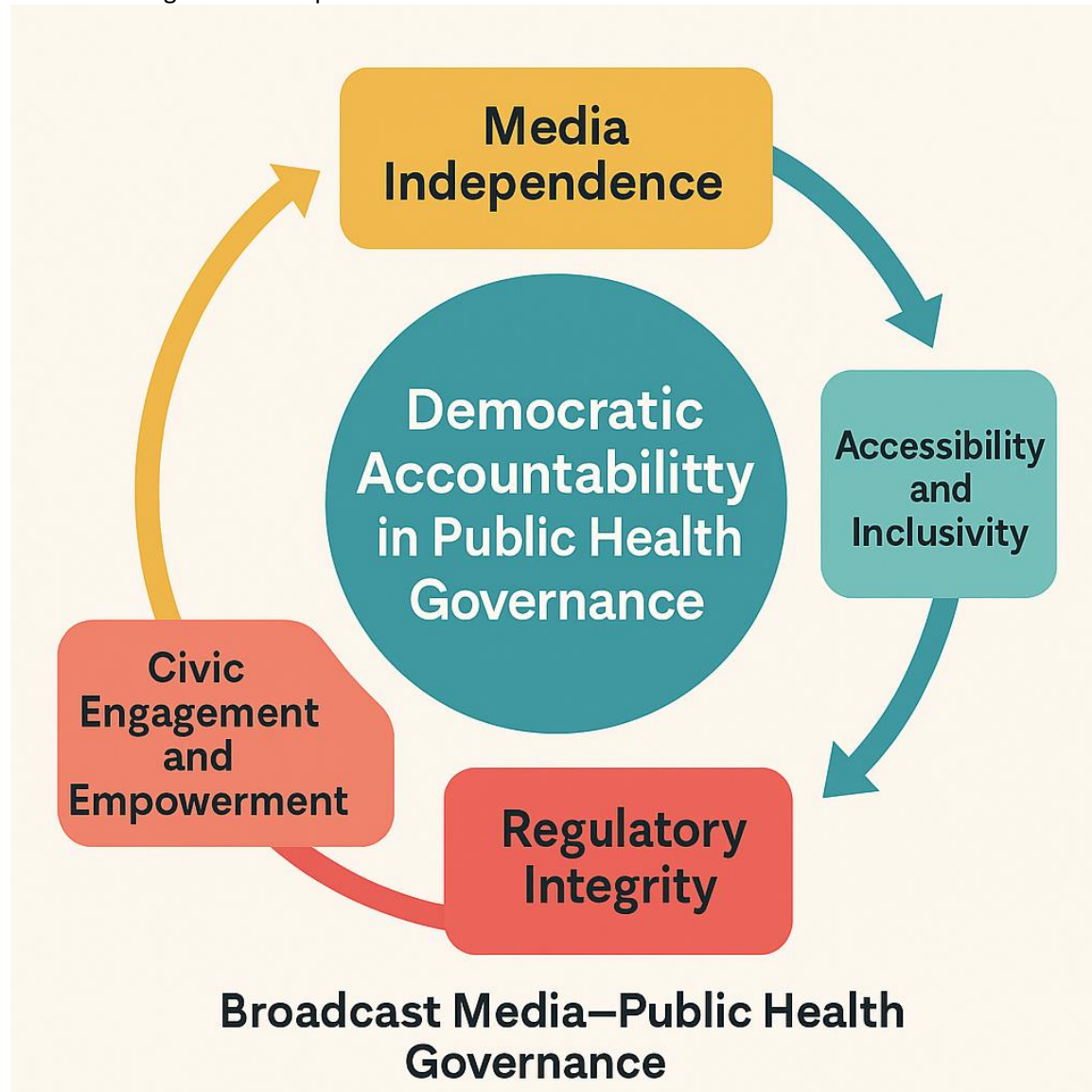
3. **Regulatory Integrity.** For broadcast media to operate with credibility and purpose, regulatory institutions must be impartial, transparent, and consistently enforced. Regulatory integrity refers to the ethical governance of both media systems and health institutions. In Nigeria, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has often been criticised for selective enforcement of broadcasting codes and political interference (Karppinen & Moe, 2022; Idowu, 2021). Without reform, such agencies can serve as instruments of repression rather than democratic oversight. BM-PHGAM posits that robust and depoliticised regulation is essential to align media and institutional behaviours with public interest objectives.
4. **Civic Engagement and Empowerment.** At the heart of democratic accountability is the active participation of citizens in holding institutions responsible for their actions. This pillar highlights the role of broadcast media in enabling deliberative spaces, facilitating public feedback, and amplifying the voices of ordinary citizens in public health discourse. Civic engagement includes call-in programs, town hall broadcasts, audience-generated content, and advocacy campaigns. When well-

facilitated, these formats convert audiences from passive consumers of information into co-creators of governance (Waisbord, 2021; Oso,

2012). This pillar ensures the model is not media- or institution-centric but people-oriented.

Model Diagram

Below is a diagrammatic representation of the BM-PHGAM model:



Model Logic and Dynamics

The Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM) is built on the premise that democratic accountability in health governance is not a linear process with a fixed endpoint, but a dynamic, iterative system in which media, institutions, and citizens are

continuously engaged in reciprocal relationships. The model advances a logic of interdependence, where media independence, accessibility and inclusivity, regulatory integrity, and civic engagement and empowerment function as mutually reinforcing pillars that collectively sustain

transparency, responsiveness, and legitimacy within public health governance systems in Africa.

At the foundation of the model lies media independence, which serves as the critical enabler of all subsequent processes. Without the freedom to operate without political coercion or economic manipulation, broadcast media cannot perform its role as a credible watchdog, public educator, or deliberative platform. Independence grants the media the autonomy to interrogate official narratives, expose institutional shortcomings, and disseminate accurate health information to the public. However, independence alone is insufficient if access to information is limited to urban elites or if content fails to reflect the pluralism of society.

This leads to the second pillar: accessibility and inclusivity. Here, the model acknowledges that the democratising potential of broadcast media depends not only on freedom of expression but also on the equitable distribution of communicative power. In African contexts, especially in Nigeria, where rural populations, linguistic minorities, and low-literacy communities are often marginalised in public discourse, radio and television must be designed to include these voices. Culturally responsive programming, use of indigenous languages, and community-based content production are central to making public health communication both effective and just. Inclusivity deepens legitimacy, enhances participation, and ensures that a broader spectrum of public input shapes governance decisions.

The third pillar, regulatory integrity, reinforces the operational framework for both media institutions and health governance systems. This component reflects the need for transparent, impartial, and consistently applied rules that govern institutional behaviour. In the absence of regulatory fairness, media can be co-opted for partisan agendas, while public health responses risk being compromised by corruption, inefficiency, or lack of oversight. Regulatory

integrity thus functions as the normative spine of the model, it safeguards editorial independence, enforces ethical standards, and ensures that public institutions remain answerable to their mandates and to the people they serve.

The fourth pillar, civic engagement and empowerment, represents the model's participatory dimension. When broadcast media is independent, inclusive, and governed ethically, it creates the conditions for meaningful citizen involvement. This engagement goes beyond information consumption to include active public participation, such as questioning officials on live programs, contributing to policy debates, monitoring health service delivery, and mobilising collective action. Empowered civic actors can hold institutions accountable, demand transparency, and co-produce governance outcomes. In this sense, civic engagement is not an endpoint but a catalyst for deeper accountability and sustained institutional reform.

At the core of this interconnected system is democratic accountability, a state in which public health institutions justify their decisions, accept scrutiny, and respond constructively to public feedback. Crucially, the model conceptualises accountability not as a terminal goal but as a feedback-driven process, one that is continuously nurtured through the interplay of media integrity, public participation, and institutional responsiveness. As civic engagement prompts calls for reform, regulatory bodies may evolve, media systems may gain further independence, and accessibility may expand, thus perpetuating the cycle of democratic deepening.

In sum, the logic of the BM-PHGAM model lies in its systemic orientation. It does not treat media or institutions in isolation but emphasises their co-dependence and embeddedness into the broader governance ecology. It advocates for a multi-actor, communicatively sustained approach to public health governance, one in which transparency,

inclusion, fairness, and participation are not abstract ideals, but operational realities. By identifying these interlocking mechanisms, the model offers a valuable theoretical lens for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to advance accountable governance in the aftermath of health crises across Africa.

Application and Utility of the BM-PHGAM Model

The Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM) serves not only as a theoretical construct but also as a pragmatic and diagnostic tool with wide-ranging utility across the domains of governance, communication, public health, and civil society engagement. Its design enables multi-level application by scholars, policymakers, media practitioners, public health communicators, and development actors seeking to strengthen democratic accountability within African governance systems, particularly in post-pandemic contexts.

As a diagnostic framework, the BM-PHGAM can be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of public health communication and institutional accountability systems. Each of the model's four pillars, media independence, accessibility and inclusivity, regulatory integrity, and civic engagement and empowerment, can be unpacked into a set of contextual indicators for evaluating the health of governance structures and media performance. In practice, this means the model can help identify deficiencies such as political interference in media operations, exclusionary communication strategies, regulatory double standards, or shallow citizen engagement. By doing so, it provides a holistic perspective that captures the interconnected nature of media and governance accountability systems in contexts like Nigeria, where institutional failures are often multidimensional and systemic.

The model also functions as a strategic tool for planning and policy reform. Public institutions, health agencies, and media

regulatory bodies can adopt BM-PHGAM as a blueprint for designing inclusive and participatory communication policies. For example, ministries of health might use the model to create campaigns that are not only informative but dialogical, incorporating feedback loops from community stakeholders. Similarly, media regulators can rely on the model to guide reforms that enhance transparency, impartiality, and citizen trust. In this capacity, BM-PHGAM is more than an evaluative lens—it becomes a forward-looking framework for institutional transformation that helps decision-makers anticipate and address the communicative dimensions of democratic governance.

In educational and training settings, the BM-PHGAM model provides a useful foundation for capacity-building across professional sectors. Journalism and communication students can be introduced to the model as a way of understanding their societal role beyond news production—as agents of accountability, inclusion, and public empowerment. Public health practitioners and development workers can also benefit from training based on the model, gaining insights into how broadcast media platforms can be leveraged not just for awareness creation, but for enabling civic participation and demanding institutional responsiveness. The model's participatory orientation makes it ideal for grassroots civil society organisations involved in advocacy and public education, offering them a framework for mobilising citizens to engage constructively with both media and public institutions.

Moreover, the BM-PHGAM model is applicable in academic research and program evaluation. Its theoretical depth and contextual relevance make it a strong foundation for empirical inquiries into media systems, health communication, and governance outcomes. Researchers can draw on the model to conduct case studies, assess the impact of media interventions, or compare the performance of regulatory institutions across different African countries. Evaluators

can also apply it in development projects focused on strengthening social accountability, using its pillars as outcome indicators for democratic responsiveness and public trust.

Finally, the model has strong utility as a communication strategy framework, particularly in times of public health emergencies. During crises such as pandemics, cholera outbreaks, or humanitarian disasters, the BM-PHGAM model can guide how media platforms and public institutions coordinate to ensure clear, inclusive, and trustworthy communication. It offers a foundation for building resilience in governance systems by embedding communicative accountability into emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. This is particularly vital in African settings where institutional memory is often weak and where lessons from past health crises are not systematically institutionalised.

In essence, the BM-PHGAM model is both a normative guide and an operational framework. It invites stakeholders to move beyond viewing communication as a mere transmission of information and toward embracing it as a governance function, central to the promotion of transparency, participation, and justice. Whether as a research framework, an accountability tool, or a planning guide, the model stands as a timely contribution to rethinking the role of media in advancing inclusive and responsive health governance in Nigeria and across Africa.

Implications of the BM-PHGAM Model

The Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM) has far-reaching implications for theory, policy, and practice. As a conceptual framework that links media systems with governance accountability in the context of public health, it challenges conventional assumptions, redefines institutional roles, and provides a new lens through which to interrogate the dynamics of communication and accountability in African democracies. The implications of this model transcend its

immediate context, offering both normative guidance and practical insight for scholars, policymakers, media regulators, civil society actors, and global health institutions.

1. **Theoretical Implications.** At the theoretical level, the BM-PHGAM model contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary scholarship that interrogates the interface between communication, governance, and development. Its synthesis of Public Sphere Theory, Governance Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D) presents a novel integrative framework that moves beyond the siloed treatment of media as a passive conduit of information or health governance as an administrative function. Instead, it frames both as interactive, co-constitutive systems, mutually dependent and dialogically structured.

This model contributes to the re-theorisation of democratic accountability in postcolonial contexts. It challenges liberal-democratic models that presume functional institutions and autonomous media landscapes by introducing a framework grounded in the complex realities of African political communication. It thereby supports a contextualised epistemology, one that incorporates linguistic diversity, regulatory fragility, and informal civic spheres, all of which are often overlooked in Eurocentric governance models.

Moreover, the model creates a basis for empirical testing and comparative analysis. Each pillar, media independence, accessibility and inclusivity, regulatory integrity, and civic engagement, can be operationalised to study media ecosystems, institutional reforms, or civic participation across regions. This expands the horizon of research possibilities in media studies, political science, public health, and development communication.

2. **Policy Implications.** From a policy perspective, BM-PHGAM presents a

strategic framework for institutional reform within media regulation and public health communication. It compels policymakers to recognise that achieving democratic accountability during health emergencies, or in their aftermath, requires more than message dissemination or public awareness campaigns. It demands that communication systems themselves be structured to promote inclusivity, institutional transparency, and citizen agency.

One of the central policy implications of the model is the need for governments to invest in protecting editorial independence and reforming regulatory institutions. In contexts like Nigeria, where media freedom is frequently compromised by political interference, the model offers a justification for the depoliticisation of broadcasting regulation, diversification of media ownership, and legislative safeguards for press freedom. These reforms are not optional add-ons but structural preconditions for a healthy accountability ecosystem.

The model also calls for health ministries and public agencies to embed inclusive and participatory strategies in their communication architecture. Public health communication must not only inform but also empower, listen, and adapt. BM-PHGAM makes clear that health governance strategies should include citizen feedback loops, culturally contextual content delivery, and responsive media interfaces to foster trust and participation. By doing so, it moves public communication from a transactional practice to a relational, governance-enhancing function.

3. **Practical Implications.** In practical terms, the BM-PHGAM model serves as a guide for professional conduct, organisational strategy, and grassroots engagement. For media practitioners, the model reasserts the journalist's role as not merely a

content creator but as an accountability broker, someone who facilitates civic discourse, challenges institutional opacity, and ensures that marginalised voices are heard in the governance conversation.

For civil society organisations, the model can shape advocacy strategies that demand not only institutional performance but also communicative justice. It provides NGOs, community leaders, and citizen groups with a framework for assessing how accessible and inclusive media environments are, and whether communication practices foster genuine participation or merely replicate elite narratives.

Within the public health sector, the model encourages the adoption of deliberative and people-centred communication strategies. It discourages one-size-fits-all messaging and promotes the co-creation of health messages with communities. This has the potential to improve health outcomes by addressing behavioural, cultural, and informational barriers through inclusive dialogue rather than prescriptive broadcasting.

Again, BM-PHGAM has significant implications for crisis preparedness and resilience building. In the face of future pandemics or health emergencies, the model serves as a reference point for developing integrated communication governance systems. Such systems prioritise media freedom, institutional responsiveness, and community participation as foundational pillars of crisis response.

Overall, the BM-PHGAM model does more than provide an analytical lens; it offers a transformative framework for restructuring how media and public health institutions interact with the governed. It invites scholars to rethink accountability theory, policymakers to reimagine regulatory frameworks, and practitioners to realign their strategies toward inclusiveness and responsiveness. In doing so, it positions communication not as a peripheral

concern but as a central instrument in democratic governance and social justice.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only challenged public health systems across Africa but also illuminated the persistent gaps in democratic accountability, institutional responsiveness, and inclusive governance. Within this complex terrain, broadcast media has emerged as both a conduit and a catalyst, capable of shaping public perception, enabling civic participation, and mediating the relationship between institutions and citizens. However, the true potential of broadcast media to foster democratic governance in the public health sector remains largely underutilised due to entrenched structural, regulatory, and communicative limitations.

This paper has responded to that gap by conceptualising the Broadcast Media–Public Health Governance Accountability Model (BM-PHGAM), a normative framework designed to reposition broadcast media as a central actor in the pursuit of transparency, responsiveness, and participatory governance in health emergencies and beyond. Drawing on Public Sphere Theory, Governance Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D), the model integrates four critical and interdependent pillars: media independence, accessibility and inclusivity, regulatory integrity, and civic engagement and empowerment. It presents a circular and iterative logic, reflecting the real-world interplay of communication, power, and public interest in African democratic contexts.

Through its theoretical synthesis, the BM-PHGAM model contributes to a more grounded understanding of accountability in postcolonial societies, challenging the assumptions of media neutrality and institutional robustness that dominate Western governance models. It also offers strategic insights for policy reform and institutional strengthening, particularly within contexts like Nigeria, where media regulation, civic inclusion, and institutional legitimacy

remain contested terrains. Furthermore, the model provides a usable framework for journalists, public health communicators, civil society actors, and researchers, enabling them to diagnose communication breakdowns, design inclusive health messaging, and evaluate institutional trust and transparency.

In addition to its conceptual contributions, the model invites further empirical validation and contextual adaptation. Future research could test the model across different geopolitical zones in Nigeria, compare its applicability in other African countries, or extend its use to digital and social media platforms. There is also room to explore how the model might guide communication policy development, capacity-building initiatives, and community engagement programs aimed at strengthening resilience in public health governance.

Ultimately, the BM-PHGAM model affirms that communication, when institutionalised with justice, inclusivity, and autonomy, is not merely instrumental but foundational to democratic life. As Africa continues to navigate its post-pandemic future, models such as this are indispensable for building governance systems that are not only efficient but also ethical, equitable, and responsive to the voices of the people they serve.

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IMPACT OF BI-CAMERAL LEGISLATION ON NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH USING ARDL APPROACH

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Abstract

This study critically examines the impact of bicameral legislation on the Nigerian economy. The research investigates the economic implications of maintaining a bicameral legislative system, including the cost of salaries, allowances, and operational cost expenses. ARDL method of analysis is employed in the analysis combining quantitative analysis on budgetary allocation to national assembly, inflationary rate and percentage of budgetary allocation to national assembly in relation to total federal budget. The result of the findings reveals that bicameral system of legislation has significant economic implications through the increase in governance cost, affecting resource allocation to critical sectors of the economy retarding economic development in Nigeria. Hence the study recommend among others that the national assembly budget should be kept as low as 0.5 percent of the total budget as it is obtainable in countries like Ghana and South Africa, the study also recommend the scribing of the senate which have one hundred and nine senators and retaining only the Federal house of representative as found in other African countries in other to cut cost of governance. Study contributes to the debate on legislative reform and provides recommendation for optimizing Nigerians legislative framework efficiently

Keywords: Legislature, governance, national assembly, budget, bi-cameral

Introduction

It is indisputable that Nigeria can no longer sustain the high financial burden associated with running its democratic system. The excessive spending is both unjustifiable and insensitive, representing a stark departure from the hopes and expectations of the Nigerian populace. This is one of the key reasons why the cost of governance particularly the oversized salaries and benefits of public officials has remained a major topic of concern since the beginning of the current democratic dispensation. While the vast majority of Nigerians live in extreme poverty, a relatively small number of public office holders enjoy extravagant privileges, creating a painful contrast that continues to provoke public outrage.

The scale of waste and lavish spending by public officials, especially legislators, severely drains national resources, hindering economic

development and national progress. This situation is reflected in Nigeria's annual budget, where approximately 70% of the total allocation is dedicated to recurrent expenditure, mainly for salaries and running costs. There is a growing consensus that Nigeria's lawmakers and members of the executive arm draw disproportionately from public funds without delivering corresponding benefits or meaningful policies that improve citizens' lives. A report by The Economist magazine (2024) brought fresh attention to this issue by ranking Nigerian legislators as the highest paid in the world. According to the report, annual salaries in other countries were significantly lower: Ghana (\$46,500), Indonesia (\$65,800), Thailand (\$43,800), India (\$11,200), Italy (\$182,000), Bangladesh (\$4,000), Israel (\$114,800), Hong Kong (\$130,000), Japan (\$149,700), and Singapore

(\$154,000). In contrast, Nigerian lawmakers were said to earn around \$189,000 (approximately ₦30 million) annually excluding other substantial earnings from unofficial sources.

What makes the situation more alarming is that the base salary pales in comparison to the range of allowances legislators receive, such as oversight, recess, wardrobe, and constituency allowances, among others. These perks significantly inflate their total income. Although the National Assembly's public relations officers have dismissed the claims from *The Economist* as inaccurate, their inability to clearly disclose the actual remuneration of legislators only fuels suspicion. They have repeatedly avoided direct answers regarding their full earnings and the sources of funds that sustain their luxurious life styles implying a lack of transparency. It is widely perceived that nowhere else in the world are so few rewarded so generously for doing so little. Rather than showing a sincere commitment to public service, many lawmakers appear more interested in personal enrichment.

In contrast, in developed nations like the Netherlands (which spends 47.7% of its national income on governance), Sweden (42.8%), the United Kingdom (37.8%), and the United States (21.0%), the high cost of governance is justified by tangible outcomes and public services—not inflated salaries. Nigerian legislators have, by their conduct, eroded their moral credibility and turned the National Assembly into a symbol of systemic corruption. The situation has reached a critical point. Today, rather than being part of the solution, the National Assembly is seen as a significant obstacle to the nation's democratic development and urgently requires thorough reform.

Roskin, Cord, Medeiros, and Jones (2008), as well as Dahl, Shapiro, and Cheibub (2003), argue that democracy offers a vital platform for citizens to participate in leadership transitions and influence issues that directly or indirectly affect their lives (Lipset & Lakin,

2004; Roskin et al., 2008; Dahl et al., 2003). Before the emergence of the legislature as a means for citizen representation, societies primarily relied on direct democracy. Also known as "pure democracy," this system allowed citizens themselves rather than elected officials to make decisions on laws and policies (Gaus & Kukathas, 2004). However, due to challenges such as population size and the high cost of implementation, direct democracy gradually gave way to representative democracy (Gaus & Kukathas, 2004).

Representative democracy, a form of indirect democracy, enables citizens to elect individuals to represent their interests in government (Dibie, 2003; Hénaff & Strong, 2004). Its core principle is citizen participation. Since it is no longer practical for everyone to participate directly in governance, electing competent and trusted individuals to act on behalf of the people has become the most viable alternative. In this context, democracy is essentially synonymous with representative democracy. In countries like Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, representatives are typically elected by a plurality of eligible and participating voters (Gaus & Kukathas, 2004).

The legitimacy of representative democracy lies in its foundation on the collective will of the people. This makes it more acceptable, popular, and centered around the needs of the populace than other forms of governance. The concept of "representation" is rooted in a mutual trust—a social contract between the electorate and their chosen officials (Harvey & Harvey, 1989). As such, elected representatives are expected to honour the principles and commitments upon which they were elected (Gaus & Kukathas, 2004).

The essence of representative democracy is its emphasis on truly reflecting the will of the people. Citizens, having transferred their sovereign power through the ballot, expect genuine representation in return. The legislature acts as the voice and eyes of the people, fulfilling responsibilities they cannot

personally carry out due to challenges such as large population, coordination difficulties, and resource constraints.

In Nigeria, a bicameral legislature is employed to ensure fair representation of the country's diverse ethnic groups. However, in practice, this system has not necessarily enhanced democratic governance. Instead, the high financial cost of maintaining a bicameral legislature has overshadowed its intended benefits, raising questions about its effectiveness in truly advancing democratic ideals., maintaining its original meaning while improving clarity and coherence: The trend of reckless behavior by legislators at the national level, coupled with their pursuit of personal gain at the expense of national interest and citizens' welfare, has been highlighted by Arowolo and Aluko (2012). These issues, and their negative impact on national development and good governance, have become the focus of this study. Given the ongoing controversies and contradictions surrounding the practice of bicameral legislature in Nigeria, this research seeks to propose an alternative, more effective legislative system that aligns better with the country's democratic needs.

Understanding the Legislature in Context

A legislature refers to a deliberative body empowered to create, amend, or repeal laws. Laws enacted by such a body are termed legislation or statutory laws. Beyond its law-making function, the legislature typically holds exclusive rights to impose or reduce taxes, as well as to approve budgets and other financial-related bills. While legislatures are referred to by different names such as parliament or congress these labels may carry distinct meanings in specific political systems. Essentially, the legislature functions as the government branch responsible for crafting and revising laws.

In parliamentary systems, the legislature holds ultimate authority and selects one of its members to serve as prime minister, who then leads the executive branch. Conversely, in

presidential systems governed by the principle of separation of powers, the legislature operates as an autonomous and equal branch alongside the executive and judiciary.

Legislatures are generally composed of one or more chambers deliberative assemblies where laws are debated and voted upon. A legislature with a single chamber is known as unicameral, while a bicameral system includes two chambers, often labeled the upper and lower houses. These houses typically differ in roles, responsibilities, and methods of member selection. Rare instances of trilateral legislatures have existed, such as the Massachusetts Governor's Council and, more notably, during the final years of apartheid-era South Africa.

In many parliamentary systems, the lower house holds more power, while the upper house primarily serves as an advisory or reviewing chamber. In contrast, presidential systems often provide equal or nearly equal powers to both chambers. Within federal systems, upper houses often represent the constituent states. This setup is also mirrored in supranational bodies like the European Union. In some cases, state delegates occupy upper houses, as seen in Germany and pre-1913 United States. In others, like in modern Australia and the United States, representation is based on formulas that give smaller states equal voice. Since legislative members usually sit in designated halls for discussions and voting, the term "seat" has become synonymous with both legislative membership and electoral districts. For example, a legislature with 100 seats means it has 100 members. When someone says they are "contesting a seat," it means they are seeking election to become a member. Terms like "safe seat" or "marginal seat" also refer to electoral zones and the level of competition associated with them.

Thus, a legislature is essentially a representative deliberative assembly with authority to legislate. Despite differing names parliament, congress, national assembly their core function remains lawmaking and

government oversight. Additionally, they are instrumental in representing constituents and maintaining checks on the executive. As defined in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Science*, legislatures are political institutions whose members are equal in standing, derive legitimacy from representing the political community, and operate within established procedures to make collective decisions (Loewenberg, 1995:118).

Loewenberg (1995) further describes legislatures as gatherings of elected representatives from specific geographical areas, tasked with lawmaking roles in the governance process. Similarly, Jewell emphasizes two defining characteristics of legislatures: the formal power to enact laws, which are enforced by the executive and interpreted by the judiciary, and the representative role of its elected members. This paper aligns with these interpretations and underscores the legislature's centrality to democratic governance, given its foundational responsibilities. It is important to recognize that legislative bodies may vary in structure, function, and scope depending on the political context. Let me know if you need this condensed or tailored for a specific audience or academic style.

Democracy and Bicameralism

Democracy has been defined in numerous ways by different scholars, making it one of the most extensively conceptualized terms. However, relying on a single dimension to define such a complex system often results in an incomplete understanding. The many aspects of democracy contribute to its uniqueness (Diamond, 2005). For this reason, this paper seeks to clearly define and analyze the concepts of democracy and bicameralism to highlight their core features.

Smith (2009) defines democracy as a form of governance that encourages meaningful and widespread competition among individuals and groups, includes broad political participation in choosing leaders and shaping policies, ensures civil and political liberties that

support such participation, maintains representative parliaments, holds the government accountable to the legislature, and conducts regular, free, and fair elections while upholding freedoms of expression, association, and universal suffrage.

Similarly, Onyeoziri (1989) outlines four key dimensions of democracy: individual and collective rights and freedoms; inclusive and equal participation in collective decision-making; government accountability to the general public and minority groups; and the implementation of equal citizenship principles across social, economic, and political life. The consistent theme here is that any government claiming to be democratic must demonstrate openness, competitive political choices, active citizen participation, enjoyment of civil liberties, and leadership accountability. Citizens should have real opportunities to engage in the democratic process, especially through regular elections that allow them to choose credible representatives. A government is typically composed of three distinct branches: the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. Each arm performs specific functions executing laws, making laws, and interpreting laws, respectively. This separation of powers aims to prevent the concentration of authority and avoid power abuse, as encapsulated in the adage "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." It also facilitates checks and balances, which are vital for effective governance and adherence to the rule of law. This study, however, focuses specifically on the legislative arm in relation to its representational role. Generally, there are two main types of legislature: unicameral and bicameral. In Nigeria, the legislature operates at two levels, making it a bicameral system. Bicameralism refers to a legislative structure with two separate chambers or houses. In such systems, the legislature is divided into two parts commonly referred to as the upper and lower houses (Bugaje, 2003).

The power dynamic between the two chambers varies; in some legislative systems,

both chambers have equal authority, while in others, one chamber holds more influence. Bicameral legislatures are typical in federal systems, where the upper chamber usually represents the various constituent units. Let me know if you'd like a more concise summary or an academic version tailored for a paper or presentation. Sure! Here's a paraphrased version of the text, maintaining the original ideas but presenting them in clearer and more concise language: In both the United States and Nigeria, the bicameral legislature consists of two chambers: the upper house, which represents the individual states, and the lower house, which represents the population-based districts (Roskin, Cord, Medeiros & Jones, 2008). This structure is common in federal systems such as those found in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States, where bicameralism is closely tied to the federal nature of the government (Bugaje, 2003).

The rationale behind adopting a bicameral legislature is to foster well-rounded legislation that benefits the population, while also enhancing political participation, representation, and engagement. This structure helps promote a sense of inclusion and trust, which can strengthen national unity and encourage patriotism an essential element of democratic governance (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012). Therefore, democracy serves as the framework through which bicameral legislative goals can be realized and sustained. Legislatures generally perform several key functions: they create laws, address the needs of their constituents, exercise oversight over the executive, scrutinize and critique government policies, educate the public by raising awareness of societal issues, and provide representation (Dibie, 2003). A central challenge for advocates of democracy is designing institutions that enable meaningful participation from all citizens in governance. Without such participation, governments risk losing legitimacy and the emotional

connection necessary to effectively represent and serve the people (Bugaje, 2003). This connection is reinforced through periodic elections, where citizens choose their representatives to make laws and manage public affairs at local, state, and national levels.

Models of Representation

Political representation is commonly explained through four theoretical models: the trusteeship model, the delegation model, the mandate model, and the resemblance model (Heywood, 2007).

Trusteeship Model

To understand the trusteeship model, one must first define a trustee someone entrusted with managing property or responsibilities on behalf of others. Under this model, representatives are expected to use their own informed judgment and moral conscience to serve the interests of their constituents (Burke, 1975; Heywood, 2007). It assumes that individuals with more education, privilege, or resources are better equipped to govern and make decisions for the less fortunate. This view holds that knowledge and wisdom are not evenly distributed across society, and not all citizens are equipped to make informed political decisions. However, the trusteeship model has faced significant criticism, particularly for its lack of logical consistency. Critics question the assumption that education necessarily correlates with the ability to represent others effectively. While education may improve understanding of policies and economics, true representation also depends on moral values and empathy qualities that formal education alone may not instill. Furthermore, giving representatives too much unchecked power can lead to corruption and elitist attitudes in leadership (Heywood, 2007).

Delegate Model

The delegate model is derived from the basic concept of a delegate someone selected to act or speak on behalf of others. A delegate

is typically an individual who understands and shares the sentiments of those being represented and is committed to effectively conveying their views. In this model, the delegate functions primarily as a spokesperson with limited autonomy, refraining from personal judgment or independent decision-making (Heywood, 2007). A common example is when political party members are chosen to represent the views of their constituents during national primary elections.

Mandate Model

Before the rise of contemporary political parties, political representation was largely based on the personal traits and qualities of individuals, who were supported due to their charisma, image, or talents. However, with the development of party politics, the mandate model became prominent. This model, often referred to as the "doctrine of the mandate" (Heywood, 2007), asserts that voters entrust elected officials with the authority to act on their behalf in parliament. Central to this model is the idea that once a political party wins an election, it receives a mandate to implement the policies and programs promoted during its campaign. Unlike the delegate model, the focus here shifts from individual politicians to the party as the primary vehicle of representation. This ensures party cohesion and enforces discipline among members (Dibie, 2003). However, critics argue that it overlooks the significance of personal attributes in political leadership.

Resemblance Model

The resemblance model emphasizes the importance of representatives sharing social and cultural experiences with the groups they represent. It advocates that a representative body should mirror the wider society, reflecting its diversity and composition (Heywood, 2007). According to this perspective, only individuals who belong to a particular group and have lived its experiences can genuinely understand and defend its interests (Burke, 1975). Nevertheless, this

model has been criticized for potentially encouraging group-based politics, which could lead to fragmentation. For instance, if women are expected to represent only women, workers represent only the working class, and ethnic groups are represented exclusively by their own members, it may foster division and conflict within the polity.

Application in Nigeria

Nigeria's system of representation reflects a blend of the mandate and resemblance models. Legislative bodies such as the Houses of Assembly and the National Assembly often align with the resemblance model, where representatives are typically chosen based on ethnic or regional backgrounds. Similarly, appointments to executive cabinets at both federal and state levels also demonstrate this approach for example, the appointment of women to head ministries related to women's affairs or youth representatives in charge of youth-related portfolios. On the other hand, the executive arm of government, including the offices of the President and State Governors, operates more in line with the mandate model. These individuals are elected to serve as representatives of the entire nation or their respective states, carrying the mandate of the electorate to implement party policies and programs.

Arguments against Bicameral Legislature in Nigeria

Critics of Nigeria's bicameral legislature raise several concerns. One major argument is that it results in excessive government spending and resource wastage. The operation of two legislative chambers incurs high administrative costs and centralizes too much financial and political power at the federal level, often to the disadvantage of the constituent states. Another point of criticism is the legislative inefficiency it creates. The process of passing bills is often delayed due to the need for both chambers to deliberate on identical proposals. After each house passes its version of a bill, both versions must be

harmonized before they can be signed into law, causing significant delays (Okuwa, 2001).

Additionally, bicameralism can foster unhealthy competition and power struggles between the two chambers. A notable example was the disagreement during the joint session to amend the 1999 Constitution in Minna, Niger State, in 2009. Some argue that a single legislative chamber could effectively perform the same functions, making the existence of two redundant. This school of thought believes that bicameralism can hinder the full expression of democracy by concentrating less power in the hands of representatives elected by the popular majority (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012). Another contentious issue is the huge financial burden imposed by the allowances and salaries of legislators and their numerous aides. Reports suggest that Nigerian taxpayers shoulder an annual cost of around ₦52.4 billion for lawmakers' salaries, with an additional ₦15.02 billion in quarterly multi-purpose allowances. On average, each lawmaker reportedly earns over ₦10 million monthly in statutory income (Arizona, 2009).

Arguments in Favour of Bicameral Legislature in Nigeria

Supporters of a bicameral legislative system argue that it provides a crucial check

against impulsive or self-serving laws that may benefit a narrow group or an individual leader. Within a federal system like Nigeria's, a two-chamber legislature helps ensure national stability by preventing the domination of smaller groups or states over others. The Senate, for example, serves as the chamber that represents the interests of the federating units. Senators are elected to represent their individual states, helping to balance regional interests and promote national unity (Dibie, 2003). This dual structure enables the Senate to act as a counterweight to potentially biased legislation passed by the House of Representatives. Furthermore, having both chambers review bills helps guard against ethnic, sectional, or class dominance in national policymaking. Although this duplication may appear time-consuming, it serves an important democratic function. In a developing country like Nigeria, the complexities of governance and national development might justify such costs.

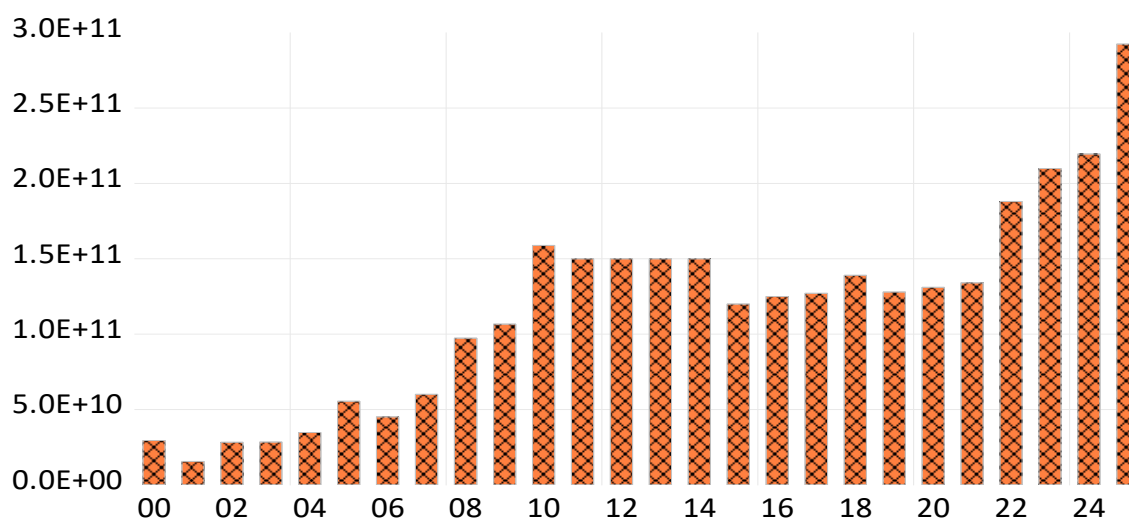
Bicameralism also facilitates the fair allocation of legislative responsibilities. For instance, the Nigerian Senate is specifically tasked with approving executive nominations (Dibie, 2003), thereby contributing to a more balanced distribution of power and workload.

Table1: National Assembly Budget, Total Budget and percentage to Total Budget

YEAR	NASS ALLOCATION	TOTAL BUDJECT	AS % OF TOTAL BUDJECT
2000	29,400,197,761.00	675,080,490,731.06	4.355065531
2001	15,500,000,000.00	894,214,805,186.00	1.733364278
2002	28,161,930,230.00	1,064,801,253,520.00	2.644806262
2003	28,290,056,582.00	1,679,318,043,375.00	1.68461577
2004	34,729,324,335.00	1,302,523,844,588.00	2.666310063
2005	55,432,457,557.81	1,799,938,243,138.00	3.079686638
2006	44,999,999,999.00	1,876,302,363,351.00	2.398334132
2007	60,000,000,000.00	2,266,394,423,477.00	2.647376793
2008	97,325,333,760	2,492,076,718,936.96	3.905390754
2009	106,642,333,759.81	3,101,858,996,077.92	3.438013588
2010	158,916,167,627.80	4,608,616,278,213.00	3.448240384
2011	150,000,000,000.00	4,484,736,648,992.00	3.344677999

2012	150,000,000,000.00	4,877,209,156,933.00	3.075529369
2013	150,000,000,000.00	4,987,220,425,601.00	3.007687393
2014	150,000,000,000.00	4,695,190,000,000.00	3.194758892
2015	120,000,000,000.00	4,493,363,957,158.00	2.670604944
2016	125,000,000,000.00	6,070,000,000,000.00	2.059308072
2017	127,000,000,000.00	7,208,000,000,000.00	1.761931188
2018	139,000,000,000.00	8,600,000,000,000.00	1.61627907
2019	128,000,000,000.00	8,830,000,000,000.00	1.449603624
2020	131,000,000,000.00	1.030,000,000,000.13	1.27184466
2021	134,000,000,000.00	1,300,600,000,000.13	1.030293711
2022	188,000,000,000.00	1,639,340,000,000.00	1.3246
2023	210,000,000,000.00	2,183,000.000,000.00	1.32444
2024	219,626,800,000.11	2,754.000,000,000.00	0.79864
2025	292,522,110,000..00	5,499,000,000,000.00	0.532826958

**Figure 1: Budgetary allocation to National Assembly from 2000 to 2025 in Billions
NASS ALLOCATION**



Source: Authors Computation (2025)

Figure 1 above shows the allocation to national assembly for the period of twenty five years the figure above shows that national assembly budget has been on the increasing since 2001 the figure above reveals that in the year 2000 the overall national assembly budget put together is ₦29, 400,197,761.00 while in 2001 witness a reduction to ₦15, 500,000,000.00 which represent 47.279 percent reduction and rose to 28,161,930,230.00 representing 45 percent increase in allocation.

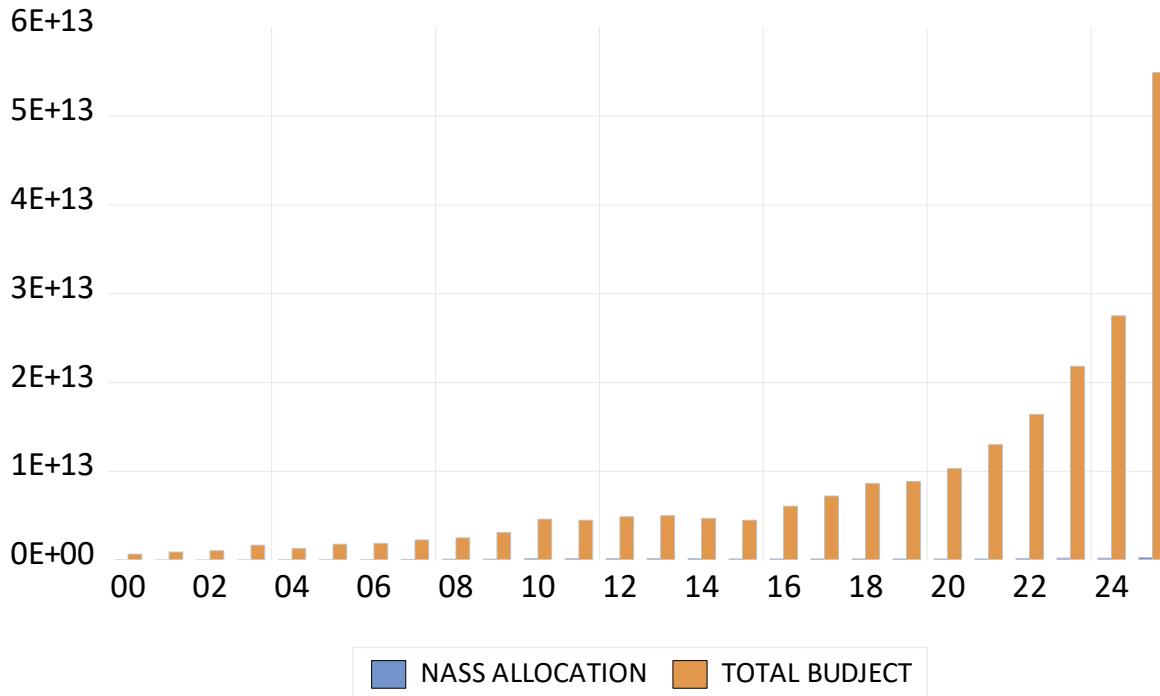
In 2011 to 2015 it shows consistency as the budget by maintain a steady allocation of ₦

150,500,000,000.00 even though it represent an increase of 81 percent from the base year in 2000 in 2015 the national assembly budget witness a decline from ₦ 150,500,000,000.00 in 2014 to 120,000,000,000.00 in 2015 representing 20 percent reduction from 2011 allocation this shows how national assembly allocation has been growing even though inflation is in single digit of 9.4. from 2022 there have a sharp increase in the budget from 120billion in 2015 to ₦ 188,000,000,000.00 which represent 56.67 percent increase from 2014. This trend continued to increase in the

pass three year to 292,511.000.000.000.00 in
2015 resenting 59.66 percent increase from

2022 representing 45 percent increase in
allocation

Figure 2: National Assembly allocation as Percentage of total budget



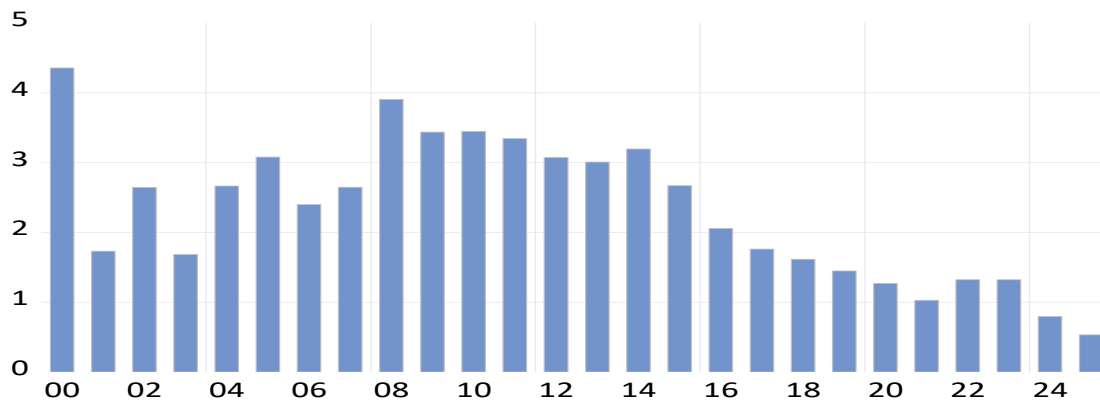
Source: Authors Computation (2025)

Figure 2 shows the national assembly allocation as a percentage of the total Nigerians total budget from the figure above national assembly budget in blue while total budget is in orange from the figure above it shows that even though the figure represent just a fraction of the total budget this become so as a result of the size of the budget. From

the total allocation is shows that the size of Nigerian budget has grown from 675billion from 2000 to 5.49 Trillion which reveal a monstrous increase in budgetary within the period this represent 8593 percentage increase in the last fifteen years of democracy

Figure 3: National Assembly allocation as Percentage of total budget

AS % OF TOTAL BUDJECT



Source: Authors Computation (2025)

Figure 3 to above shows the percentage of National assembly allocation to Nigerians total budget in 2000 it represent 4.355065531 of the total budget, in 2001 it represent 1.733364278 to the total budget, in 2003 it represent 2.644806262 of the total budget. 1.68461577 The figure above also reveals that in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008, 2009, and 2010 the percentage of national assembly allocation to Total National budget represent. 2.666310063, 3.079686638, 2.398334132, 2.647376793, 3.905390754, 3.438013588 and 3.448240384 respectively while there is a drop in 2011 to 0.345616727 percent of the

National budget, and rose to 3.075529369 3.007687393, and 3.194758892 in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively. The budgetary allocation has continued to increase in size since then to represent 2.670604944, 2.059308072, 1.761931188, 1.61627907, 1.449603624, 1.27184466, 1.030293711, 1.3246 1.32444, 0.79864, and 0.532826958 of the total budget in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 respectively.

Table 2: Appropriations to the legislature: comparative analysis between Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa from 2010-2015

	NIGERIA (IN NAIRA)			GHANA (IN GHC)			SOUTH AFRICA (RAND)		
YEAR	NASS ALL.	TOTAL BUDGET	% OF TO. BUDJECT	ALL. TO PAR.	TO BUDGET	% OF BUDGET	ALL. TO PAR.	TO BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
2010	158,916,167,627.80	4,608,616,278,213.00	3.448240384	34,037,510.00	10,900,843,233.00	0.31	1198.9	805979.1	0.15
2011	150,000,000,000.00	4,484,736,648,992.00	3.344677999	36,885,489.00	13,534,030,225.00	0.27	1214.8	889911.5	0.14
2012	150,000,000,000.00	4,877,209,156,933.00	3.075529369	109,293,102.00	21,596,600,000.00	0.51	1297.9	965495.6	0.13
2013	150,000,000,000.00	4,987,220,425,601.00	3.007687393	178,540,891.00	28,163,377,196.00	0.63	1535.5	1047763.8	0.15
2014	150,000,000,000.00	4,695,190,000,000.00	3.194758892	209,055,215.00	36,358,350,000.00	0.57	1508.2	1135121.6	0.13
2015	120,000,000,000.00	4,493,363,957,158.00	2.670604944	185,194,572.00	37,695,512,766.00	0.49	1566.9	1222344.7	0.13

Source: Appropriation Acts, 2000-2015

Key

ALL. TO PAR.= Allocation to parliaments

NASS ALL.=National Assembly allocation

TO. BUDGET= Total Budget of the federation

% OF TO. BUDJECT= percentage of total budget

Fig 4: Comparative analysis between Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa from 2010-2015 National Assembly allocation as Percentage of total budget

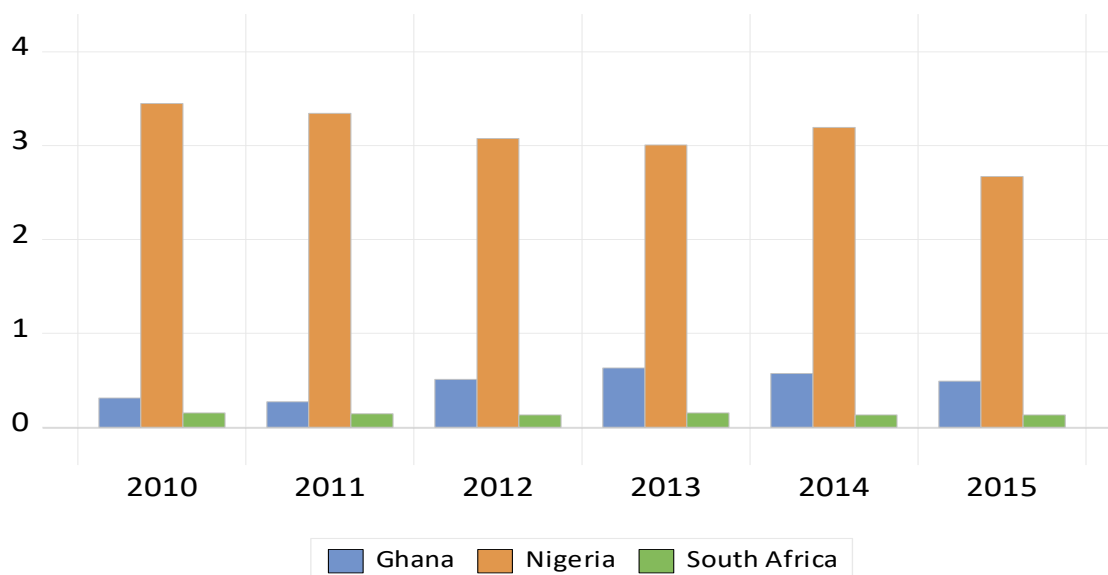


Fig 4 above shows the comparative analysis of Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa. From the figure above it shows that Ghana's budgetary allocation to the parliament is less than 0.7 percent of the country's total budget from 2010 -2015 similarly the figure shows that South African budgetary allocation to its parliament is also less than 0.2 percent of its total budget to a contrary in Nigeria the National assembly budget is from 3 percent to approximately 3.8 percent of the country total budget which depict a chunk

Methodology

Descriptive and inferential statistics

The descriptive and inferential statistic is a very important preliminary test before conducting any test on the variables. The descriptive statistics test is normally carried out to ascertain the characteristics of the variable, it show if the mean, median, maximum, minimum and standard deviation of the variables are normally distributed. The decision to accept the null hypothesis lies on the Jarque-Bera probability value. However if the value of the Jarque-Bera probability is more than 0.5 implies accepting

the null hypothesis that the variables are normally distributed and fit for estimation.

Test of stationarity

The Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test is employed to test for the unit root as the disturbances or the error term in Dickey and fuller unit root test is unlikely to be white noise, the ADF unit root test includes extra lagged terms of the dependent variable in order to eliminate the problem of autocorrelation the decision to accept or to reject the null hypothesis of $\delta = 0$ is based on the Dickey –Fuller critical values. The test was then applied as follows

$$\Delta Y_t = \gamma Y_{t-1} + a_{2t} + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta \Delta Y_{t-1} + U_t \dots \dots \dots (3.1)$$

Where

Δ = difference operator
 Y_t = dependent Variable
 U_t = white noise

Under the null hypothesis if $\gamma = 1$ becomes a random walk, that is non-stationary process if $\gamma < 1$ this means that the series Y_t is stationary. The stationarity test for each of the series is stated as follows

$$\Delta RGDP_t = \gamma RGDP_{t-1} + a_{2t} + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta \Delta RGDP_{t-1} + U_t \dots \dots \dots (3.2)$$

$$\Delta DEXP_t = \gamma NALL_{t-1} + a_{2t} + \sum_{t-1}^p \beta \Delta NALL_{t-1} + U_t \dots \dots \dots (3.3)$$

$$\Delta INSDEX_t = \gamma POTB_{t-1} + a_{2t} + \sum_{t-1}^p \beta \Delta POTB_{t-1} + U_t \dots \dots \dots (3.4)$$

$$\Delta FDI_t = \gamma TBUG_{t-1} + a_{2t} + \sum_{t-1}^p \beta \Delta TBUG_{t-1} + U_t \dots \dots \dots (3.5)$$

$$\Delta GFCF_t = \gamma INFL_{t-1} + a_{2t} + \sum_{t-1}^p \beta \Delta INFL_{t-1} + U_t \dots \dots \dots (3.6)$$

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Estimates

ARDL model was introduced by Pesaran et al. (2001) in order to incorporate I(0) and I(1) variables in same estimation so if your variables are stationary I(0) then OLS is appropriate and if all are non-stationary I(1) then it is advisable to do VECM (Johanson Approach) as it is much simple model.

We cannot estimate conventional OLS on the variables if any one of them or all of them are (1) because these variable will not behave like constants which is required in OLS and as most of them are changing in time so OLS will mistakenly show high t values and significant results but in reality it would be inflated because of common time component, in econometric it is called spurious results where R square of the model becomes higher than the Durban Watson Statistic. So we move to a new set of models which can work on I(1) variable In order to run ARDL some preconditions needed to be checked

- Dependent must be non-stationary in order for the model to behave better.
- None of the variable should be I(2) in normal conditions (ADF test)
- none of the variable should be I(2) in structural break (Zivot Andrews test)

$$\Delta \ln RGDP = \alpha_0 + \partial_i \ln RGDP_{t-1} + \partial_2 \ln NALL_{t-1} + \partial_3 \ln POTB_{t-1} + \sum_{i=0}^q \Omega \Delta \ln TBUG_{t-1} + \sum_{m=0}^q \lambda \Delta \ln INFL_{t-1} + \dots \dots \dots (3.7)$$

Were ∂_i are the long run multipliers, α_0 is the intercept, Ω and λ are the speed of adjustment and ε_t is the error term

Model I

$$RGDP = \alpha_0 + NALL_{t-1} + POTB_{t-1} + TBUG_{t-1} + INFL_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \dots \dots \dots (3.7)$$

Were

RGDP = Real Gross Domestic Product
NALL= National Assembly allocation
POTB= Percentage of total Budget
TBUG= Total Budget
INFL= Inflation
 α_0 = intercept

Result and Discussion

Result

Table 3: Descriptive and inferential statistics

	RGDP	NALL	POTB	TBUG	INFL
Mean	13.94298	10.97601	2.325547	12.66641	16.58808
Median	13.79438	11.10551	2.521570	12.66761	14.50000
Maximum	14.75358	11.46616	4.355066	13.73957	34.40000
Minimum	13.37416	10.19033	0.532827	11.82936	5.400000
Std. Dev.	0.438659	0.331039	1.014046	0.476142	7.135305
Skewness	0.601643	-0.838646	0.068713	0.262893	0.885138
Kurtosis	2.114558	2.634264	2.043046	2.560312	3.516405
Jarque-Bera	2.417898	3.192660	1.012533	0.508923	3.683928
Probability	0.698511	0.702639	0.702742	0.775334	0.858506
Sum	362.5174	285.3762	60.46423	329.3266	431.2900
Sum Sq. Dev.	4.810539	2.739671	25.70726	5.667773	1272.814
Observations	26	26	26	26	26

Source: Computed by Author Using Eviews 10

If $p\text{-value} > 0.05$: Accept H_0 . The data does not significantly deviate from normality (i.e., it's likely normally distributed) from 3 above the value of the Jarque-Bera Probability values for the variables RGDP, NALL, POTB, TBUG and INFL are greater than 0.05 which depict

rejection of the null hypothesis that the data are not normally distributed and accept the alternative that the data are normally distributed and can be used for analysis

Table 4: Unit root test

VARIABLE	ADF VALUE LEVEL	TEST AT	PROB	ADF VALUE FIRST DIFF	TEST AT	PROB	STATIONARITY
RGDP	0.907253		0.9939	-5.844548		0.0001	I(I)
NALL	-0.907172		0.7689	-7.775740		0.0000	I(I)
POTB	-2.142787		0.2308	-9.620161		0.0000	I(I)
TBUG	0.863269		0.9931	-4.670086		0.0011	I(I)
INFL	-4.190357		0.0037				I(0)

Source: Computed by Authors

Table 4: from the analysis in table 4 above shows that the variable RGDP is a non-stationary variable but become stationary after first differencing and the probability value of 0.0001 which is less than 0.005 signifies accepting the hypothesis that RGDP has no unit root at that level similarly the variable NALL is a non-stationary variable but become stationary after first differencing and the probability value of 0.0000 which is less than 0.005 signifies accepting the hypothesis that NALL has no unit root at that level, on the same vein POTB and TBUG are non-stationary variable but became stationary after first

differencing their probability values of 0.0000 and 0.0011 respectively are less than 0.005 which depict rejecting the null hypothesis that POTB and TBUG have unit root and accepting the alternative that they do have unit root at that level while the variable INFL is said to be a stationary variable at level. Based on the stationary condition of the variable the appropriate model for estimation is ARDL (Auto Distributive lag model) which incorporate I (I) and I (0) will be the appropriate method of analysis

Table 5 Result of ARDL Estimation

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Estimates			
ARDL (1, 1, 1, 1, 0) selected based on Schwarz Bayesian Criterion			
Dependent variable is RGDP			
25 observations used for estimation from 2001 to 2025			
Regressor	Coefficient	Standard Error	Ratio [Prob]
RGDP (-1)	.50892	.22353	2.2767 [.035]
NALL	-.190610	.57388	1.5789 [.002]
TBUG	.56051	.43942	1.2756 [.232]
POTB	.14447	.10793	1.3386 [.000]
INFL	- .020857	.0036081	.57807 [.002]
C	8.8112	3.2313	2.7268 [.014]
T	.040057	.015485	2.5868 [.019]

Source: Computed by Authors Using Microfit

From the analysis in table 5 above shows the coefficient of the regression analysis with

dependent variable as RGDP (real gross domestic product) as proxy for economic

growth from the analysis it reveal that 1 unit increase in national assembly allocation will lead to 0.191 decrease in economic growth in Nigeria, the implication is that national assembly allocation from 2000 to 2025 has resulted to a decrease in the nation's economic growth by 19.1 percent. This is to say national assembly budget has negative impact of economic growth in Nigeria for the period under study. On the same vein the analysis also reveals that 1 unit increase in real gross domestic product which is proxy for economic growth will lead to 0.56 increase in the total countries budget the implication of this findings is that 1 unit increase on economic growth is as a result to 56% fifty percent increase in budgetary allocation.

The result of the analysis shows that 1 unit increase in real gross domestic product or

economic growth in Nigeria lead to 0.14 unit increase in the percentage of national assembly allocation in Nigeria the implication of his findings is that every time that the budget of the federation increase by 1 unit national assembly allocation increases by 14% this show a geometric relation between economic growth and increase in percentage of national assembly allocation in respect to total budgetary allocation. Lastly the result of the findings reveal that inflation has negative relationship with economic growth in Nigeria from the analysis it reveals that an increase in the level of inflation by 0.2 will lead to 1 unit decrease on economic growth in Nigeria. The interpretation to this is that 2% increase in the inflationary level lead to 1 unit decrease in economic growth in Nigeria for the period under study.

Table 6: Long run ARDL Result

Estimated Long Run Coefficients using the ARDL Approach
ARDL (1, 0, 0, 0, 0) selected based on Schwarz Bayesian Criterion

Dependent variable is RGDP

25 observations used for estimation from 2001 to 2025

Regressor	Coefficient	Standard Error	Ratio [Prob]
NALL	-1.8451	.93244	1.9788 [.063]
TBUG	1.1414	.63127	1.8081 [.087]
POTB	.29420	.18145	1.6213 [.122]
INFL	.042472	.0069247	.61335 [.547]
C	17.9426	4.7338	3.7903 [.001]
T	.081571	.028063	2.9067 [.009]

Source: Computed by Authors Using Microfit.

Table 6 shows the long run result of the ARDL which reveals that in the long run the national assembly budget will 1.8451 unit decrease on economic growth in Nigeria. The implication is that in the long run the national assembly allocation will lead to 184.5 percent reduction on Nigerians economic growth which represent a chuck on Nigerians economic growth on the same vein in the long run national assembly allocation will be 29 percent of the total budget if it keep increase at the pace it is today.

Discussion of Findings

From the analysis of the data it shows that it does not significantly deviate from normality (i.e., it's likely normally distributed) From the analysis the result indicate that 1 unit increase in national assembly allocation will lead to 0.191 decrease in economic growth in Nigeria, the implication is that national assembly allocation from 2000 to 2025 has resulted to a decrease in the nation's economic growth by 19.1 percent. That is the national assembly budget has negative impact

of economic growth in Nigeria for the period under study. Similarly the analysis also reveals that 1 unit increase in real gross domestic product which is proxy for economic growth will lead to 0.56 increase in the total countries budget the implication of this findings is that 1 unit increase on economic growth is as a result to 56% fifty six percent increase in budgetary allocation.

The result also reveals that 1 unit increase in real gross domestic product or economic growth in Nigeria lead to 0.14 unit increase in the percentage of national assembly allocation in Nigeria the implication of his findings is that every time that the budget of the federation increase by 1 unit national assembly allocation increases by 14% this show a geometric relation between economic growth and increase in percentage of national assembly allocation in respect to total budgetary allocation. Lastly the result of the findings reveal that inflation has negative relationship with economic growth in Nigeria from the analysis it reveals that an increase in the level of inflation by 0.2 will lead to 1 unit decrease on economic growth in Nigeria. The interpretation to this is that 2% increase in the inflationary level lead to 1 unit decrease in economic growth in Nigeria for the period under study. The result of the ARDL in addition reveals that in the long run the national assembly budget will lead to 1.8451 unit decrease on economic growth in Nigeria. The implication is that in the long run the national assembly allocation will lead to 184.5 percent reduction on Nigerians economic growth which represent a chuck on Nigerians economic growth on the same vein in the long run national assembly allocation will be 29 percent of the total budget if it keep increase at the pace it is today

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study which investigate the impact of bicameral legislature on Nigerian economic growth concludes that bicameral legislation has negative relationship with economic growth in Nigeria and also the percentage of

National assembly allocation is on the high side and also the recurrent expenditure has continued to be on the increase which also contribute to the increase in National assembly budget, the study lastly concludes that the huge amount allocated to national assembly will lead to increase in the countries rate of inflation in the long run.

Based on the findings of the study the following were recommended by the study:

- i The National assembly budget should be kept as low as 0.5 percent of the total budget as it is obtainable in countries like Ghana and South Africa
- ii the study also recommend the scribing of the senate which have one hundred and nine senators and retaining only the Federal house of representative as found in other African countries in other to cut cost of governance.
- iii. Also the study recommend that Federal law maker should not be given constituency allowance, all constituency allowance should be capture under capital expenditure in the federal budget.
- iv the study also recommend that Federal law makers should stay in their constituency and only come to Abuja when the need arise and in digital world of today were meeting can be held via zoom it can also be apply to save cost of governance

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APPENDIX A

Null Hypothesis: D(INFL) has a unit root
Exogenous: Constant
Lag Length: 1 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-4.190357	0.0037
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.752946	
5% level	-2.998064	
10% level	-2.638752	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation
Dependent Variable: D(INFL,2)
Method: Least Squares
Date: 04/12/25 Time: 14:08
Sample (adjusted): 4 26
Included observations: 23 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(INFL(-1))	-1.424085	0.339848	-4.190357	0.0005
D(INFL(-1),2)	0.374157	0.201330	1.858423	0.0779
C	0.917847	0.891208	1.029891	0.3154
R-squared	0.503480	Mean dependent var		-0.217391
Adjusted R-squared	0.453828	S.D. dependent var		5.436441
S.E. of regression	4.017717	Akaike info criterion		5.740413
Sum squared resid	322.8411	Schwarz criterion		5.888521
Log likelihood	-63.01474	Hannan-Quinn criter.		5.777661
F-statistic	10.14018	Durbin-Watson stat		1.703401
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000911			

APPENDIX B

Null Hypothesis: RGDP has a unit root
Exogenous: Constant
Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	0.907253	0.9939
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.724070	
5% level	-2.986225	
10% level	-2.632604	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(RGDP)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/13/25 Time: 12:43

Sample (adjusted): 2 26

Included observations: 25 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
RGDP(-1)	0.029462	0.032474	0.907253	0.3737
C	-0.354654	0.451920	-0.784772	0.4406
R-squared	0.034551	Mean dependent var		0.055177
Adjusted R-squared	-0.007425	S.D. dependent var		0.065728
S.E. of regression	0.065972	Akaike info criterion		-2.522560
Sum squared resid	0.100102	Schwarz criterion		-2.425050
Log likelihood	33.53200	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-2.495515
F-statistic	0.823107	Durbin-Watson stat		2.563508
Prob(F-statistic)	0.373681			

Null Hypothesis: D(RGDP) has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-5.844548	0.0001
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.737853	
5% level	-2.991878	
10% level	-2.635542	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(RGDP,2)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/12/25 Time: 14:09

Sample (adjusted): 3 26

Included observations: 24 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(RGDP(-1))	-1.213987	0.207713	-5.844548	0.0000
C	0.068759	0.017944	3.831956	0.0009
R-squared	0.608253	Mean dependent var		0.000317
Adjusted R-squared	0.590447	S.D. dependent var		0.104075
S.E. of regression	0.066604	Akaike info criterion		-2.500448
Sum squared resid	0.097594	Schwarz criterion		-2.402276
Log likelihood	32.00537	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-2.474403
F-statistic	34.15874	Durbin-Watson stat		1.952127
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000007			

APPENDIX C

Null Hypothesis: NALL has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-0.907172	0.7689
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.724070	
5% level	-2.986225	
10% level	-2.632604	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(NALL)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/13/25 Time: 12:44

Sample (adjusted): 2 26

Included observations: 25 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
NALL(-1)	-0.065225	0.071900	-0.907172	0.3737
C	0.754546	0.788087	0.957441	0.3483
R-squared	0.034545	Mean dependent var		0.039912
Adjusted R-squared	-0.007431	S.D. dependent var		0.113032
S.E. of regression	0.113451	Akaike info criterion		-1.438268
Sum squared resid	0.296038	Schwarz criterion		-1.340758
Log likelihood	19.97835	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-1.411223
F-statistic	0.822962	Durbin-Watson stat		2.119922
Prob(F-statistic)	0.373723			

Null Hypothesis: D(NALL) has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-7.775740	0.0000
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.737853	
5% level	-2.991878	
10% level	-2.635542	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(NALL,2)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/12/25 Time: 14:10

Sample (adjusted): 3 26

Included observations: 24 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(NALL(-1))	-1.278932	0.164477	-7.775740	0.0000
C	0.063309	0.019315	3.277783	0.0034
R-squared	0.733211	Mean dependent var		0.016771
Adjusted R-squared	0.721084	S.D. dependent var		0.170348
S.E. of regression	0.089965	Akaike info criterion		-1.899139
Sum squared resid	0.178061	Schwarz criterion		-1.800968
Log likelihood	24.78967	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-1.873094
F-statistic	60.46213	Durbin-Watson stat		1.419666
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Null Hypothesis: D(NALL) has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-7.775740	0.0000
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.737853	
5% level	-2.991878	
10% level	-2.635542	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(NALL,2)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/12/25 Time: 14:10

Sample (adjusted): 3 26

Included observations: 24 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(NALL(-1))	-1.278932	0.164477	-7.775740	0.0000
C	0.063309	0.019315	3.277783	0.0034
R-squared	0.733211	Mean dependent var		0.016771
Adjusted R-squared	0.721084	S.D. dependent var		0.170348
S.E. of regression	0.089965	Akaike info criterion		-1.899139
Sum squared resid	0.178061	Schwarz criterion		-1.800968
Log likelihood	24.78967	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-1.873094
F-statistic	60.46213	Durbin-Watson stat		1.419666
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

APPENDIX C

Null Hypothesis: TBUG has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	0.863269	0.9931
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.724070	
5% level	-2.986225	
10% level	-2.632604	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(TBUG)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/13/25 Time: 12:46

Sample (adjusted): 2 26

Included observations: 25 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
TBUG(-1)	0.034025	0.039414	0.863269	0.3969
C	-0.353100	0.497817	-0.709298	0.4853
R-squared	0.031385	Mean dependent var		0.076409
Adjusted R-squared	-0.010729	S.D. dependent var		0.082887
S.E. of regression	0.083330	Akaike info criterion		-2.055397
Sum squared resid	0.159710	Schwarz criterion		-1.957887
Log likelihood	27.69246	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-2.028352
F-statistic	0.745234	Durbin-Watson stat		2.043545
Prob(F-statistic)	0.396902			

Null Hypothesis: D(TBUG) has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-4.670086	0.0011
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.737853	
5% level	-2.991878	
10% level	-2.635542	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(TBUG,2)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/12/25 Time: 14:12

Sample (adjusted): 3 26

Included observations: 24 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(TBUG(-1))	-1.182494	0.253206	-4.670086	0.0001
C	0.086748	0.024281	3.572646	0.0017
R-squared	0.497828	Mean dependent var		0.007423
Adjusted R-squared	0.475002	S.D. dependent var		0.117314
S.E. of regression	0.085002	Akaike info criterion		-2.012627
Sum squared resid	0.158958	Schwarz criterion		-1.914456
Log likelihood	26.15152	Hannan-Quinn criter.		-1.986582
F-statistic	21.80971	Durbin-Watson stat		1.589555
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000117			

APPENDIX E

Null Hypothesis: POTB has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-2.142787	0.2308
Test critical values: 1% level	-3.724070	
5% level	-2.986225	
10% level	-2.632604	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(POTB)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/13/25 Time: 12:47

Sample (adjusted): 2 26

Included observations: 25 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
POTB(-1)	-0.310247	0.144786	-2.142787	0.0429
C	0.590851	0.373129	1.583504	0.1270
R-squared	0.166411	Mean dependent var		-0.152890
Adjusted R-squared	0.130168	S.D. dependent var		0.734164
S.E. of regression	0.684717	Akaike info criterion		2.156996
Sum squared resid	10.78326	Schwarz criterion		2.254506
Log likelihood	-24.96245	Hannan-Quinn criter.		2.184041
F-statistic	4.591537	Durbin-Watson stat		1.707072
Prob(F-statistic)	0.042941			

APPENDIX F

Null Hypothesis: D(POTB) has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant

Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=5)

	t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic	-9.620161	0.0000
Test critical values:		
1% level	-3.737853	
5% level	-2.991878	
10% level	-2.635542	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation

Dependent Variable: D(POTB,2)

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/12/25 Time: 14:15

Sample (adjusted): 3 26

Included observations: 24 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(POTB(-1))	-1.314547	0.136645	-9.620161	0.0000
C	-0.096633	0.102293	-0.944677	0.3551
R-squared	0.807940	Mean dependent var		0.098162
Adjusted R-squared	0.799210	S.D. dependent var		1.096222
S.E. of regression	0.491213	Akaike info criterion		1.495777
Sum squared resid	5.308382	Schwarz criterion		1.593948
Log likelihood	-15.94932	Hannan-Quinn criter.		1.521822
F-statistic	92.54749	Durbin-Watson stat		1.797325
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Dependent Variable: RGDP

Method: Least Squares

Date: 04/12/25 Time: 14:17

Sample: 1 26

Included observations: 26

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	4.424456	0.970322	4.559782	0.0002
NALL	-0.401651	0.427131	-0.940346	0.3577
POTB	0.042646	0.081898	0.520717	0.6080
TBUG	1.077744	0.399640	2.696789	0.0135
INFL	0.010654	0.005629	1.892623	0.0723
R-squared	0.950240	Mean dependent var		13.94298
Adjusted R-squared	0.940762	S.D. dependent var		0.438659
S.E. of regression	0.106765	Akaike info criterion		-1.465339
Sum squared resid	0.239372	Schwarz criterion		-1.223398

Log likelihood	24.04941	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-1.395669
F-statistic	100.2565	Durbin-Watson stat	1.397489
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		

APPENDIX H

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Estimates

ARDL(1,1,1,0) selected based on Schwarz Bayesian Criterion

```

*****
**
Dependent variable is RGDP
25 observations used for estimation from 2001 to 2025
*****
***
Regressor          Coefficient          Standard Error
Ratio[Prob]
RGDP(-1)           .50892           .22353
2.2767[.035]
NALL               -1.90610         .57388
1.5789[.002]
TBUG               .56051           .43942
1.2756[.232]
POTB               .14447           .10793
1.3386[.000]
INFL               .020857          .0036081
.57807[.002]
C                  8.8112           3.2313
2.7268[.014]
T                  .040057          .015485
2.5868[.019]
*****
*****
R-Squared           .98552          R-Bar-Squared
.98069
S.E. of Regression .059997          F-stat.      F( 6, 18)
204.1526[.000]
Mean of Dependent Variable 13.9657          S.D. of Dependent Variable
.43176
Residual Sum of Squares .064793          Equation Log-likelihood
38.9694
Akaike Info. Criterion 31.9694          Schwarz Bayesian Criterion
27.7033 DW-statistic          2.2560          Durbin's h-statistic
*NONE*
*****
*****

```

Diagnostic Tests

```

*****
***** Test Statistics *          LM Version          *          F
Version          *
*****
*****

```

```

*
*
* A:Serial Correlation*CHSQ( 1)= 1.6296[.202]*F( 1, 17)=
1.1854[.291]*
*
*
* B:Functional Form *CHSQ( 1)= .16648[.683]*F( 1, 17)=
.11397[.740]*
*
*
* C:Normality *CHSQ( 2)= 6.3729[.041]* Not applicable
*
*
D:Heteroscedasticity*CHSQ( 1)= 1.1124[.292]*F( 1, 23)=
1.0711[.311]*
*****
*****
A:Lagrange multiplier test of residual serial correlation
B:Ramsey's RESET test using the square of the fitted values
C:Based on a test of skewness and kurtosis of residuals
D:Based on the regression of squared residuals on squared fitted
values

```

APPENDIX I

Estimated Long Run Coefficients using the ARDL Approach

```

ARDL(1,0,0,0,0) selected based on Schwarz Bayesian Criterion
*****
*****
Dependent variable is RGDP
25 observations used for estimation from 2001 to 2025
*****
*****
Regressor          Coefficient          Standard Error
TRatio[Prob]
NALL                -1.8451                .93244
1.9788[.063]
TBUG                1.1414                .63127
1.8081[.087]
POTB                .29420                .18145
1.6213[.122]
INFL                .0042472              .0069247
.61335[.547]
C                   17.9426                4.7338
3.7903[.001]
T                   .081571                .028063
2.9067[.009]
*****
*****

```

ELECTORAL INTEGRITY AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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Abstract

Elections play a crucial role in democratic governance by ensuring political representation, legitimacy, and accountability. However, in Nigeria, electoral integrity has remained a contentious issue, with concerns over electoral malpractices, violence, and institutional weaknesses undermining democratic consolidation. The 2023 General Election was particularly significant due to the introduction of electoral reforms, including the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Result Viewing Portal (IREV), aimed at improving transparency and credibility. This study evaluates the effectiveness of these electoral reforms in fostering electoral integrity and their implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The study adopts a **qualitative research approach**, relying on secondary data sources such as academic publications, policy documents, and election monitoring reports. **Democratic theory** serves as the theoretical framework, emphasizing principles such as electoral credibility, institutional accountability, and citizen participation. The findings reveal that while technological innovations enhanced transparency in some areas, technical failures, logistical inefficiencies, and uneven implementation undermined public confidence in the process. Additionally, issues such as vote-buying, electoral violence, and post-election judicial disputes further weakened democratic consolidation. To address these challenges, the study recommends strengthening electoral infrastructure, improving the enforcement of electoral laws, ensuring judicial independence in electoral dispute resolution, and promoting civic education to enhance voter participation. These reforms are essential to ensuring that future elections contribute to Nigeria's democratic stability rather than undermining public trust in governance.

Keywords: Electoral reforms, democratic consolidation, electoral integrity, BVAS, Nigeria

Introduction

Elections are fundamental to democratic governance, serving as mechanisms through which citizens express their political will and hold leaders accountable. The integrity of electoral processes is crucial for fostering legitimacy, political stability, and democratic consolidation (Lindberg, 2006). However, in Nigeria, electoral integrity has been a persistent challenge, with issues such as electoral violence, vote buying, logistical inefficiencies, and manipulation of results undermining public trust in the democratic process (Omotola, 2010). These challenges have contributed to a fragile democratic system characterized by contested legitimacy and governance crises.

The 2023 General Election in Nigeria was particularly significant as it introduced key electoral reforms aimed at improving transparency and credibility. The Electoral Act 2022, signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari, provided a legal framework for innovations such as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the electronic transmission of results by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (INEC, 2023). These measures were intended to curb electoral malpractices and enhance the credibility of the electoral process. Despite these efforts, the election was marred by allegations of irregularities, voter suppression, technical

glitches, and security concerns, leading to widespread public discontent and legal challenges (International Crisis Group, 2023).

The role of institutions such as INEC, security agencies, and the judiciary in ensuring electoral integrity remains a subject of debate. While some observers lauded the technological advancements introduced, others argued that the elections still suffered from systemic issues that compromised their credibility (Adebayo, 2023). The outcomes of the 2023 elections have raised critical questions about the state of democratic development in Nigeria, particularly in relation to electoral reforms, voter participation, and the overall quality of governance. Given the significance of electoral integrity to democratic consolidation, this study seeks to assess the 2023 General Election in Nigeria, evaluate the effectiveness of electoral reforms introduced in the 2023 General Election in enhancing electoral integrity in Nigeria and examine the impact of the 2023 General Election on democratic development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Election

Elections are a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, providing a structured process through which citizens express their political preferences, select their leaders, and influence policy directions. As an essential mechanism of representation, elections grant legitimacy to governments, ensuring that political authority is derived from the consent of the governed. Beyond leadership selection, elections also serve as a tool for political accountability, enabling the electorate to reward or punish leaders based on their performance in office.

The concept of elections has evolved over time, shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic factors. From the early forms of electoral democracy in ancient Greece to the modern-day multi-party electoral systems, the evolution of elections reflects broader societal transformations. Today, elections are

conducted in various political contexts, ranging from fully democratic to semi-democratic and authoritarian regimes, each with different degrees of electoral integrity and competitiveness. This conceptual review explores the meaning, characteristics, types, and theoretical underpinnings of elections, highlighting their significance in governance and political development. Elections can be broadly defined as a formal decision-making process through which individuals select candidates to occupy public offices (Norris, 2014). In democratic societies, elections constitute a core mechanism for determining political leadership and policy direction, ensuring that governance reflects the will of the people.

According to Dahl (1998), elections are an essential feature of democracy, providing a structured means for citizen participation in governance. By allowing the electorate to vote periodically, elections ensure the renewal of political mandates and the possibility of leadership change. Similarly, Huntington (1991) argues that elections serve as a means of legitimizing political power, as they confer authority upon leaders who secure the majority's support through a competitive process.

Schumpeter (1942) presents elections within the framework of **competitive democracy**, emphasizing that leadership selection occurs through contestation among political parties. He asserts that democracy is primarily a system of elite competition, where voters choose among competing elites rather than directly engaging in governance. This perspective aligns with the idea that elections are not just about representation but also about structuring political competition within a defined institutional framework.

Beyond political office, elections also play a crucial role in decision-making across various sectors of society. Heywood (2019) notes that elections are not limited to national and local politics; they are also a key feature of governance in organizations, labor unions, and professional associations. In these contexts,

members elect representatives to articulate their interests, oversee institutional governance, and implement policies that affect their constituencies.

Within the context of this study, **election** refers to a structured political process through which eligible citizens participate in selecting representatives or leaders to hold public office, thereby influencing governance and policy decisions. It serves as a mechanism for political legitimacy, accountability, and democratic consolidation by ensuring that power is derived from the electorate's mandate.

Concept of Democracy

Democracy is the most familiar concept in many political discourses. democracy is quite old. It entails a system of government that allows the citizens freedom to decide their desires. Ancient Greece (Athens in particular) is widely regarded as the birthplace of western democracy (Jev, and Dzoho, 2014). It is common knowledge that the word democracy is derived from Greek words *demos* which means "the people", and *kratia* which means "to rule". This in theory means a governance system by the people and, for the people, as opposed to rule by one despot (autocracy), or a few (oligarchy). Thus, literally, democracy signifies 'the rule of the people. Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy is very close to its literal meaning. It reads: 'Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people'. In short, democracy as a form of government implies that the ultimate authority of government is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve the interest of the people.

Popper (1963) on his part, asserts that democracies are a system wherein one administration can be replaced by another without bloodshed, which to him indicates elections. He rejects the concept of sovereignty in favour of elections, stating that the imperfections and uncertainties of elections are preferable to the prospect of

tyranny found within sovereignty (Jev, & Dzoho, 2014) The minimalist conception of democracy has been challenged by maximalists. In criticizing the minimalist conception, the Maximalists argued that without effective guarantees of civil liberties, elections do not constitute democracy, and that a "procedural minimum" for defining democracy must include not only elections, but reasonably broad guarantees of basic civil rights -such as freedom of speech, association and assembly (Jev, & Dzoho, 2014).

Thus beyond the procedural electoral minimum, maximalist scholars of democracy have identified further characteristics that must be present for these basic procedures to meaningfully constitute a democracy. Robert Dahl, for instance, advances three essential conditions for the well-functioning multiparty democracy. These are: (a) Extensive competition by political candidates and their groups or parties; (b) Political participation that provides the choice for the electorate to select candidates in free and fair elections; and (c) Civil and political liberties that enable citizens to express themselves without fear of punishment (Dahl, 1982). Larry Diamond, another maximalist, sees the definition of democracy as encompassing "not only a civilian, constitutional, multiparty regime, with regular, free and fair elections and universal suffrage, but organizational liberties (freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations); effective power for elected officials; and functional autonomy for legislative, executive and judicial organs of government (Diamond, 1988 cited in Jev, & Dzoho, 2014).

Nwankwo (2000), sees democracy as "a system which gives periodic opportunities for the masses to choose their leaders; a system of government in which the will of the people prevails. It is a majority government; a government elected by the majority of the electorate who are qualified adult citizens." It therefore means that in a democracy, political sovereignty is vested in the people or the electorate (Jev, & Dzoho, 2014). Arising from

the forging, the definition of democracy in the context of this study follows Nwankwo's definition but also integrates Dahl's perspectives. Therefore, democracy implies a political arrangement that offers the opportunity to electorates to determine their representatives who act directly on their behalf within both formal and informal organisational settings. The formal setting being the state structures such as the legislature, executives and judiciary and other related agencies. The informal settings on the other hand consists of political parties, pressure groups and other non-formal agencies making demands on the government.

Concept of Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation is a critical process in ensuring that democracy becomes the only legitimate system of governance in a society, free from the threat of authoritarian regression. It involves the entrenchment of democratic norms, institutions, and practices, making them deeply rooted in political culture and public consciousness (Omotola, 2011). Scholars such as Linz and Stepan (1996) argue that democratic consolidation occurs when democracy is perceived as the "only game in town," meaning that all significant political actors abide by its rules. In the Nigerian context, despite over two decades of uninterrupted civilian rule since 1999, democratic consolidation remains an ongoing struggle due to weak institutions, electoral malpractices, and political violence (Jega, 2019). Aiyede (2021) emphasizes that for democracy to be consolidated, adherence to the rule of law, judicial independence, and institutional stability must be guaranteed. However, persistent challenges such as executive dominance, judicial manipulation, and legislative inefficiency continue to hinder Nigeria's democratic progress (Ojo, 2022). Additionally, the role of credible elections in consolidating democracy cannot be overemphasized, as Olaniyan and Akinola (2020) assert that electoral integrity is a fundamental pillar of a stable democratic

system. Unfortunately, Nigeria's electoral process has been marred by vote-buying, rigging, and violence, which undermine public trust in democratic governance (Ibeanu, 2013). Beyond electoral credibility, a consolidated democracy requires an active and informed citizenry, a free press, and mechanisms for conflict resolution, all of which are still underdeveloped in Nigeria (Omotola, 2011). While progress has been made in terms of political pluralism and civilian rule, the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria remains fragile and requires substantial reforms to strengthen institutions, promote accountability, and foster genuine political participation. Without addressing these challenges, Nigeria's democracy may remain an unstable and vulnerable system prone to reversals and crises (Jega, 2019).

Within the context of this study, democratic consolidation is operationalized as the ability of the electoral process to ensure fairness, minimize irregularities, promote political participation, and enhance public confidence in democratic governance. It also involves the extent to which the election's conduct, outcomes, and post-election processes reinforce democratic stability, institutional credibility, and the rule of law in Nigeria.

Electoral Politics and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Review of Empirical Studies

Electoral politics plays a critical role in the process of democratic consolidation, as free, fair, and credible elections serve as the foundation for stable democratic governance. In Nigeria, elections have been central to the country's democratic experience, yet challenges such as electoral malpractices, political violence, and weak institutions continue to hinder democratic consolidation. Empirical studies on electoral politics in Nigeria provide insight into the relationship between electoral processes and the deepening of democracy.

Jega (2019) argues that the credibility of elections is fundamental to democratic consolidation, as electoral irregularities undermine public trust in democratic institutions. His study on Nigeria's electoral system identifies vote-buying, rigging, and intimidation as major obstacles to free and fair elections. Similarly, Omotola (2011) examines the patterns of electoral politics in Nigeria and finds that while multiparty democracy has been sustained since 1999, issues such as electoral fraud and weak judicial oversight have prevented democracy from becoming fully institutionalized. The study further emphasizes that democratic consolidation requires not just regular elections but also improvements in electoral governance and institutional credibility.

Olaniyan and Akinola (2020) explore the impact of electoral integrity on democratic sustainability in Nigeria. Their study, based on an analysis of past elections, highlights that electoral violence, corruption, and political interference weaken the legitimacy of democratic institutions. The research suggests that strengthening the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), ensuring judicial independence, and promoting voter education are essential for consolidating democracy. Ojo (2022) also focuses on electoral reforms and their implications for democratic consolidation, noting that technological advancements such as the use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in the 2023 General Election contributed to improved transparency but were insufficient in addressing broader systemic challenges such as political interference and logistical failures.

Furthermore, Ibeanu (2013) examines the role of political elites in shaping electoral politics and its consequences for democratic stability. His study finds that the personalization of political power, party defections, and elite manipulation of electoral processes have contributed to weak democratic consolidation in Nigeria. This aligns with the findings of Aiyede (2021), who argues that democracy in Nigeria remains fragile due

to weak political institutions and a lack of accountability among elected officials. The study underscores the need for comprehensive electoral reforms that go beyond technical improvements to address the deeper structural and institutional deficits in Nigeria's democracy.

Studies focusing on the 2023 General Election indicate that while there were improvements in voter accreditation and transmission of results, electoral irregularities persisted. Adebayo and Ibrahim (2023) conducted a post-election assessment and found that despite reforms, issues such as voter suppression, logistical delays, and judicial controversies over election petitions weakened democratic consolidation efforts. Their study recommends enhancing electoral transparency, strengthening the judiciary's role in electoral dispute resolution, and increasing citizen engagement to ensure greater democratic accountability.

From these empirical studies, it is evident that while Nigeria has made progress in sustaining electoral democracy, significant challenges persist in the consolidation of democratic governance. The findings suggest that addressing electoral fraud, strengthening institutions, and ensuring electoral integrity are critical steps toward achieving sustainable democracy in Nigeria. Without these reforms, democratic consolidation will remain fragile, and electoral politics will continue to be characterized by contestations that undermine the legitimacy of democratic processes.

Theoretical Framework

Democratic theory provides a foundational lens for analyzing electoral integrity and democratic consolidation, particularly in the context of Nigeria's 2023 General Election. The theory emphasizes governance systems in which power is derived from the people, exercised through periodic elections, and sustained by principles of accountability, transparency, and inclusivity (Dahl, 1971). Scholars such as Rousseau,

Locke, Schumpeter, and Dahl have significantly shaped democratic thought, each contributing distinct perspectives on how democracy should function. Rousseau's notion of direct democracy underscores the centrality of the people's will in governance (Rousseau, 1762), while Locke's theory of popular sovereignty advocates for government legitimacy based on the consent of the governed (Locke, 1689). In contrast, Schumpeter's elite democratic model suggests that democracy operates as a competitive struggle among elites for electoral support, a perspective that is particularly relevant to Nigeria's political landscape (Schumpeter, 1942). Dahl's concept of polyarchy extends the discussion by highlighting the role of free elections, political pluralism, and institutional checks and balances in democratic governance (Dahl, 1989).

The relevance of democratic theory to this study is grounded in its core assumptions, which emphasize popular participation, political equality, accountability, and institutional effectiveness (Held, 2006). A democracy thrives when electoral processes are free, fair, and inclusive, allowing citizens to choose their leaders without coercion or manipulation. In Nigeria, elections are expected to reflect these principles; however, historical and contemporary challenges, including electoral malpractices, violence, voter suppression, and weak institutional frameworks, continue to undermine democratic consolidation (Omotola, 2010). The 2023 General Election was anticipated as a turning point, given the introduction of key reforms through the Electoral Act 2022, particularly the deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and electronic transmission of results (INEC, 2023). While these reforms aimed to enhance electoral transparency, their implementation was met with mixed reactions, as reports of technical failures, logistical inefficiencies, and allegations of result manipulation cast doubts on the election's credibility (International Crisis Group, 2023).

Despite its normative ideals, democratic theory is not without criticism, particularly regarding its practical limitations in states with fragile democratic institutions. Schumpeter's argument that democracy often benefits political elites rather than ordinary citizens resonates strongly in Nigeria, where political power is frequently concentrated within a small ruling class (Schumpeter, 1942). Electoral manipulation, vote buying, and institutional bias weaken the democratic process, raising questions about the extent to which elections truly reflect the people's will (Ake, 2000). Furthermore, the assumption that all citizens have equal opportunities to participate in elections is challenged by the realities of voter intimidation, systemic disenfranchisement, and security threats that deter civic engagement (Ojo, 2019). These criticisms are evident in the Nigerian context, where the 2023 elections, despite reform efforts, still faced significant integrity issues that undermined public confidence in democratic governance.

The use of democratic theory to this study facilitates a more profound examination of the correlation between election integrity and democratic growth. The assessment of the 2023 General Election will examine whether democratic principles were upheld, the effectiveness of electoral reforms, and the role of institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, and the judiciary in safeguarding electoral integrity. By engaging with democratic theory, this study provides a critical reflection on Nigeria's democratic trajectory, highlighting areas where electoral processes align with or deviate from the theoretical ideals of democracy. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to ongoing debates on electoral credibility and the broader implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, relying primarily on secondary data

sources to assess the impact of electoral integrity on democratic development in Nigeria, with a focus on the 2023 General Election. The use of secondary data allows for an in-depth analysis of existing literature, electoral reports, policy documents, and academic publications related to electoral reforms, democratic processes, and governance in Nigeria. Key sources include academic journals, books, government reports, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) publications, and assessments by international organizations such as the International Crisis Group, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other relevant bodies.

Electoral Integrity in the 2023 General Election and Its Implications for Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Electoral integrity is a fundamental pillar of democratic consolidation, as it determines the credibility of elections, the legitimacy of political leadership, and public trust in democratic institutions. In Nigeria, the 2023 general election was widely regarded as a crucial test of the country's democratic progress, particularly following the passage of the Electoral Act 2022 and the introduction of new technological measures aimed at reducing electoral fraud and enhancing transparency. However, while these reforms sought to improve electoral integrity, their implementation faced significant challenges that raised concerns about the credibility of the process. The election was characterized by technical failures, logistical inefficiencies, vote-buying, electoral violence, and post-election disputes, all of which had profound implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

One of the key innovations in the 2023 election was the deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV). These technologies were introduced to enhance transparency, curb multiple voting, and improve the credibility of result collation. The

BVAS was designed to verify voters' identities using biometric authentication, while the IReV was meant to allow for the real-time upload of election results to prevent manual manipulation. In some urban areas, these measures worked effectively, leading to faster accreditation processes and increased transparency in result transmission (INEC, 2023). However, in several rural and semi-urban locations, network failures and logistical challenges hindered the effective deployment of these technologies. Reports indicated that in states like Rivers, Kano, and parts of Borno, BVAS machines failed to function properly, leading to delays and manual accreditation, which compromised the integrity of the election (International Crisis Group, 2023). The inconsistent implementation of these reforms created an uneven electoral playing field, where some regions benefited from technological advancements while others remained vulnerable to traditional forms of electoral malpractice.

Beyond technological failures, the election was also marred by vote-buying and financial inducements, which undermined the credibility of the democratic process. Despite the legal restrictions imposed by the Electoral Act 2022 on campaign financing and illicit electoral practices, political parties and candidates continued to engage in monetary inducements to sway voter preferences. Reports from election monitoring groups indicated that in several polling units, particularly in Lagos, Osun, and Delta States, voters were offered cash and food items in exchange for their votes (Usman & Abubakar, 2023). This practice not only weakened the principle of free and fair elections but also highlighted the enduring influence of money politics in Nigeria's democratic process. The inability of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies to curb vote-buying raises questions about the enforcement of electoral laws and the political will to tackle systemic corruption in the electoral system.

Another significant challenge to electoral integrity in the 2023 election was electoral violence and voter suppression, which further limited the extent to which democratic principles were upheld. Several states experienced incidents of intimidation, ballot box snatching, and attacks on voters, particularly in opposition strongholds. In Lagos State, there were reports of ethnically targeted voter suppression, where certain ethnic groups were prevented from accessing polling units or were threatened with violence if they did not vote for specific candidates (Ojo, 2023). Similar cases of electoral violence were recorded in Kogi and Rivers States, where clashes between rival political groups disrupted the voting process. The failure of security agencies to prevent these incidents raises concerns about the neutrality of state institutions in electoral processes and the ability of Nigeria's democracy to guarantee equal political participation for all citizens. Electoral violence not only deters voter participation but also delegitimizes the outcome of elections, further eroding public trust in the democratic system.

The role of the judiciary in post-election disputes also had significant implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Following the announcement of election results, several opposition parties challenged the credibility of the process, citing irregularities, technical failures, and electoral malpractice. The courts became the final arbiters in deciding the legitimacy of the election outcome, with multiple petitions filed at both the Election Tribunal and Supreme Court (Oni & Joshua, 2023). While judicial intervention is a key component of democratic consolidation, the increasing reliance on litigation rather than electoral credibility to determine leadership raises concerns about judicial independence and public confidence in the electoral process. In some cases, delays in court rulings and allegations of political influence over judicial decisions further undermined the perception of fairness in the adjudication of electoral disputes.

Despite these challenges, the 2023 general election also demonstrated some progress in Nigeria's democratic journey. The introduction of technological reforms, increased voter awareness, and active participation of civil society organizations in election monitoring were positive indicators of a growing commitment to electoral integrity. The youth population, in particular, showed greater political engagement, largely influenced by the #EndSARS movement and increasing dissatisfaction with the political establishment (Adebayo, 2023). While voter turnout remained lower than expected, the heightened political consciousness among young people suggests a potential shift toward greater democratic accountability in the future.

In conclusion, while the 2023 general election introduced several reforms aimed at enhancing electoral integrity, systemic challenges such as technical failures, vote-buying, electoral violence, and judicial inefficiencies significantly undermined the credibility of the process. The uneven implementation of technological reforms created disparities in electoral transparency, while the persistence of money politics and voter suppression raised concerns about the fairness of the election. The inability of state institutions, including INEC, security agencies, and the judiciary, to effectively manage these challenges reflects deep-seated structural weaknesses in Nigeria's democratic framework. For democratic consolidation to be achieved, there is a need for stronger enforcement of electoral laws, enhanced security measures, and greater institutional independence. Moving forward, addressing these issues will be essential in ensuring that future elections contribute to the deepening of democracy in Nigeria rather than reinforcing public distrust in the electoral system.

The Impact of the 2023 General Election on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The 2023 General Election in Nigeria had significant implications for the country's

democratic development, reflecting both progress and persistent challenges in electoral governance. Democratic development entails the consolidation of democratic institutions, increased political participation, respect for electoral integrity, and the enhancement of governance structures that promote accountability and transparency (Dahl, 1989). While the 2023 election introduced key electoral reforms aimed at strengthening democracy, its outcomes revealed a complex interplay between institutional innovations, systemic inefficiencies, and public trust in Nigeria's democratic process.

One of the most notable impacts of the 2023 election was the introduction and deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and electronic transmission of results. These measures were intended to curb electoral malpractices, enhance voter authentication, and promote transparency in the collation of results (INEC, 2023). In theory, these reforms aligned with democratic principles of free and fair elections, ensuring that votes counted accurately and reducing human interference in result transmission. However, in practice, the elections were marred by allegations of technical failures, logistical shortcomings, and non-compliance with the promised real-time electronic result transmission. The inability of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to fully implement these reforms fueled widespread skepticism, undermining the credibility of the electoral process (International Crisis Group, 2023). This reflects a gap between democratic aspirations and the actual functionality of institutions responsible for electoral governance.

Furthermore, the election had a mixed impact on political participation, a key indicator of democratic development. On one hand, voter registration and mobilization efforts saw an increase in youth engagement, largely driven by the #EndSARS movement's influence on political consciousness (Adebayo, 2023). This suggested a shift towards greater political awareness and active citizenship. On

the other hand, voter suppression, electoral violence, and security concerns discouraged participation in several regions, particularly in areas affected by insurgency and political intimidation (Ojo, 2023). The persistence of these challenges highlighted structural barriers that continue to limit the full realization of democratic participation in Nigeria.

Institutionally, the role of security agencies and the judiciary in managing post-election disputes also shaped democratic development. While courts played an active role in adjudicating election petitions, their decisions often sparked controversy regarding judicial independence and impartiality (Oni & Joshua, 2023). The reliance on the judiciary to resolve electoral disputes rather than the credibility of the electoral process itself raises concerns about the stability of Nigeria's democratic system. Moreover, the inability of security agencies to prevent electoral violence and intimidation further underscored weaknesses in Nigeria's democratic framework, suggesting that reforms must extend beyond INEC to broader governance structures. The 2023 General Election had a dual impact on Nigeria's democratic development. While it demonstrated an attempt to improve electoral integrity through technological reforms, systemic challenges such as institutional inefficiencies, voter suppression, and post-election disputes hindered substantial democratic progress. The election highlighted both the resilience of Nigeria's democratic aspirations and the structural obstacles that must be addressed to achieve true democratic consolidation. Moving forward, sustained electoral reforms, enhanced institutional capacity, and stronger mechanisms for accountability will be crucial in ensuring that future elections contribute positively to Nigeria's democratic trajectory.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from this study indicate that while the 2023 General Election in Nigeria introduced significant electoral reforms aimed

at enhancing electoral integrity, the extent of their effectiveness remained uneven. The implementation of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the Result Viewing Portal (IReV) represented crucial steps towards curbing electoral fraud and increasing transparency. However, challenges such as technical failures, inadequate infrastructure in rural areas, and persistent vote-buying undermined the full potential of these reforms. Similarly, the passage of the Electoral Act 2022 provided a legal framework for more credible elections, yet enforcement mechanisms were insufficient to fully eliminate electoral malpractices. Despite voter education efforts, issues of apathy and political disillusionment persisted in some regions, suggesting the need for long-term civic engagement strategies.

From a broader democratic development perspective, the 2023 election had both positive and negative implications. On one hand, it marked progress in electoral governance through technological and legal innovations, encouraging increased political participation among youth and civil society. On the other hand, the credibility of the election was questioned due to irregularities, logistical inefficiencies, and the inability of security agencies to prevent electoral violence. The role of the judiciary in adjudicating electoral disputes further emphasized the reliance on legal interventions rather than the intrinsic credibility of the electoral process.

Ultimately, while the 2023 General Election showcased Nigeria's commitment to democratic reform, it also highlighted systemic gaps that must be addressed to ensure the consolidation of democracy. Future elections must focus on strengthening institutional frameworks, improving technological infrastructure, and enforcing electoral laws more effectively. A holistic approach, including better security measures, civic engagement, and judicial independence, will be crucial in fostering a more credible and participatory democratic process in Nigeria.

1. **Strengthening Electoral Infrastructure and Technological Implementation**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should invest in improving the technological infrastructure supporting elections, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Network connectivity issues that hindered the effective use of BVAS and IReV must be addressed through partnerships with telecommunications providers. Additionally, regular testing and auditing of electoral technologies should be conducted before elections to ensure their reliability and prevent system failures that could undermine public confidence in the process.

2. **Enhancing Enforcement of Electoral Laws and Reducing Vote-Buying**

While the Electoral Act 2022 introduced reforms aimed at reducing electoral malpractice, enforcement remains a major challenge. The government should empower anti-corruption agencies and electoral monitoring bodies to actively investigate and prosecute cases of vote-buying, campaign finance violations, and result manipulation. Stiffer penalties should be imposed on political actors and parties found guilty of such offenses to serve as a deterrent. Public awareness campaigns should also be intensified to educate voters on the negative consequences of electoral malpractice and encourage ethical political participation.

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PART III:
SOCIAL CHANGE

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Abstract

Rural development remains one of the significant roots to economic growth and development in Nigeria; however, Nigeria's rural development drives have been hampered by institutional weakness. This study explored the complex relationship between institutions, rural development, and social change in Nigeria, with a focus on how institutional weaknesses hinder effective rural transformation. The scope covers governance structures, policy frameworks, and the socio-economic dynamics shaping rural communities, highlighting both the obstacles and emerging opportunities for sustainable development. The aim of the study is to assess the impact of institutional effectiveness on rural development and social transformation, while proposing actionable reforms for inclusive progress. A qualitative research approach was adopted, utilizing secondary data from academic journals, policy documents, and development reports published recently. The study employed content analysis to identify recurring themes related to institutional performance, corruption, community participation, and development outcomes. Findings reveal that rural underdevelopment in Nigeria is largely driven by weak institutions, corruption, policy inconsistencies, and a top-down approach to governance. However, prospects for transformation exist in the form of grassroots initiatives, youth engagement, technological innovations, and community-driven development models. The study concludes by asserting that institutional reform is central to unlocking rural potential and achieving inclusive social change. Empowering rural communities through transparent, accountable, and responsive institutions is essential for bridging Nigeria's development divide and promoting equitable national growth. The study recommends strengthening institutional capacity at the local level, promoting participatory governance, investing in rural infrastructure, and aligning development efforts with climate resilience and sustainability. Collaborative partnerships with civil society and development partners are also emphasized.

Key words: Institution, rural, development, social change, participatory governance

Introduction

Rural development stands as a fundamental pillar in the quest for national development, particularly in emerging economies such as Nigeria, where a significant portion of the population resides in rural areas. The rural sector is not only home to the majority of the population but also to the bulk of the country's natural resources, agricultural activities, and cultural heritage. Consequently, rural development encompasses a multifaceted process aimed at improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Despite its critical importance, rural development in Nigeria continues to face considerable obstacles, many of which are rooted in institutional deficiencies. The roles institutions play, whether formal such as laws, policies, and governmental structures, or informal such as customs and traditions are indispensable in shaping the direction and efficacy of rural development initiatives (Ajayi et al., 2022).

Institutions serve as the framework through which rules are enforced, rights are protected, and developmental efforts are managed. They determine the capacity of the state to deliver services, enforce contracts, implement policies, and support inclusive development (Eze, 2023). However, the failure or weakness of institutions has repeatedly undermined Nigeria's rural development efforts. Institutional weaknesses manifest in several forms: corruption, mismanagement, policy inconsistencies, lack of accountability, and poor governance; all of which contribute to persistent underdevelopment in rural communities (Adebayo & Owolabi, 2021). In a country where rural poverty, infrastructural deficits, limited access to quality healthcare and education, and high unemployment rates are prevalent, the performance of institutions becomes a critical determinant of social change and economic transformation.

The relationship between institutions and rural development is not merely functional but deeply embedded in broader processes of

social change. Social change refers to shifts in societal norms, values, behaviors, and structures, often influenced by technological, economic, and political factors. In rural Nigeria, social change is shaped by the interplay of institutional influences and external drivers such as globalization, digitalization, and community-based movements (Nwankwo & Hassan, 2024). The persistent failure of state institutions to catalyze sustainable rural development has not only left rural areas marginalized but also fostered grassroots responses aimed at self-reliance and community-driven development. Nonetheless, these efforts often remain limited in scale and sustainability without enabling institutional support.

Institutional theory offers a useful lens through which to understand the stagnation in Nigeria's rural development trajectory. The theory posits that institutions provide the necessary structure and stability for human interaction and societal functioning (North, as cited in Okoye & Daniels, 2022). When institutions function effectively, they reduce uncertainty, enhance coordination, and facilitate the implementation of development policies. Conversely, institutional failure increases transaction costs, promotes rent-seeking behaviors, and creates a disjointed policy environment, all of which hinder developmental progress. In the Nigerian context, institutional failure has created an ecosystem of inefficiency, where rural development projects are frequently abandoned, misappropriated, or poorly executed (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

Moreover, the governance framework within which rural development occurs in Nigeria is often characterized by centralization, limited participation of local communities, and a top-down approach that ignores the specific needs and potentials of rural areas. This disconnect between policy formulation and implementation realities has been widely documented. For instance, rural electrification programs, agricultural

extension services, and water supply projects have often failed to deliver on their objectives due to institutional bottlenecks such as inadequate funding, corruption, and lack of transparency (Chukwuma & Edeh, 2021). The implications of these institutional weaknesses extend beyond developmental inefficiencies; they also erode public trust, exacerbate inequalities, and perpetuate cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Despite the grim institutional landscape, rural Nigeria is not static. Forces of social change, often operating independently of state institutions, are reshaping rural life in meaningful ways. Technological advancements, particularly the proliferation of mobile phones and internet access, have opened up new channels for communication, financial inclusion, and access to information in rural communities (Akinwale & Idowu, 2024). These technologies enable farmers to access market prices, obtain weather forecasts, and participate in digital marketplaces, thereby enhancing their productivity and income levels. Similarly, the spread of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based groups, and community development associations has created alternative spaces of governance and service delivery that partially fill the void left by weak state institutions (Udo & Etim, 2022).

Nonetheless, these positive developments are not substitutes for strong, accountable, and responsive institutions. Rather, they highlight the untapped potential that could be maximized if institutional reforms are undertaken to support grassroots innovations and promote inclusive development. Strengthening institutions involves more than bureaucratic restructuring it requires fostering transparency, enforcing the rule of law, ensuring policy coherence, and creating mechanisms for community participation. It also entails capacity building at the local government level, where most rural development initiatives are meant to be implemented but often suffer from chronic

underfunding and administrative incapacities (Ogunleye & Salawu, 2023).

Furthermore, the challenge of institutional reform in Nigeria must be situated within the broader context of political economy. Elite capture, patronage politics, and ethno-regional biases continue to influence how resources are allocated and how development priorities are set (Emefiele & Obasi, 2021). Rural areas, especially those that lack political leverage, often find themselves at the periphery of national development agendas. Consequently, addressing institutional weaknesses requires not just technical fixes but also political will and citizen engagement. It calls for a reimagining of the state's role in development, one that places the needs of rural communities at the center of policy discourse and implementation.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the intricate relationship between institutions, rural development, and social change in Nigeria. It aims to identify how institutional weaknesses; manifested in governance failures, corruption, and policy fragmentation; have undermined efforts toward rural transformation. At the same time, it will examine the dynamics of social change in rural communities, highlighting both the limitations imposed by institutional dysfunction and the possibilities for progress through community resilience and innovation. By employing both empirical and theoretical perspectives, the study hopes to contribute to the discourse on institutional effectiveness, rural development, and sustainable social transformation in Nigeria.

Ultimately, the urgency of institutional reform in Nigeria cannot be overstated. As the nation grapples with widening inequality, deepening rural poverty, and a youth bulge that threatens socio-political stability, reengineering institutions to better serve the needs of rural communities becomes a national imperative. Achieving inclusive rural development is not merely about infrastructure or service delivery it is about transforming the governance structures that

determine who get what, when, and how. Only through institutional integrity, accountability, and participatory governance can Nigeria hope to unlock the developmental potential of its rural areas and chart a path toward sustainable and equitable social change.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, relying primarily on secondary data sources. Data were gathered through an extensive review of relevant academic literature, government reports, development agency publications, and policy documents published between 2021 and 2025. The qualitative approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of complex social and institutional dynamics influencing rural development. Content analysis was employed to interpret and synthesize emerging themes related to institutional performance, rural change, and governance challenges. This methodology ensures a rich contextual understanding of the structural and systemic barriers confronting rural development in Nigeria.

Institutions and Their Role in Development

Institutions are broadly defined as the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic, and social interaction (North, as cited in Okoye & Daniels, 2022). In the development discourse, they are critical because they influence behavior, allocate resources, and guide decision-making. Effective institutions promote stability, reduce uncertainty, and create an environment conducive to economic and social development. In contrast, weak institutions are associated with policy inefficiencies, corruption, and development stagnation (Eze, 2023).

In Nigeria, the institutional framework governing rural development is characterized by overlapping mandates, poor coordination, and a top-down structure that marginalizes rural voices. Local governments, which should be the drivers of rural transformation, are

often hampered by inadequate resources and political interference (Ogunleye & Salawu, 2023). This institutional fragility has resulted in the failure of rural electrification projects, agricultural subsidies, and healthcare initiatives, reinforcing cycles of poverty and exclusion (Chukwuma & Edeh, 2021).

Rural Development Challenges in Nigeria

Rural development in Nigeria remains elusive despite numerous policy frameworks such as the National Rural Development Policy and the Agricultural Transformation Agenda. One of the core issues is the lack of institutional coherence and implementation fidelity. Adebayo and Owolabi (2021) argue that development programs often fail due to elite capture, politicization of project sites, and diversion of funds. Moreover, rural development is rarely prioritized in national budgets, and when it is, projects are often misaligned with local needs due to limited community participation in decision-making (Emefiele & Obasi, 2021).

Infrastructure deficits in rural areas, including poor road networks, lack of potable water, and inadequate schools and health facilities, further widen the development gap. According to Ibrahim et al. (2023), over 60% of Nigeria's rural population lacks access to basic infrastructure due to weak institutional oversight and poor project sustainability. The absence of functioning institutions means that service delivery mechanisms are not monitored, and accountability systems are almost non-existent.

Rural development in Nigeria continues to face persistent challenges that hinder meaningful socio-economic transformation in rural areas. Despite multiple policy frameworks and interventions designed to uplift rural communities, many of these initiatives fall short of their objectives due to deep-seated structural, institutional, and socio-cultural issues. This section provides an in-depth discussion of the major challenges confronting rural development in Nigeria,

drawing on recent literature and policy analyses.

Institutional Weaknesses

One of the most pervasive challenges affecting rural development is the weakness of state institutions. Institutions are expected to enforce laws, manage public resources, and implement development programs effectively. However, in Nigeria, institutional inefficiency is evident at all levels of government. Local government authorities, which are constitutionally tasked with rural development, often suffer from lack of autonomy, inadequate funding, and political interference (Ogunleye & Salawu, 2023). These issues impair their ability to plan and execute development projects, making them dependent on state or federal interventions that may not reflect local priorities.

Additionally, institutions in Nigeria frequently lack accountability mechanisms. According to Eze (2023), the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks allows for mismanagement and embezzlement of funds meant for rural projects. The lack of transparency in public procurement and service delivery exacerbates citizens' distrust in the government and undermines the legitimacy of rural development initiatives.

Corruption and Resource Mismanagement

Corruption is a systemic issue in Nigeria and remains a major barrier to development at all levels. In rural development, corruption manifests in several forms, including the diversion of project funds, inflation of contract prices, ghost projects, and bribery in the allocation of development resources (Chukwuma & Edeh, 2021). Many rural electrifications, road construction, and water supply projects have either been abandoned or poorly executed due to misappropriation of funds. Funds allocated for rural projects are frequently embezzled or misappropriated. The Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI, as cited in Eze, 2023) noted

that billions of naira earmarked for rural development between 2015 and 2021 remain unaccounted for. This level of corruption erodes trust in government and discourages local participation in development efforts.

Furthermore, governance failures manifest in weak rule of law, lack of transparency, and poor service delivery. According to Ajayi et al. (2022), rural communities often experience administrative neglect, where public officials are absent or unresponsive, and grievance redress mechanisms are ineffective. This undermines the capacity of rural dwellers to demand accountability and access the services they are entitled to.

Emefiele and Obasi (2021) highlight that corruption thrives due to a lack of institutional checks, a weak judicial system, and the politicization of anti-corruption efforts. This mismanagement not only wastes scarce resources but also results in the underdevelopment of critical infrastructure needed for economic growth in rural areas.

Infrastructural Deficits

Rural areas in Nigeria are characterized by severe infrastructural inadequacies. Poor road networks, lack of access to potable water, erratic electricity supply, and dilapidated educational and healthcare facilities are common (Ibrahim et al., 2023). These deficiencies limit the ability of rural dwellers to engage in economic activities, access social services, and improve their livelihoods.

The lack of transportation infrastructure, for instance, raises the cost of moving agricultural produce from farms to markets, reducing farmers' profits and contributing to post-harvest losses. Similarly, inadequate health infrastructure increases mortality rates and limits productivity, while poor access to quality education hampers human capital development in rural communities.

Policy Incoherence and Fragmentation

The policy environment in Nigeria is often characterized by inconsistency and lack of

coordination. Multiple government agencies implement overlapping or conflicting rural development programs without synergy. According to Ajayi et al. (2022), this policy fragmentation results in duplicated efforts, resource wastage, and implementation delays. Additionally, successive governments often abandon previous administration's programs for political reasons, leading to policy discontinuity. The absence of a comprehensive and inclusive rural development strategy further complicates the situation. Policies are often designed without adequate input from the rural population, resulting in interventions that do not reflect the real needs and aspirations of the communities they intend to serve (Adebayo & Owolabi, 2021).

Centralization and Lack of Local Participation

Despite being the primary beneficiaries of rural development programs, rural communities are frequently excluded from planning and decision-making processes. Nigeria's governance structure is heavily centralized, with federal and state governments making most of the development decisions, often without consulting local stakeholders (Eze, 2023). This top-down approach disregards local knowledge, marginalizes grassroots actors, and undermines the sustainability of development initiatives. Participatory development is essential for ensuring community ownership and accountability. However, as Ogunleye and Salawu (2023) note, the lack of community engagement results in projects that are misaligned with local needs, thereby increasing the likelihood of failure or abandonment.

Insecurity and Conflict

Many rural areas in Nigeria are plagued by insecurity, including farmer-herder clashes, banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts. These security challenges disrupt economic activities, displace populations, and destroy infrastructure (Ajayi et al., 2022). In regions such as the North-West and North-Central

zones, frequent violence has forced rural dwellers to flee their homes, abandon farming, and seek refuge in urban slums or internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

Insecurity also discourages private investment and limits the ability of government agencies and NGOs to operate effectively in affected areas. The ripple effects of these conflicts extend to education, healthcare, and social cohesion, making it even harder to implement rural development programs.

7. Cultural and Gender Barriers

Cultural norms and gender discrimination pose additional challenges to rural development. In many parts of rural Nigeria, traditional practices restrict women's access to land, credit, and education. These limitations undermine women's capacity to contribute to development and limit the overall productivity of the rural economy (Okoye & Daniels, 2022).

Moreover, cultural resistance to change can hinder the adoption of new technologies, farming practices, or social reforms. Community development programs that ignore these cultural dynamics are likely to encounter resistance or fail to gain traction.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Environmental challenges such as desertification, soil erosion, flooding, and changing rainfall patterns are increasingly threatening rural livelihoods, especially in the agricultural sector. According to Nwankwo and Hassan (2024), climate change is intensifying food insecurity in rural communities by reducing crop yields and increasing pest infestations. Inadequate institutional response to climate challenges further exacerbates rural vulnerability. Most rural farmers lack access to climate-smart technologies, early warning systems, or insurance schemes that could help them mitigate and adapt to environmental risks.

Prospects for Rural Development and Social Change in Nigeria

While rural Nigeria is faced with a multitude of development challenges, there remains significant potential for transformation if the right institutional and policy measures are put in place. The prospects for rural development and social change lie in several key areas: institutional reform, technological innovation, community-driven initiatives, agricultural modernization, youth engagement, and strategic partnerships with development stakeholders. These prospects offer a pathway to reversing the historical neglect of rural areas and fostering sustainable and inclusive growth.

Institutional Reforms and Good Governance

One of the most promising prospects for rural development is the potential for institutional reform, particularly at the local government level. Strengthening institutional capacity can significantly improve service delivery, transparency, and community participation. Ogunleye and Salawu (2023) argue that when local government authorities are empowered with the necessary resources, autonomy, and oversight mechanisms, they can become effective drivers of rural transformation. Moreover, the entrenchment of good governance practices—such as participatory budgeting, anti-corruption measures, and performance-based accountability systems—can restore trust in public institutions and enhance the implementation of rural projects (Eze, 2023). The shift toward open government and e-governance platforms is also gaining traction as a tool to make rural governance more transparent and citizen-centered.

Leveraging Technology and Digital Innovation

Technological advancements, particularly in digital communication, agricultural technology (AgriTech), and financial services, offer vast opportunities to bridge rural development gaps. Mobile money services, for

instance, are revolutionizing financial inclusion in rural areas, enabling individuals to save, borrow, and transact without needing physical bank branches (Akinwale & Idowu, 2024). Similarly, precision farming, irrigation technologies, and access to real-time market information can enhance agricultural productivity and resilience against climate shocks. Government partnerships with private sector actors in technology and telecoms can further boost digital infrastructure in rural zones, fostering innovation and connectivity (Ajayi et al., 2022).

Grassroots and Community-Based Initiatives

Rural communities in Nigeria have demonstrated resilience and creativity in the face of institutional neglect. Many have established cooperative societies, women's groups, and youth associations that function as informal development agencies. Udo and Etim (2022) document the success of such community-based organizations in improving access to microcredit, health education, and agricultural inputs.

The continued promotion of community-driven development (CDD) models where communities identify, design, and execute their development priorities has shown great promise. With appropriate technical and financial support, these grassroots models can drive inclusive and sustainable outcomes by ensuring that development is tailored to local needs.

Youth Empowerment and Skill Development

With a large proportion of Nigeria's rural population being under the age of 35, youth empowerment is both a challenge and an opportunity. Engaging rural youth through entrepreneurship programs, vocational training, and digital literacy initiatives can unleash their potential as agents of change and innovation (Nwankwo & Hassan, 2024).

Targeted investments in agribusiness incubation hubs, green enterprises, and rural start-ups can also help reduce youth unemployment and rural-urban migration.

Empowering youth with skills that match local economic activities will ensure that they remain productive and rooted in their communities.

Agricultural Transformation and Value Chains

Agriculture remains the backbone of rural Nigeria, and transforming the sector is key to achieving broader rural development goals. Modernizing agricultural practices through mechanization, improved seeds, fertilizers, and extension services can increase productivity and rural incomes. Ibrahim et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of linking rural farmers to value chains and markets to ensure that they benefit more directly from the agriculture economy.

Additionally, investments in agro-processing and storage infrastructure can reduce post-harvest losses and create off-farm employment opportunities, especially for women and youth.

Improved Access to Infrastructure and Social Services

Prospects for rural development will remain limited unless there is substantial improvement in infrastructure and service delivery. Federal and state governments must prioritize rural electrification, road rehabilitation, water supply, and health and education services. Emefiele and Obasi (2021) argue that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria is impossible without a rural-focused approach to infrastructure development.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and decentralized service delivery models can help meet infrastructure gaps more effectively. Infrastructure investments not only stimulate economic activity but also enhance access to markets, reduce transaction costs, and improve quality of life.

Climate Adaptation and Environmental Sustainability

Climate change remains a significant threat to rural development, but it also offers

an avenue for promoting sustainable practices. Training farmers in climate-smart agriculture, promoting afforestation, and protecting water bodies can build rural resilience (Nwankwo & Hassan, 2024). Development agencies and government must mainstream environmental sustainability into all rural development programs.

Additionally, supporting renewable energy projects such as solar mini-grids can provide clean, affordable electricity to off-grid rural areas and reduce dependence on unsustainable energy sources.

Strategic Partnerships and Donor Collaboration

Finally, forging strategic partnerships with development agencies, civil society organizations, and international donors can catalyze rural development. These stakeholders bring in technical expertise, funding, and innovation. Aligning donor efforts with national and local priorities ensures sustainability and ownership (Ajayi et al., 2022).

Nigeria's development partners including the World Bank, IFAD, USAID, and UNDP have long-standing programs in rural development. Enhancing coordination and building on successful pilot projects can scale up impact across rural communities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Rural development in Nigeria remains an essential yet elusive goal due to longstanding institutional weaknesses, governance failures, and socio-economic inequalities. As highlighted throughout this study, institutions play a central role in enabling or obstructing development outcomes. When institutions are weak, characterized by corruption, inefficiency, and lack of public engagement; rural areas suffer neglect, deepening poverty, and infrastructural decay. However, amid these challenges, prospects for social change and inclusive development persist.

Emerging dynamics such as community-led innovations, youth-driven initiatives, and

technological advancements demonstrate that rural Nigeria is not static. These pockets of progress illustrate the untapped potential for social transformation if backed by enabling institutional frameworks. Importantly, the rural population is not merely a passive recipient of development but an active stakeholder with agency and capacity for change.

To unlock Nigeria's rural development potential, institutional reforms must be prioritized. These reforms should address governance gaps, strengthen local government performance, eliminate corruption, and integrate the voices of rural dwellers into the development process. Rural development must also be framed within a holistic strategy that incorporates economic empowerment, social services, climate resilience, and gender equity.

Ultimately, achieving sustainable rural transformation in Nigeria is not only a matter of policy; it is a moral imperative and a strategic necessity. Rural areas represent the soul and backbone of the Nigerian economy, and their development is central to national stability, food security, and inclusive growth. With the right institutional structures and policy direction, Nigeria can build resilient rural communities and foster equitable social change across the nation.

Drawing from the preceding analysis of the interplay between institutions, rural development, and social change in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed to address institutional weaknesses and stimulate sustainable rural transformation:

1. Strengthen Institutional Capacity at the Local Level

Local government authorities should be adequately empowered financially, administratively, and technically to take charge of rural development initiatives. This includes revising the revenue allocation formula to give local governments more autonomy, enhancing capacity-building programs for local officials, and instituting

robust accountability mechanisms. Institutions must also be insulated from political interference to ensure continuity and professionalism in service delivery (Ogunleye & Salawu, 2023).

2. Promote Participatory Governance

Rural development projects should be based on the needs and priorities of local communities. Inclusive planning and participatory budgeting processes should be institutionalized at all levels of governance. This will promote ownership, reduce resistance to change, and ensure that projects align with cultural and socio-economic realities (Eze, 2023).

3. Enhance Transparency and Fight Corruption

Institutional reforms must be anchored in anti-corruption efforts. Establishing independent oversight bodies, ensuring the digitalization of public procurement, and encouraging citizen-led monitoring (e.g., social audits) can help curb corruption in rural development programs. These measures can also rebuild public trust in governance institutions (Chukwuma & Edeh, 2021).

4. Invest in Rural Infrastructure and Social Services

Governments at all levels must prioritize and sustain investments in rural infrastructure such as roads, electricity, health centers, schools, and water supply systems. Leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) and development financing can fill funding gaps and enhance sustainability. Infrastructure development should target productivity, inclusivity, and access (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

5. Foster Agricultural and Technological Innovation

Rural transformation should center on agricultural modernization and technological adoption. Farmers should be provided access to improved inputs, mechanization services, extension workers, and digital platforms for market access. Innovation hubs and rural enterprise incubators can support youth and women entrepreneurs in agriculture and allied sectors (Akinwale & Idowu, 2024).

6. Promote Climate Resilience and Sustainability

Sustainable environmental practices must be embedded in all rural development plans. Government and civil society actors should support farmers with climate-smart agriculture techniques, early warning systems, and green technologies. Rural energy programs should prioritize renewable energy sources, especially solar and biogas systems (Nwankwo & Hassan, 2024).

7. Build Stronger Partnerships with Civil Society and Development Partners

Multilateral and bilateral development agencies have vast experience and resources that can enhance rural transformation. Strategic alignment of donor-funded programs with local development priorities is necessary. Strengthening civil society involvement ensures better transparency, innovation, and grassroots participation (Udo & Etim, 2022).

8. Institutional Reform and the Way Forward

There is an urgent need for comprehensive institutional reform to enhance rural development outcomes. Such reform must address structural issues such as the autonomy and funding of local governments, anti-corruption enforcement, and decentralization of service delivery. Capacity building, especially in data management, planning, and community engagement, is also essential.

Participatory governance, where rural dwellers are involved in designing and implementing development programs, has shown promise in various contexts. For instance, community-driven development models in parts of Northern Nigeria have improved health and education outcomes through local ownership and accountability (Chukwuma & Edeh, 2021).

Furthermore, leveraging digital technologies for monitoring, feedback, and data collection can improve transparency and responsiveness. Akinwale and Idowu (2024) recommend integrating digital platforms into rural

governance structures to enhance participation and reduce corruption.

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INTERPLAY OF CULTURE, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

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Introduction

A dynamic approach woven from Nigeria's rich historical legacy, varied ethnic identities, and changing sociopolitical landscapes is presented by the interaction of culture, religious institutions, and social change in the twenty-first century. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is home to more than 250 ethnic groups and a wide range of religious beliefs that greatly influence its social fabric. These beliefs are primarily Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion (ATR). Navigating the intricacies of modern life has become increasingly dependent in recent years on the meeting point of religious institutions' influence and traditional cultural practices. These days, it's hard to tell African Traditional Religion apart from other religions. Others use the ATR's symbols in places of worship or engage in covert practice, which is the cause. A large number of these have been discovered recently.

As Nigeria struggles with urgent issues like governance, gender dynamics, economic challenges, and interfaith relations, the conversation between culture and religion is not just a backdrop but a vital force behind social change. New social movements have emerged in the twenty-first century, driven by global influences, youth activism, and digital connectivity. These movements aim to

redefine identity and community while challenging long-standing conventions.

In order to comprehend this interaction, it is necessary to investigate how religious organisations interact with cultural norms to promote both continuity and change, in addition to serving as pillars of moral authority and hope. The intricate connections between culture, religion, and social change will continue to be crucial as Nigeria develops in order to understand the country's course and respond to the goals and difficulties of its diverse population. In this regard, analyzing these intersections provides information about how Nigeria can use its abundant religious and cultural resources to pave the way for a society that is more egalitarian, inclusive, and forward-thinking.

Religious Institutions

Scholarly examination of the concepts of a few variables will be conducted in this section in order to comprehend the topic of this paper. The first awareness that man had when he first arrived on Earth was the existence of the Supreme Being, which he sought to understand and get in touch with. This can be referred to as the spiritual stage of man's consciousness of himself. In Africa, Nigeria, and around the world, this has a significant

impact on the social, political, and cultural landscapes. The various facets of religious institutions are examined in this conceptual framework, along with their relationships with society, which include social change, and their consequences for governance and development, which is the cultural aspect. We'll go over each of these ideas below.

Definition of Religious Institutions

Organisations that support particular religious practices and beliefs are known as religious institutions. These include Christianity, Islam, and traditional religions in Africa, as well as more recent movements like African Indigenous Churches and Prosperity Gospel. In their communities, each of these organizations plays a unique role and exerts influence. The term "religion" is a rather nebulous concept, and although there isn't a universally accepted definition, their general characteristics can be outlined. A community's organized set of beliefs, customs, and rituals is called religion. Religion is intended to foster a greater sense of intimacy with the sacred or transcendent (whether that be God, a higher power, or ultimate truth/reality) as well as an awareness of one's duty to and relationship to other members of one's community. Therefore, religion is community-focused (organized into formal, observable, and quantifiable practices), may be authoritarian in terms of behaviors and responsibilities, and frequently involves doctrines and beliefs that, among other things, aim to distinguish between good and evil (Koenig, 2005).

Furthermore, one needs to think about how the person specifically accepts religion. Both intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations are described by Allport and Ross (1961). People who are naturally inclined toward religion cherish religion as a whole. This ultimate significance outweighs any other advantages that religion may provide. "After adopting a creed, the person makes an effort to fully internalize and adhere to it. He demonstrates his religious beliefs in this way. Extrinsically oriented people use religion as a

tool to achieve their goals, whether they are to improve their social standing and networks, find solace, or defend their behavior. "The extrinsic type turns to God, but without turning away from self," the statement reads, but religious teachings are secondary, shaped to serve the individual's primary needs. Individual well-being suffers greatly when these divergent orientations are present. According to Koenig (2005) and McCullough and Larson (1999), there are five factors that predict the rate of recovery from depression, including one's degree of innate religious orientation. Additionally, studies show that anxiety is negatively connected with an inherent orientation but positively connects with an extrinsic orientation (Baker & Gorsuch 1982 c.f. Koenig 2005). Ultimately, religion is multifaceted, and this empirical study has focused on all of its different facets in an effort to understand how it interacts dynamically with other metrics. According to George et al. (2002).

What is the meaning of culture?

Individual viewpoints can be used to define the concept of culture. Numerous academics have explored the phenomenon of the concept at various points in time. Therefore, in the language of the average person, culture can be defined as what a man in a community or society has adopted as a way of life that is appropriate for his existence given the circumstances of his surroundings. It's what he practices and believes. what he consumes. where he finds refuge. his line of work and his belief in nature or a divine being. The authors of this paper hold this viewpoint. Culture is not a gift from God. It was created by humans for human use. But let's do more research to find out what other academics.

Material and Non-material culture

Material and non-material terms can be used to analyze culture in two ways. Physical components include, first and foremost, the tools, buildings, machinery, and technology created in a society. According to Zencirkiran

(2017), a society's culture can be reflected in its material aspects, such as its architectural styles, food, technology, durable consumer goods, fashion choices, and so forth. Fichter looked at material culture items in relation to popularizing factors using the following criteria:

They are important indicators of human behavior, cultural tools because of the various roles they play, tools people use to carry out their behavior, and dissemination elements in terms of meeting social needs. According to him, they are a part of culture in this context (Fichter, 1996:131). The question of whether or not human-made objects qualify as material components of culture has been up for debate. It is necessary to view everything as a material product of culture since everything from the stone axe used in prehistoric times to the tools of contemporary mass communication technology are products that can be made as a result of social accumulation and because, once produced, they have an impact on human life. People design homes and create architectural styles based on the regions in which they reside. Skyscrapers, cars, computers, irons, and bridges are not regarded as cultural elements. All human-made objects are, nevertheless, recognized as cultural components since the information that produces them is a cultural component.

Cultural concepts that are not material include mentality, tradition, value judgments, belief, law, and morality (Zencirkiran, 2017:58). According to a different perspective, the knowledge and methods utilized to create the material components of culture constitute non-material culture (Dönmezer, 1994:109). The products and technological tools that have been used determine life itself. Living without the house we use for housing, the vehicles we use for transportation, and the clothing we wear to stay warm is extremely challenging. People's creations have a significant impact on our social lives and shape our thought processes and behaviors. For instance, although televisions were not very common until the 1980s, there are differences between

then and now in terms of family communication, sleeping schedules, and opportunities to obtain news and information. Evening activities and sleeping schedules have changed as a result of the widespread use of televisions. The aforementioned relationships between the individuals have changed, but they have persisted, and televisions can be watched as a family. However, as computers became more widely used in the 1990s, the opportunities for obtaining news and information changed. Computer technology has allowed for the quick completion of corporate calculations, drawings, comparisons, and information folder storage that would have taken many people years of labor-intensive work. The extensive use of smartphones and the internet has had a significant impact on society. Due to the inability of technological devices or material cultural elements, such as television, to be utilized in the family, face-to-face communication has decreased, patterns of appreciation have changed, information and news gathering has accelerated, resources have increased, and our social and individual behaviors have changed. Twenty years ago, hundreds of thousands of people flocked to city centers to demonstrate against any social issue; today, they can organize online and carry out their actions in this setting. In fact, people began to think that sometimes just using an emoji was sufficient.

Norns and Values

In order to continue existing, every society seeks to create laws and order to safeguard it. These guidelines help people recognise the boundaries of their own attitudes and actions and set expectations for others. As a result, the person perceives whether or not a particular situation calls for appropriate behaviour. Norms are guidelines that specify what members of a society can and cannot do, as well as their attitudes and behaviours (Zencirkiran, 2017; Tolan, 1991).

Norms are typically accepted and followed to the extent that they are useful and practical

in preserving a society. When a social group violates a norm, its members are prepared to mediate the situation and impose penalties. In interpersonal relationships, certain behavioral patterns ought to be adhered to. These norms, which are essential components of the social structure, include speech patterns and commonplace interactions like greetings that are influenced by specific guidelines, priorities, and penalties and that are acquired through socialization. Most of the time, we don't need to be reminded to follow the rules because they are now part of our movements. In other words, adherence to a norm does not solely rely on external sanctions because the individual imposes certain sanctions on himself based on the norms of the group to which he belongs. However, even though internalization is how norms are established, the system still needs some sanctions (Durdu, 2014).

All societies require values and a set of societal values in order for norms to be formed and maintained. The values of a society are what define good and evil, what is beautiful and ugly, what is worth dying for, and for what reason? We feel these values and unconsciously incorporate them into our lives. This is what society anticipates from us. Immediately after birth, we try to instill our child's value system by telling him or her whether what they do is good or bad or by warning them. It is believed that these values, which we learned through socialization, are inherent to the world. Values, however, can differ between societies or between groups within a society. They even undergo changes over time.

An "ideal" that is thought to exist in the future serves as the foundation for the values. The goal of our thoughts and actions is to create a system of values that are suitable for this ideal and to work toward it. This ideal system has a certain consistency in its organization, even though it occasionally contradicts itself. Values give culture and society meaning and importance. Since many facets of society have embraced it, it is shared.

In order to meet social needs and safeguard the welfare of the community, people take values seriously. Values are therefore occasionally even blessed and sacrificed for (Durdu, 2014). The rank of martyrdom, for instance, is given to those who die for their country, indicating that they are capable of making a significant sacrifice for a cause.

Meaning of Social Change

Social change, according to sociologists, is the transformation of cultural and social institutions, including religious institutions, through changes in human interactions and relationships with his surroundings. These shifts take place gradually and frequently and have significant, long-term effects on society. Another possibility is that a variety of factors, including demographic, technological, cultural, political, economic, and educational ones, contribute to social change. These elements frequently work together to produce changes, either in parallel or serial fashion. According to Comte, a specialist in this area, social change will occur as society advances and it will be in a better position than it was before the positive stage. According to Comte, social changes happen, but maintaining the social order is necessary in order to reach a higher stage.

The term "change" is very broad. Despite the fact that change is everywhere, we do not all consider it to be social change. Therefore, a person's physical development from year to year or the changing of the seasons is not considered a social change. In this context, social change is defined as modifications to the social structure and social relationships. We will talk about what social change means and what is important about it.

Moreover, a social change is a modification of the social structure of a social group or society, which includes changes in the social institutions, social behaviors, or social relations of a society. A society's cultural products, symbols, norms, and values may all change. Through the process of social change, a social system's structure and function,

institutions, and patterns of interaction, employment, leisure, roles, and other facets of society can all change over time.

Characteristic of Social Change

The process of change without regard to the quality of change is known as social change. And societal shifts are linked to cultural shifts. The development of contemporary technology as a cultural component, for example, has been closely linked to changes in the economic structures of significant segments of society. There are differences in the extent and rate of social change. We can discuss changes on a small or large scale. Change affects many facets of a society and upends the entire social structure because of its varied scope. Numerous facets of society were impacted by the industrialisation process. While some changes happen quickly, developing countries are working to accelerate them. They accomplish this by taking ideas or modifications from countries that have already succeeded.

According to modern anthropologists, change is inevitable, natural, and present in every aspect of life for every society. An individual's experiences are not the main focus of social change analysis; rather, we look at differences in social structures, institutions, and relationships. The following are examples of social change factors: Many things contribute to social change. Demographic factors, such as population shifts, technological factors, cultural factors, and political factors are a few examples.

Theoretical Framework

In the twenty-first century, Nigeria's culture, religious institutions, and social transformation interact in a complex way that can be analyzed using a variety of theoretical approaches. The following two theoretical frameworks are appropriate and pertinent.

A. Social constructionism

Social constructionism was first presented in the 1966 book "The Social Construction of

Reality" by sociologists Thomas Luckman and Peter L. Berger. Several intellectuals, such as George Herbert Mead, Emile Durkheim, and Karl Marx, influenced the theories of Berger and Luckman. According to social constructionism, shared meanings, social interactions, and processes all influence how we perceive the world. This framework investigates the formation and upkeep of cultural norms, values, and beliefs in societies. It highlights how crucial language and communication are to the formation of social realities.

It is highly pertinent to this paper because social constructionism enables an examination of how religious beliefs and cultural identities are created and reconstructed in response to current social changes in Nigeria, a nation with a diverse range of religious practices and a rich tapestry of cultural diversity. The framework can be used to investigate how local and global forces impact the narratives surrounding tradition and modernity, and how these narratives impact social cohesion, conflict, and the function of religious institutions. The effects of migration, globalization, and technological development on Nigerian cultural customs and religious expressions can be examined using this lens.

B. Structural Functionalism

The main pillars of structural functionalism were established by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim in the late 19th century. According to this sociological viewpoint, society is a complex system made up of many components that cooperate to uphold social order and stability. It highlights the roles that social institutions—such as the family, religion, and education—play in preserving the balance of society.

The application of structural functionalism to the interaction of Nigerian culture, religious institutions, and social change is also relevant to the paper because it enables an analysis of the ways in which these factors support social stability and transformation. One could, for example, look into how religious organizations

react to social issues like poverty, violence, or corruption and how they help advance social norms and values that either support social change or preserve traditional practices. This framework can also be used to analyze how religious and cultural practices support social cohesiveness while also adapting to the needs of a society that is changing quickly.

Both structural functionalism and social constructionism offer useful perspectives for comprehending how Nigerian culture, religious institutions, and social change interact. Structural functionalism provides insights into the roles and functions of institutions within the larger social system, whereas social constructionism concentrates on the dynamic processes of meaning-making and identity formation. When combined, these frameworks can enhance the study of modern Nigerian society and contribute to debates regarding its future course in the face of continuous social and cultural change.

Methodology

The study approaches historical research in a descriptive and analytical manner. It also makes use of both primary and secondary sources of data. The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Abuja, Nigeria, and the National Library of Nigeria were among the repositories from which primary sources were gathered. Online resources, periodicals, newspapers, journal articles, and unpublished PhD theses were used to collect additional data for the study.

Culture in Africa and Nigeria

More than 3,000 ethnic groups call Africa, a diverse continent, home, and each has its own distinctive customs, languages, and cultural practices. Nigeria, which is a microcosm of the continent's larger cultural fabric, is the primary focus of this review, which attempts to investigate the cultural dynamics within Africa. This essay uses empirical research and data to analyze a number of cultural topics, such as language, religion, the arts, and social customs.

Overview of African Culture

Africa is home to over 3,000 ethnic groups and more than 2,000 languages (Ethnologue, 2021). Cultural practices across the continent are deeply influenced by historical, social, and environmental factors. Essential cultural elements include art, music, dance, religion, and social structures. According to Mbiti (1990), African cultures are primarily communal, with a strong emphasis on family and community ties, spirituality, and oral traditions.

Cultural Variability and Unity

Even though African cultures are incredibly diverse, researchers like Nyamnjoh (2002) contend that some commonalities, like resistance, adaptation, and colonialism, bind them together. African identity is complex, and as a result of local customs, languages, and interactions with other cultures, there has been both conflict and cooperation among various groups. With more than 2,000 languages spoken throughout the continent, linguistic diversity is a defining feature of Africa's cultural landscape (Ethnologue, 2021). Different cultural practices and worldviews have developed as a result of the geographical, historical, and social contexts of the continent. Stavenhagen (1996) highlights how historical processes like colonialism, migration, and globalization have merged indigenous cultures with outside influences to shape cultural identities in Africa.

In Africa, language is essential to cultural identity. Indigenous languages in Africa embody distinct worldviews, oral traditions, and social norms, promoting a sense of community among speakers, according to the African Language Research Project (ALRP, 2016). There are more than 500 languages spoken in Nigeria alone, with the most common being Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba (Ethnologue, 2021).

Spirituality and Religion

In Africa, religion has a big impact on cultural practices. Numerous religions,

including Islam, Christianity, and traditional African religions, are practiced throughout the continent. According to Adebayo (2018), traditional beliefs are frequently incorporated into world religions, leading to distinctive spiritual practices. This religious diversity is evident in Nigeria, where traditional beliefs are still widely held and more than 50% of the population identifies as Muslim and roughly 40% as Christian (Pew Research Center, 2010). Nigeria has more than 250 different ethnic identities, including the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, which contribute to its cultural diversity. The cultural aspects of Nigeria are thoroughly examined in this section.

Folklore and the Arts

Nigerian cultural expressions are at the heart of the country's visual arts, music, dance, and literature. Both indigenous customs and modern influences can be heard in Nigeria's music scene, which includes genres like hip-hop, highlife, and Afrobeat (Ndebele, 2016). The work of Afolabi (2017), which emphasizes the use of oral narratives to transmit morals and values, shows how important traditional storytelling and folklore are to maintaining cultural heritage.

In Nigeria, festivals are important cultural occasions that frequently highlight customs, rituals, and ties to the community. For example, the Osun-Osogbo Festival, which showcases traditional religious practices and communal harmony, attracts thousands of people each year to worship the goddess Osun (Alabi, 2019). These celebrations boost local economies by attracting tourists and reaffirming cultural identity. Another essential component of cultural expression is Nigerian cuisine, which is distinguished by a wide range of regionally specific dishes. According to studies by Oloyede (2020), food is an important part of social rituals and serves as a unifying factor among Nigeria's many ethnic groups. In addition to providing nourishment, foods like jollof rice, pounded yam, and egusi soup are also markers of cultural heritage.

In conclusion, according to this empirical review, African culture—especially that of Nigeria—is vibrant and diverse, representing a wide range of customs, beliefs, and behaviors. The intricate relationship between language, religion, the arts, and social customs demonstrates how cultural identity is influenced by both domestic and international factors. Nigeria's cultural legacy is still vital to its people as it navigates modernization and globalization, promoting unity in the face of diversity.

Social Change in Africa and Nigeria

Social change is the term used to describe notable shifts in a society's norms, cultural values, and behavioral patterns over time. Social change in Africa, a continent distinguished by its many cultures, languages, and historical backgrounds, is impacted by a number of factors, including globalization, politics, the economy, and technology. With one of the biggest economies and the most people in Africa, Nigeria offers a distinctive perspective on social change in the continent.

In Africa, social change is largely driven by political factors. Numerous movements for self-determination and governance reform emerged during the postcolonial era. Significant changes toward democracy were sparked in Nigeria by the fight against military regimes in the late 20th century. Adejumobi (2016) asserts that the 1999 shift to civilian rule was a turning point in Nigerian politics, encouraging increased civic participation and changing the country's public dialogue. The emergence of social movements, especially among young people, has been crucial in promoting transparency and accountability in government.

In the area of economic, economic shifts have a big impact on lifestyles and social structures. Poverty and economic inequality continue to be problems as African nations join the global economy. Due to its heavy reliance on oil, Nigeria's economy has experienced boom and bust cycles, which have affected social conditions all throughout the nation.

According to a 2020 study by Asongu et al., economic volatility has made socioeconomic inequality worse by causing a rise in migration, urbanization, and family structure changes. In Africa, technological developments have also played a significant role in influencing social change. Communication, education, and business have all changed as a result of the widespread use of mobile devices and internet connectivity. The International Telecommunication Union (2021) reports that mobile subscriptions in Africa have grown at an exponential rate, having a major impact on community engagement and social interaction. Youth activism in Nigeria has been strengthened by the emergence of social media platforms, which has allowed for the national and worldwide recognition of campaigns like #EndSARS (Bamgbose, 2020). Changes in values, beliefs, and practices are examples of the cultural aspects of social change. African societies, which have historically been characterised by familial ties and communal living, are changing as a result of urbanisation and exposure to other cultures. According to Owolabi's work (2019), Nigerian youth in particular exhibit a fusion of traditional and modern values. This duality, which represents a changing cultural landscape, appears in a variety of ways, such as music, fashion, and social norms.

Obstacles to Social Transformation

Notwithstanding the encouraging developments in social change, Nigeria and Africa still face many obstacles. Progress is still hampered by problems like political unpredictability, corruption, and poor infrastructure. Furthermore, conservative facets of society that are opposed to novel concepts and methods may react negatively to social change. Oyediran (2021) contends that conflicts, especially between various demographic groups, can arise from the tension between tradition and modernity.

Conclusively, in Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, social change is the result of intricate interactions between political, economic,

technological, and cultural elements. Even though there has been a lot of progress, there are still many obstacles in the way of holistic development. Policymakers, scholars, and social activists striving for a better future for the continent and its citizens must comprehend the complex nature of social change.

African Religious Institutions with an Emphasis on Nigeria

African social, cultural, and political life is greatly influenced by religious institutions, which have an effect on everything from social cohesion to governance. Religious institutions play an important role in forming social structures and communal identities in Nigeria, a country known for its ethnic and religious diversity. Using a variety of studies and data sources, this empirical review investigates the roles, difficulties, and effects of religious institutions in Africa, with a special emphasis on Nigeria. In Africa, religious organizations play a variety of functions, such as promoting social justice, offering health care, education, and spiritual counseling. Adogame (2018) asserts that these organizations frequently fill the voids left by the government by offering crucial services that enhance the welfare of the community. In regions with weak or nonexistent state mechanisms, the impact of religion is especially noticeable.

Social and Spiritual Roles

In Africa, religious beliefs influence both individual and collective identities. According to Afolabi and Onuoha (2020), religious organisations help communities develop a moral compass and sense of belonging, which is especially important in regions that are prone to conflict. Additionally, they mediate conflicts and foster harmony both within and between communities (Ogunyemi, 2019).

It is impossible to overestimate the role that religious institutions play in education. Religious affiliations affect literacy and vocational training in many African educational institutions (Nwankwo & Onuoha,

2021). For example, both Muslim and Christian organisations have set up schools in Nigeria that serve a variety of demographics, but inequalities in accessibility still exist. Nigeria is home to African Traditional Religions (ATR) as well as a complex fusion of religious beliefs, primarily Islam and Christianity. The division of these religions has important ramifications for social cohesiveness, governance, and national unity.

The religious landscape in Nigeria has changed due to the rise of mega churches and sizable Islamic organizations. According to Okon (2018), these organizations actively address social issues such as poverty alleviation and health care in addition to offering spiritual guidance. In Nigeria, religious institutions hold significant political power and frequently impact both policymaking and voter behavior. As gatekeepers of moral authority, religious leaders hold considerable power and frequently influence public opinion and political decisions in ways that benefit their communities (Bako, 2021). This is demonstrated by how important religious institutions were in influencing votes during the 2019 general elections, where religious leaders' endorsements played a significant role.

Issues Religious Organisations Face

Religious institutions in Nigeria face many obstacles despite their power, such as economic limitations, governance problems, and interreligious conflict. Violence and displacement have been caused by sectarian conflicts, especially those between Christians and Muslims (Kaunda, 2020). Additionally, the commercialisation of religion has caused skepticism and disillusionment among adherents, as some organisations put financial gain ahead of spiritual well-being (Adebayo, 2019). Corruption and a lack of accountability are two governance-related problems that religious institutions frequently face. In order to encourage accountability and transparency among their members, there is an increasing

demand for these institutions to participate more positively in governance processes (Ismail, 2020). In Nigeria and Africa, religious institutions have a big influence on community dynamics and societal structures. Their diverse responsibilities include social, educational, and spiritual roles as they negotiate the difficulties presented by sectarianism and problems with governance. Policymakers, community leaders, and researchers interested in promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding in this diverse region must comprehend their impact.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In contemporary Nigeria and Africa, the roles that the ideas covered in this paper play are essential to the general growth of any community. Nonetheless, the reason why everything that should be done is not being done can be summed up as the lack of political will on the part of those in the states' corridor of power. Because of the holistic viewpoint and the unity of the resources in the communities, it is sufficient for the people to promise land and act as a haven for those who are not on the continent. As a result, the continent is only waiting for the beautiful to emerge within its boundaries.

Nonetheless, as this paper demonstrates, there are connections between the interplay of social change, culture, and religious intuitions. The most developed countries in the world uphold and sustain their high standards thanks to the three pillars of connectiveness. While some schools of thought may differ, none of them can be ignored when upholding the essential principles of development. Even if the concepts are democratic, the facts are not interchangeable. Thus, social change is crucial in the communities to alter the cultural patterns and processes of things from all perspectives. Finally, it should be noted that religious institutions are intrinsic to human nature and play significant roles in all aspects of human life. You can't ignore it.

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INSTITUTIONALIZING LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL VALUES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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Abstract

Language and cultural values are central to Africa's sense of self, social stability, and development. Nevertheless, the indigenous languages and the traditional cultural systems were badly eroded by colonial languages, globalization, and a weak policy framework. The purpose of this study is to identify how education and governance practices centered on institutionally embedding indigenous languages and cultural values as economic activities are making them important for development. Foreign language dominance puts language preservation and cultural sustainability at risk; having the will and resources is the other two challenges. But success in this harmonization has been achieved in countries as Tanzania and South Africa, which opens up a potential good aspect of Multilingual Education, of Bilingual Governance and Heritage Preservation. Strategic interventions suggested in this paper include stronger language policies, more powerful cultural institutions, technical innovation, as well as cooperation among the regions. An integration of AI-based language technology, digital learning platforms, and social media engagement can aid in preserving indigenous knowledge and representation of culture. Language and cultural values need to be institutionalised for Africa's long-term sustainability, innovation, social unity, and economic resilience. In that way, African nations may be able to form inclusive policies, utilizing technology to save their linguistic and cultural heritage while pursuing sustainable development.

Keywords: Indigenous languages, culture, development, multilingual education, policy

Introduction

Language and the cultural values they reflect are fundamental to a society's identity, social cohesion, and economic progress. Indigenous languages and cultural traditions have always been crucial in governance, education and economic activities in Africa. However, the increasing dominance of foreign languages and the erosion of traditional values due to globalization pose significant challenges to the sustainability of African societies. As stated in the United Nations, sustainable development requires that the needs of the present do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations, 2015). In Africa, achieving this will need to institutionalize local languages and cultural

values to promote inclusivity, social stability and growth of economy.

Notwithstanding this fact, African indigenous languages and culture traditions are marginalized in formal institutions such as education, governance and commerce. Such colonial legacy of giving priority to European languages like English and French as well as Portuguese among others has seen the local languages overtaken in official discourse (Bamgbose, 2011). Further, as the world grows to become more urbanized and more globalized, cultural values are not only, but more rapidly weakened, so that they do not pass through the transmission in generations (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2009). As a result, indigenous knowledge programs have been

lost and replaced with an erroneous template of development that has contributed to the loss of indigenous knowledge systems necessary to environmental conservation, conflict resolution and operation of a sophisticated sustainable economic machinery.

To promote sustainable development in Africa, it is necessary to establish language and cultural values in education policies, governance systems, and technological advancement. However, some countries such as Tanzania and South Africa, are leading the way by including indigenous languages in national policies. These are countries that can preserve indigenous culture and economic advancement through this (Stroud & Heugh, 2020). This paper discusses the role of language and cultural values in the development process, the hindrances to institutionalizing these values, and plans the effective inclusion of these values in the development agenda of Africa.

Conceptual Framework

Institutionalizing language and cultural values for sustainable development in Africa requires a clear understanding of key concepts and theoretical perspectives that underpin the relationship between language, culture, and development. This section defines essential terms and explores relevant theories that highlight the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in fostering sustainable growth.

Institutionalization

The concept of institutionalization is the embedding of policies and values in formal structures such as education and governance to secure sustainability (North, 1990). Colonialism had already staked a claim on colonial histories in Africa, favoring foreign or colonial languages in governance and in the education, marginalizing native or indigenous languages and struggling cultural values. For African languages to be institutionalized, the need is for official recognition, curriculum

integration, and the use in public administration, and cultural values must be embedded in the governance for social cohesion. The experience of Tanzania with making Kiswahili the national language shows that language policies can promote nation building. If other nations are to take up the same approach, they can work to encourage multilingual education, conduct cultural research and make use of digital tools. Preserving linguistic and cultural heritage as well as fostering inclusive development and sustainable national progress (UNESCO, 2023) are institutionalization's purposes.

Language

Language is a structured system of communication used to transfer knowledge; sustained identity; and socio-economic participation (Fishman, 2018). The heavier is about more than just a tool for interaction and it encompasses whatever it is that shows the cultural heritage and the indigenous knowledge being passed on from generation to generation. But operating under colonial languages such as English and French, which dominate the African continent, has also meant that its languages are marginalized in education, governance and in the media. The exclusionalty eases the way of information and disrupts cultural continuity. Yet, Ethiopia and South Africa demonstrate that bringing the language learners into the language in education policies leads to more literacy and more involvement in the economy. Using digital technology, media and inclusive policies, African languages can be made to still remain relevant, contributing to the growth of national identity, communication and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2023).

Cultural Values

According to Hofstede (2020), cultural values are beliefs, customs and traditions that are learned from pre-existing conditions and shape the behavior of those in a society and the people's way of making decision. Social norms, identity, as well as moral conduct are

defined by them, and they are used to structure how people interact with their communities. These values are firmly fixed in tribal folklore and oral traditions, proverbs, communal living and traditional, indigenous governance systems throughout the African continent and thereby promote social cohesion and continuity within African society.

So, for instance, Ubuntu in Southern Africa, literally written as 'I am because we are', as it highlights collective responsibility, mutuality of support. Storytelling, music and dance also carry a piece of education and ethics that transmit history and wisdom. Nevertheless, globalization and modernization are undermining these traditions since younger generations are being increasingly driven by Western ideas.

Governments must institutionalize the cultural values in order to preserve Africa's rich heritage through education, the law of the land and cultural initiatives as they are relevant in contemporary society (UNESCO, 2023).

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a development approach, which seeks to meet 'present needs' without compromising future generation's ability to meet theirs, considering societal, economic and environmental perspectives (United Nations, 2015). Long term strategies in the area of economic growth, conservation of environment and social equity are part of it, the purpose being that we should manage the resources wisely for the future generations.

For Africa to achieve sustainable development, these issues have to be dealt with: reducing poverty, increasing climate resilience and creating inclusive economic growth. This is achieved through language and cultural values which environment conservation, traditional medicine and community led development require prevalent indigenous knowledge systems out of which language iterates. For example, traditional ecological knowledge of African

cultures help Africans practice sustainable farming, conserve water and protect biodiversity.

Preserving and promoting the biodiversity, fostering these policies of the inclusion of education, via institutionalize of local languages and cultural values, can contribute to assisting sustainable development in the local sense. In the policy framework of indigenous languages and traditional governance structures, communities can participate at the decision making process because development strategies are tailored to their needs and figure in the values of their community.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories support the argument that language and cultural values are integral to sustainable development in Africa:

Linguistic Relativity Theory (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis)

The Linguistic Relativity Theory (also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) holds that the human thought, perception, and the world outlook are held in constitute by language (Whorf, 2018). By doing so, indigenous languages in Africa represent culturally specific knowledge such as environmental conservation, conflict resolution, governance systems. As a result, the loss of these languages would be a threat to the loss of indigenous knowledge, an essential instrument for sustainable development.

This theory has a key implication which is that without preservation of languages, cultural wisdom will cease to exist. Among African languages, there are terminologies that pertain to traditional expertise. For example, Yoruba language in Nigeria has over 200 agricultural terms indicating how much they know about agriculture. The Himba of Namibia classify colours differently, which also proves that language structures perception.

The erosion of indigenous languages—due to colonial influence, globalization, and foreign

language dominance—has serious consequences. To achieve sustainable living, the use of such traditional ecological practices as rotational grazing and sacred forest preservation depend to a great extent on the use of linguistic expressions. If languages disappear biodiversity is lost, and environmental knowledge is lost along with it, which leads to degradation.

Therefore, to combat this, African countries must institutionalize indigenous languages in education and governance. The local knowledge systems are preserved because Tanzania has adopted Kiswahili as a national language. Policy, education and research with integration of native languages can provide a better sense of sustainability and social economy for the indigenous people in such areas.

Cultural Ecology Theory

According to Julian Steward (1955) the Cultural Ecology Theory is the theory that describes how societies develop cultural practice adapted to its environmental conditions. As a result, at least in Africa, others indigenous languages and cultural values are fundamentally a part of ecological knowledge when shaping traditional agriculture, water management, and practices facilitating conservation.

This theory is applicable to Africa's sustainability issues such as climate change, food security, and biodiversity loss. There are many adaptive strategies developed by African societies for long term environmental sustainability. Rotational grazing has been the practice related to herding by the Maasai people of East Africa to avoid overgrazing and allow grassland to regenerate. In North Africa, the Berber communities have the qanats (underground water channels) to manipulate scarce water and have customary laws passed down in indigenous languages (Steward, 1955).

Despite the abandonment of sustainable practices, however, modernization and the neglect of traditional knowledge have put

them at risk. Indigenous ecological strategies have been disrupted by Western-style agriculture, industrialization, urbanization, deforestation, soil degradation, and water scarcity (Berkes, 2018). The triumph of certain foreign languages in the sphere of governance and education further marginalises traditional knowledge as a communication protocol, for it is made narrower with the generational transmission of the knowledge in the future.

The adoption of language and education policies whereby cultural ecology principles are institutionalised can improve food security and climate resilience. This is the reason why countries such as Ethiopia have successfully included traditional agroforestry within national policy (Gómez-Baggethun et al., 2013), thus showing that cultural ecology is a key factor for sustainability. African nations that know how to recognize the interdependence between culture and environment can untangle development models from ecological realities so they can last a long time.

The Role of Language and Cultural Values in Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a comprehensive concept that combines social, economic, and environmental aspects to provide for desirable long-term development and stability. Indeed, language and cultural values are very important for achieving sustainability as they influence human interactions, governance structure, economic activities, and knowledge transmission. The need for the recognition and the institutionalization of indigenous languages and values in society is to foster social cohesion, enhance innovation, and promote inclusive education.

Language as a Tool for Communication, Education, and Governance

Language is a crucial means of communication, education and governance, to spread knowledge disseminate, and take part in society. This means that of the proposed

2,000 languages in Africa, one has to be the correct choice to govern or educate any citizen throughout any part of the continent (Bamgbose, 2021).

Education research has proven that mother tongue is a better way of teaching as it improves academic performance and literacy and cognitive development (UNESCO, 2023). Ethiopia and Tanzania have made languages such as their own work_patches into curricula with great success for learning outcomes. Critical thinking and meaningful engagement is fostered when teaching to the language learners who understand.

Specifically in governance, language inclusivity enables citizens to participate, be transparent and be accountable. Public engagement and social justice (Obiegbu & Adesope, 2022) are facilitated through policies and legal frameworks through indigenous languages. The political exclusion may come from marginalising local languages. This institutionalization of indigenous languages in governance and legal systems in Africa, therefore, helps democracy and equitable development.

Cultural Values and Their Influence on Social Cohesion and Economic Activities

Social norms, ethics, traditions, and other ways of behaviour are determined by cultural values. United in communal values like Ubuntu (humanness or human interconnectedness) and harambee (collective responsibility), Africans support at least each other's humanity, which is a key to sustainable development (Hofstede, 2020). As a society, it is supposed to prefer shared responsibility with common traditions of respecting institutions for social stability and helping in resolving conflicts in case it arise.

What cultural values shape work ethics, entrepreneurship, and trade practices? These are the things in the economic sphere that will be profoundly impacted by the cultural values. Esusu (West African rotating savings systems), has been part of many African societies with rich informal and cooperative economies that

give access to capital for small businesses (Akinyoade, & Uche, 2023). Traditional economic models that promote the inclusion and resilience in finances, especially in rural areas where the formal banking structures are limited, are readily embraced by these immigrants.

Additionally, arts, cultural and heritage industries play a major role in the creation of national economies. Ghana, Kenya and other African countries, like South Africa, generate a good chunk of their revenue from cultural heritage tourism that attracts visitors interested in African traditions, music, and craftsmanship (World Bank, 2023). Thereby, governments can institutionalize cultural values and thus sustainably encourage economic activities that are aimed at preserving the heritage as well as driving innovation.

Indigenous Languages and Their Impact on Innovation and Knowledge Preservation

Indigenous languages are storage houses for traditional knowledge, more particularly in medicine, agriculture, and environmental conservation. They include ecological wisdom which is passed down through oral traditions, proverbs, and stories (Nyika. 2022). For example, South African healers generate herbal remedies based on indigenous knowledge, and some have been scientifically confirmed.

When knowledge is easily available and also culturally relevant, its value as a tool for innovation is increased. In societies where indigenous languages integrate into the research and technology, they help to keep and grow their knowledge base (Mokua, 2023). This works well in Nigeria by introducing Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo as well in STEM's education to improve student engagement.

Digital platforms and AI empowered language processing tools are now responsible for documenting and translating of African languages, making them relevant in the digital zoning (Adegbite et al., 2024). Preservation of knowledge through institutionalization of

indigenous languages in education, governance and technology in Africa is an important precursor to such Africa's sustainable development.

Challenges to Institutionalizing Language and Cultural Values in Africa

Historically, socio-economically, politically and otherwise, indigenous languages and cultural values in Africa are being undermined and made institutionalized.

Dominance of Foreign Languages

Indigenous languages are sidelined in education, governance, and in commerce, as colonial languages such as English, French, and Portuguese dominate (Bamgbose, 2021). Schools' foreign language instruction disadvantages non-elites such that their lecturing results in poor learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2023). Like this, governance and legal systems conducted in colonial languages continue to exclude the rural populations (Obiegbo & Adesope, 2022) hence the inequality.

Globalization and Cultural Erosion

Cultural homogenization is driven by Western media, urbanization, and digital communication that makes the use of indigenous languages (Nyika, 2022). English, French or urban hybrid languages are preferred by many young Africans and impede the transmission of traditional knowledge between generations (Mokua, 2023).

Weak Policies and Political Will

The policies that most African governments come up with to enhance local languages are not the strongest. In Tanzania, Kiswahili has been institutionalized but in other countries, colonial languages are directed as the official language in education and governance (Akinyoade & Uche, 2023). This further weakens language preservation efforts due to limited funding for language research and documentation (Obiegbo & Adesope, 2022).

Limited Resources and Technological Gaps

Indigenous languages are not well funded, lack learning materials, are poorly developed with regard to their digital presence (Adegbite et al., 2024). AI powered translation tools are not used in many African language and this inhibits integration of many African languages into digital education and research (Mokua, 2023). To address these challenges, strong policies, investment on linguistic research, technological innovation for linguistic and cultural sustainability for the long term development of Africa are needed.

Strategies for Institutionalizing Language and Cultural Values in Africa

Strategic policies and interventions will be necessary to institutionalize the indigenous languages and cultural values in Africa. Focal strategies include policy frameworks, the building up of cultural institutions, language multilingualism and the use of technology for language sustainability.

Policy Frameworks for Education and Governance

For African governments, a comprehensive national language policy based on indigenous languages must be developed as national assets (Bamgbose, 2021). For example, Mama Tongue Education policy is successfully carried out in countries such as Ethiopia and Tanzania, raising literacy and cognitive development (UNESCO, 2023). If these policies were expanded continent wide, then it would result in better learning outcomes and better academic performance. Furthermore, the prestige and use of higher education and public administration could be enhanced by also integrating local languages. To improve governance inclusivity, legal documents and public services should be made available in indigenous languages so that citizens can function (Obiegbo & Adesope, 2022).

Strengthening Cultural Institutions and Heritage Preservation

Museums, archives, traditional institutions are part of the institution that preserves the languages and indigenous knowledge (Nyika, 2022). This kind of community based cultural centers and language academies, help in the transfer of intergenerational knowledge. Ghana and Senegal have also introduced festivals, exhibitions and cultural tourism that reinforce cultural pride as well as economic development (World Bank, 2023).

Promoting Multilingualism and Language Technology

Despite the fact that there is multilingual policy which will help to drive the economic and social integration (Mokua, 2023) balancing between local languages and global languages. (i) Language learning apps, (ii) AI translation tools as well as (iii) digital archives contribute to the preservation of indigenous languages (Adegbite et al., 2024). It means the African languages are relevant in the digital age.

Role of Media and Digital Platforms in Language and Cultural Preservation

The media and digital platforms are powerful tools for promoting indigenous languages and cultural values. Radio, television, film, and social media play a significant role in shaping public perceptions and influencing language usage. Governments and media organizations should prioritize broadcasting in local languages to increase their visibility and usage (UNESCO, 2023).

Community radio stations, for example, have been instrumental in language revitalization efforts in countries such as Cameroon and Uganda, where indigenous languages are used for news, educational programs, and public discussions (Obiegbu & Adesope, 2022). Expanding local language programming can help reach rural and marginalized communities, ensuring that indigenous knowledge remains accessible.

Digital platforms, including YouTube, podcasts, and social media influencers, also

provide opportunities for language and cultural preservation. African content creators are increasingly using these platforms to promote indigenous storytelling, music, and cultural education. Supporting such initiatives through funding, partnerships, and digital literacy training can enhance the sustainability of language and cultural content in the digital space (Adegbite et al., 2024).

Institutionalizing language and cultural values in Africa requires multifaceted strategies that integrate policy development, cultural preservation, technology adoption, and media engagement. Governments must develop strong language policies that recognize and promote indigenous languages in education and governance. Strengthening cultural institutions and leveraging heritage tourism can further reinforce language preservation. Additionally, AI-driven language technology and media platforms must be utilized to modernize and sustain indigenous languages in the digital age. By implementing these strategies, Africa can preserve its rich linguistic and cultural heritage while fostering sustainable development.

Case Studies and Best Practices in Institutionalizing Indigenous Languages and Cultural Values in Africa

Several African countries and communities have successfully institutionalized indigenous languages and cultural values through progressive policies and grassroots initiatives. These case studies highlight best practices in language policy development, multilingual governance, and community-led cultural preservation. Notable examples include Tanzania's Kiswahili policy, South Africa's multilingual approach, and Nigeria's efforts at language inclusion, alongside community-driven programs promoting indigenous knowledge and linguistic sustainability.

Tanzania's Kiswahili Policy: A Model for National Language Integration

Kiswahili, as institutionalized in Tanzania, has been institutionalized into education,

governance, media and national discourse (Moshi, 2022); thus, it has been successfully institutionalized into national language. The ability by the government to promote Kiswahili has promoted social cohesion and national identity.

One of the most important aspects of the Tanzania language policy is its key role on education, Kiswahili is stated to be the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools. Mother-tongue education improves literacy, greatly as has been confirmed by research (UNESCO, 2023). Kiswahili is used further beyond education in governance and law, in government documents, parliamentary debates, as well as in court proceedings (Mchomvu, 2022). Radios TV and newspapers also further strengthen the national unity as it has its dominance. The experience of Tanzania indicates that a high level of, government commitment, investment and public support is essential for the institutionalization of indigenous languages. However, the lessons from this model are valuable to other African nations wishing to improve social inclusion and sustainable development.

South Africa's Multilingual Approach: Balancing Linguistic Diversity

South Africa's policy on preserving indigenous languages while promoting social integration is a good example of a robust policy. These 11 official languages of the nation that are mandated in the nation constitutionally recognize isiZulu, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, and Setswana, as well as English to ensure that linguistic diversity is institutionalized within the nation governance (Alexander, 2021). Indigenous languages are protected from marginalisation and made iron accessible to the public.

Behind these constitutional rights lies South Africa's language strategy aiming to promote and protect the rights to linguistic rights. The 1996 Constitution is mandated to promote the use of indigenous languages in the governance, education, and judiciary,

thereby making access to the populace (Mesthrie, 2023). The government in education supports the use of mother tongue based bilingual instruction in early childhood in particular, because research shows that students learn better in their native languages (UNESCO, 2023). This is a good approach because it increases cognitive development and academic performance.

In addition, South African media have also integrated linguistic diversity into representation. Much has been done by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) to offer extensive programming in indigenous languages to preserve cultural identity in the national discourse (Kamwangamalu, 2022). Although challenges remain for complete realization of multilingual policy they have proved that constitutional safeguards and co-operative linguistic governance can be combined to stimulate national unity, cultural pride and social cohesion and that this is not just relevant to South Africa, but to all African countries.

Nigeria's Language Policy: Struggles and Progress in Multilingualism

Despite efforts to institutionalize indigenous languages by teaching Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo alongside English, Nigeria's multilingual landscape poses major challenges. Combating underdevelopment becomes difficult for the country with over 500 indigenous languages, due to the lack of a functional multilingual policy but English is dominant in governance, education and commerce (Adegbite & Salami, 2023). Nevertheless, progress has been made in the integration of indigenous languages in different levels.

National Policy on Education (NPE) is a key initiative for mother tongue instruction in early child hood education. Such policies are shown to promote literacy and learning out comes, but implementation has been disjointed because there is not enough work with teacher training, a deficiency of instructional materials and Societal preference for English

(Bamgbose, 2021). Although some regional states like northern states and nomenclature southwestern advocate the use of indigenous languages in local administration, the use of English is still in control of official negotiations.

NGOs and state governments have also pioneered the work on linguistic documentation and initiatives to digitally learn languages in order to preserve endangered languages. Modern tools of language preservation are mobile apps, online dictionaries and social media campaigns (Akinyoade, 2023). To foster national identity, cultural heritage, and social inclusion, Nigeria would require strengthening of policy enforcement, creating of more funds for research, and integrating indigenous languages in digital and economic frameworks.

The Way Forward: Institutionalizing Language and Cultural Values for Sustainable Development in Africa

Institutionalizing indigenous languages and cultural values is essential for Africa's sustainable development, social cohesion, and economic progress. While various countries and communities have made strides in promoting their linguistic and cultural heritage, challenges such as globalization, policy gaps, and insufficient investment persist. A comprehensive and multi-stakeholder approach involving policymakers, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and international partners is required to address these issues. This section outlines key recommendations, the role of partnerships, and the future of African languages in the digital age.

Recommendations for Policymakers, Educational Institutions, and Cultural Organizations

Indigenous languages should be formally recognised and funded at this level, in governance, in education and in public administration. National language commissions can regulate and standardize local languages, and legal frameworks have to

safeguard the linguistic rights and do not marginalize anyone (Bamgbose, 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

Indigenous languages preservation is crucial and educational institutions have a significant role in it. Mother-tongue based multilingual education (MTB MLE) can be implemented at the primary level via changes made from the successful examples in Tanzania and Ethiopia in order to enhance literacy and cognitive development. African linguistics and oral traditions programs should be introduced into universities and teacher training methodology should involve bilingual and multilingual instruction methodologies (Moshi, 2022; Obiegbu & Adesope, 2022).

For preserving cultural heritage, the governments and the private organizations should contribute to museums, language academies and cultural centers. Heritage sustainability (Nyika, 2022) will be achieved by encouraging the documentation of oral traditions and folklore as well as the integration of cultural festivals, music, and art within the national policies.

A way to revolutionize language preservation through the use of digital technology is with the help of AI translation tools, voice recognition software, and digital language archives. The governments need to work with tech companies to develop mobile apps and e learning platforms for African languages. They should also offer social media influencers to create indigenous language content that can engage the younger audience (Adegbite et al., 2024).

Role of Regional and International Partnerships in Language and Cultural Preservation

It is essential that collaboration among African governments and regional organisations, as well as international partners take place to conserve indigenous languages. It is the part of frame words like Agenda 2063 are integrated in the continent by the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS. ECOWAS, SADC, and EAC should work together to develop policies

that regulate cross border entries of major regional languages, Kiswahili, Hausa and Amahric ones to enhance communication and trade (African Union, 2023).

UNESCO provides such funding for languages infrastructure (World Bank, UNDP and UNESCO, 2023) through documentation and educator training in language revitalization (UNESCO 2023). With Google, Microsoft, and Meta, digital advertising space should be equipped with AI translation and speech recognition tools (Akinyoade & Uche, 2023). There should be support of NGOs and philanthropic organizations to be on literacy campaign and mobile learning center so as to encourage widespread linguistic preservation.

The Future of African Languages and Cultural Values in the Digital Age

That African languages are regarded as part of digital transformation is a future for the future of the indigenous languages. Clinical speech recognition and translation tools driven by AI can enable language accessibility within education, business, and governance. More public services in healthcare and customer support can be improved even further through virtual assistants and chatbots in African languages (Mokua, 2023).

African language courses need to be included in e-learning platforms such as Coursera and Duolingo, as well as local content creators should produce educational materials for intergenerational transmission of knowledge. It also stands as a way to protect indigenous knowledge by shielding intellectual property from losses via smart contracts (Mokua, 2023).

TikTok and YouTube have become important forces of cultural revitalization. There should be digital campaigns sponsored by governments to promote the survival and global recognition of the indigenous languages in the digital world.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Indigenous languages, cultural values should be institutionalized for Africa's

development as these constitute the identity, social cohesion, governance, education and economic growth. In this paper, they are explored in terms of their significance, challenge and preservation strategies using successful African case studies as a reference. Knowledge transfer and innovation are enabled by language which also serves as a tool to participate in socio-economy. Ethical governance derives in part from cultural values expressed in both traditions and oral literature and in the resilience of the community. Despite this, foreign language dominance, weak policies, and deficient funding are conspiring to eliminate them. To tackle these challenges, governments and other cultural organizations as well as educational institutions, have to implement strong language policies, to invest in mother tongue education as well as utilize digital technology. Funding and expertise are vital, and we need to partner regionally and globally with the AU, UNESCO, among others. New campaigns for the revitalization could be formed using emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, and e-learning platforms that can be intentionally combined with the plan of preservation.

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Abstract

The unequal distribution of technological access between genders undermines female entry into cryptocurrency markets thus restricting their opportunities during the digital financial transition. The financial inclusion promise remains unable to overcome the fundamental challenges women experience from digital illiteracy and institutional biases as well as shortfalls in resources and capital opportunities. The cryptocurrency industry's male-heavy makeup allows exclusionary conduct which deepens the existing gender inequality. This study is framed within feminist economic theory and digital divide theory, which explore structural barriers limiting women's access to financial technologies. Using qualitative approach it investigates how international efforts together with rulemaking structures alongside technical developments can establish a connection to fill current gaps which enable equity between genders within cryptocurrency systems. Through research this paper analyzes how financial education combined with decentralized finance approaches and regulatory platforms influence digital asset access for women. The sector suffers from women's limited participation because of insufficient gender-responsive financial infrastructure as well as a lack of inclusive policies. Apart from digital tool accessibility some users face cybersecurity concerns that also decrease their willingness to participate in these initiatives. The research highlights that women need crypto markets empowerment through financial literacy training combined with mentoring services and specialized crypto investment programs. The adoption of three essential recommendations requires worldwide crypto policy collaborations alongside blockchain-based gender-responsive financial education and security analytics supported by artificial intelligence.

Keywords: Gender, cryptocurrency, financial inclusion, blockchain, financial literacy

Introduction

The coming of age of cryptocurrencies has been heralded as the dawn of financial system that is decentralized and democratized. However, there is still a massive gender crosswalk in cryptocurrency adoption and usage, exactly as one would expect due to traditional financial disparities. Studies do indicate that men do own and trade cryptocurrencies far more than women. As an example, in Spain, García, Pérez & Sánchez (2023) found that people who prefer using and buying cryptocurrencies are 3 more times in favor of women than for men. There are several reasons why this is so. The first of these involves digital literacy and technological access. To women, it becomes very difficult to pick up the required digital skills and also access to technology. Low mobile phone

ownership and very poor digital literacy levels are serious impediments to the engagement of women with digital financial services (Poverty Action, 2023). As will be seen, socio cultural norms have an immense role to play in restricting women financial inclusion. Traditional gender roles act as barriers in many of the societies that restrict women's education, employment and financial autonomy resulting in another hurdle in adopting digital financial solutions (World Bank, 2023).

Another big deciding factor on whether or not to join cryptocurrency markets is financial literacy. Grohmann, Menkhoff, & Suto (2023) suggests that female Bitcoin owners have lower Bitcoin knowledge than males. In addition, the perceptions of risk or investment

behavior are also different from the gender perspective. The fact that women tend to undergo lower risk tolerance than men influences their investment decisions and consequently low participation in high risk financial instruments such as cryptocurrencies (Lim, Hang & Park, 2023). Furthermore, women representation in the financial technology sector is grossly insufficient. In general, the cryptocurrency industry is predominantly male and women only make up less than 25% of seats in the boards of banks and financial regulatory functioning agencies as (Khera et al., 2022). It not only discourages women's participation in digital assets but also helps to promote already existing gendered financial exclusion.

The barriers need to be addressed through targeted interventions. There is one basic financial illiteracy strategy in action the usage of gender responsive financial education programs that will enable women to understand digital assets and investment techniques better. Furthermore, there is a need to also develop the policy reforms to support the inclusion of women in the digital financial services considering the specific challenges faced by women while accessing digital financial services. Such barriers also include addressing socio-cultural constraints and legal constraints that restrict women's financial autonomy (IMF, 2022). Additionally, greater women's access to technology, including mobile phones or even the internet, is critical to increasing women's digital finance participation. Admitting and measuring these factors can help the financial industry toward a more inclusive environment to encourage digital finance and cryptocurrency to everyone regardless of gender. Along with this, if inclusive policies is adopted and financial education is provided along with technology access, the gender gap in cryptocurrency markets can be bridged and financial democratization will occur.

Gender Disparities in Cryptocurrency Adoption

While cryptocurrency industry is largely male, with more women investors and users being a small minority. Only 26 percent of cryptocurrency investors are women (Gemini, 2021). Also, the analysis of top 50 Crypto company founders indicated that only 6 percent of them are women (Forex, 2022). There are a lot of factors that are attributed to this gender gap, including risk tolerance, financial literacy and institutional biases. The behavior of investing plays an important role when it comes to why there are gender disparities in cryptocurrency adoption. It turns out that men, especially younger ones, are more likely to dabble in high-risk ventures like cryptocurrencies (Barrons, 2022). In addition, the rise of zero commission trading platforms has had the effect of attracting a majority of the audience of which is male solely, contributing to the gender imbalance in the world of digital financial sector. A significant other barrier is the absence of digital and financial literacy amongst women. Inadequate targeted financial education programs have been demonstrated to limit women's effective participation in cryptocurrency markets (OECD, 2021). Many women feel 'unprepared' to use decentralized finance (DeFi) platforms without proper knowledge & skills, especially since what is expected of them may be very different from certain Web2 applications (Blandin, Cloots, Hussain, Rauchs, Saleuddin, Allen & Zhang, 2020).

There exists biases in provisioning cryptocurrency due to the institutional and cultural biases. The churned out crypto "bro culture" within the crypto community is a very unwelcoming environment for women which discourages them from being involved in the blockchain and crypto related roles as opined by Oladipupo (2024). Exclusionary practices increase when women are stereotyped as having less technological capability, and it prevents them from growing or investing in digital assets.

Blockchain Technology and Gender Equality

With such challenges, blockchain technology provides the space of opportunity to support gender equality. Blockchain's biggest pro is that it is a tool to ameliorate financial inclusion. As developing countries, women lacking access to traditional banking services can use blockchain based financial solutions to enhance their access to financial participation. At the same time blockchain technology can serve to increase transparency and accountability in international aid distribution. With blockchain, organisations can guarantee that the funds reach their supposed beneficiaries without the danger that it will be fallen upon. This is very helpful for women led initiatives and programs aimed at women empowerment (Oladipupo, 2024).

The Role of Digital Leadership in Cryptocurrency Adoption

Women's participation in cryptocurrency usage will be bridged with digital leadership. Policies that foster inclusivity and diversity within the cryptocurrency organizations can be adopted by leaders of digital finance. Mentorship programmes and workshops focused on women can lead to more participation in the crypto industry said Oladipupo (2024). Initiatives on the side of digital finance experts in the education sphere can demystify cryptocurrencies and enable them to be more accessible to women. Digital leaders can enhance an environment that encourages gender parity in cryptocurrency investments as discussed by Blandin et al. (2020) by promoting awareness and financial literacy. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the cryptocurrency market has seen an increase of new young investors, the digital finance has sped up and people are rushing into adopting cryptocurrencies. Yet this rise has mainly been young men wagering on high risk investments such as digital assets and sports betting (Wall Street Journal, 2022). The significance of that trend is underlined by the necessity of strategies that aim to bring more women into the digital financial ecosystem.

The empirical studies show that there are remarkable discrepancies in the adoption of cryptocurrency, and men tend to be more involved in cryptocurrency related activities compared to women. According to García-Monleón and Rocabert (2023) 22% of men have used cryptocurrencies while only 10% of women. Like this, Lopez and Tejero (2023) also found that men are three times more likely than women to buy and use cryptocurrencies, confirming the existing gender gap in the ownership of cryptocurrencies. Influences on investment behavior, thus on the adoption of new cryptocurrencies, also arise from personality traits. According to research carried out by Zhang and Zhang (2023), in general, women tend to obtain higher scores for agreeableness and lower for emotional ability than men. Investment decisions of these personalities are influenced by these personality traits, as the risk averseness of women is more than men. This echoes previous research that women tend not to participate in high risky financial markets like cryptocurrency (Smith & Johnson, 2023).

It has been found that financial literacy is one of the main determinants of why someone buys cryptocurrency. In Bitcoin, we observe that women own Bitcoin but score lower in Bitcoin-related knowledge than male owners, but they are not less literate (Stolper and Walter 2023). Conversely, women are at lower levels of cryptocurrency and financial literacy than their male counterparts among non-owners (García-Monleón & Rocabert, 2023). In this, one would assume that greater financial education could address the gender difference in the level of cryptocurrency engagement. Specific cryptocurrency systems are also based on the understanding of gender preferences. The study by Chen and Park (2024) using sentiment analysis showed that male users are in favor of using Bitcoin, whereas female users favor Ethereum. The variation in this may be related to varying risk and utility perception, or varying engagement of the community towards each cryptocurrency.

There are various factors that influence how cryptocurrency is being embraced by different populations. Rahman et al. (2023) conducted a study on Malaysia's digital economy, and were able to find that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and social influence have a strong influence on one's propensity to engage with cryptocurrencies. The study did not as such investigate differences in terms of gender, but those factors may behave differently across genders, playing a role in the observed differences in cryptocurrency adoption. A huge lack of understanding surrounding the crypto economy is keeping men far more likely to own digital currencies than women in Mexico. As per the study of the Cryptocurrency Adoption Index (Mexico Business News, 2023), 70 percent of women who do not own cryptocurrencies have a low or very low understanding of crypto. This underscores the importance of facilitating more female participation in digital finance by closing the knowledge issue with appropriate targeted education.

The pattern of cryptocurrency adoption is heavily based on demographic factor such as age, trust in financial institution and risk tolerance. In an Icelandic study, Bjarnason (2023) determined that age, gender and having no trust in traditional banking systems produced strong predictions of how many individuals owned and how they invested in cryptocurrency. The findings give weight to the idea that demographic characteristics should be taken into consideration when designing strategies to add female participation in cryptocurrency markets, given their financial inclusion efforts.

The fact that we have these empirical evidences brings us to understand the multiplicity of the reasons that prevent people from adopting cryptocurrency because of their gender. To address such disequilibrium we need a holistic approach of improving the financial and crypto literacy of women, understanding the role of personality traits in investment decisions, and also considering the

demographics in the digital financial engagement. Targeted interventions that will bring in more people to the cryptocurrency ecosystem is what future research will explore.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes Feminist Economic Theory and Digital Divide Theory to evaluate what gender divides exist for cryptocurrency adoption and cryptocurrency usage. Through these theories it makes clear how systemic barriers exist that stop women from completely joining the worlds of digital financial ecosystems.

Feminist Economic Theory

Nelson (2018) explains how Feminist Economic Theory concerns with the ways in which economic structures impede gender inequality in financial resources and opportunities. Systemic bias in the VC funding (Kirk & Rifkin, 2023), opportunities for work (Kirk & Rifkin, 2023), and access to investment (Kirk & Rifkin, 2023) hinder women within cryptocurrency industry. Forbes (2024) shows that over 90 percent of the funding blockchain startups raised funds goes to male led projects, proving they are using persistent exclusionary business practices.

Additionally, women in the digital finance sector tend to receive prevention oriented questioning from investors in the form of questions designed to limit risk, rather than enhancing potential for growth (Kirk & Rifkin, 2023). Not only does this take away their ability to raise money but it also impedes their ability to participate in cryptocurrency as a whole which already has a gender disparity in its owners and participants. Moreover, there is inconsistent pay among Web3 roles in terms of wage gaps: blockchain related finance pays significantly lower to women than to men at 46% (Forbes, 2024). This addresses the structural inequality, which prevents the women from engaging in the decentralized finance and investment opportunities, where economic biases serve as a limitation.

Digital Divide Theory

The Digital Divide Theory focuses on the inequality in access to technology and especially the inequality in digital literacy, internet access and financial technology adoption (Van Dijk, 2020). Despite this, this divide disproportionately affects women and prevents them from participating in the cryptocurrency markets. Currently, 2.6 billion people, and after updated reports due in 2026, 3 billion people, are still offline in the world, with a large figure belonging to women especially in developing areas (United Nations, 2024). According to a 2023 study by Garcia et al., women certainly don't invest in cryptocurrency because of two main things: They have no experience with investments, and they don't know what they are doing, and they feel insecure about the security of the thing they're buying and do not believe in it as a source of financial security. Rather than lack of digital skills or income level, risk aversion and mistrust in the security of cryptocurrency frameworks was the more important barrier to female participation according to the authors (Garcia et al., 2023).

It also has something to do with the disparity in financial and crypto literacy. Cambridge University (2023) research indicates that just 16% of female Bitcoin owners can be considered high crypto literate versus 37 per cent of male owners. 50 percent of men among non-owners of Bitcoin enjoy high financial literacy, while only 29 per cent of women have the same digital financial knowledge (Cambridge University, 2023).

The study applies Feminist Economic Theory and Digital Divide Theory to provide a complete analysis of how institutional biases and technological barriers are responsible for stopping US women from participating in cryptocurrency markets. Thus, for the Challenges of raising money Generation responsive financial literacy Programs should enhance women's awareness and understanding of Delegated Finance. Class action lawsuits against banks that sow and benefit from systemic biases in funding and

investment in cryptocurrency. Using AI to develop security solutions aimed at addressing women's cybersecurity concerns and encourage their part in digital finance. By implementing these interventions, the Cryptocurrency Markets will be made accessible and just for everyone.

Research Methodology

Thus, this research takes on a qualitative approach looking at the content analysis of secondary data such as policy documents, scholarly articles, and industry reports. More context to the findings was provided through interviews of financial experts and gender studies scholars.

Results/Findings and Discussions

The findings of this study reveal significant gender disparities in the cryptocurrency market. There are structural, education and institutional barriers that keep women out of digital finance. Among others, these disparities arise in the context of significant key issues of financial exclusion, cybersecurity concerns and lack of gender-sensitive policies.

Cryptocurrency markets are gendered in market access: tokens that marketers send to women are far less valuable compared to those sent to men.

Underrepresentation of Women in Crypto Investments

The promise of decentralisation and financial democratization has many aspirational levels as compared to well-funded white-hats, but despite this, women are still unbelievably underrepresented in cryptocurrency investments. The latest studies show that women represent only 26 percent of cryptocurrency investors, constituting the ongoing gap between participation in digital assets by women and men (Blockworks, 2024). One of the reasons for this restricted participation is the inability of users to equally participate, either due to a lack of financial literacy, very strict social norms, and the

perception that cryptocurrency trading is a male dominated space.

Even the gap in gender-related leadership in blockchain startups is wider than you might think. The number of women led blockchain startups in the industry is 8.99% and the male led startups registered 91%, while women led startups in the said category have received just 6.34% of the total blockchain funding in the period 2022 until 2023 (Bitget, 2024). Overall, female led startups receive lower funding allocation because the wider structure of venture capital investments are dominated by male networks and influence who gets funded.

There are also gendered differences in investment behaviour in cryptocurrency markets. The research indicates that younger demographics of men are more prone to high-risk investments such as cryptocurrencies (Wall Street Journal, 2024). And that inclination is strengthened by how user-friendly online trading platforms and communities of speculators are. However, the risk avoidance adhered to by women towards financial investments might also influence their lower engagement in the cryptocurrency markets.

Cybersecurity and Privacy Concerns

Cybersecurity and privacy are highly critical factors of accountability when it comes to women participating in cryptocurrency markets. Cryptocurrency transactions have higher levels of complexity involved in the digital security protocol, and users without even basic technical expertise find these protocols very confusing. Female investors are discouraged from investing in digital assets because of heightened cybersecurity risks, such as fraud, hacking, and phishing scams, as Bitget (2024) indicates. This problem is worsened by the lack of gender-sensitive security frameworks that make women feel less confident about entering into decentralized finance (DeFi) platforms merely because they may be potentially exposed to cyber threats.

Need for Gender-Responsive Crypto Policies

In an attempt to address the gender inequality status in the cryptocurrency industry, initiatives have been global that call for inclusion of gender. Blockchain4Her is a project for instance that was launched at the 2024 World Economic Forum to introduce gender diversity in the blockchain ecosystem (Cointelegraph, 2024). This initiative promises to foster an inclusive environment to enable participation by women in blockchain technology, cryptocurrency investments as well as entrepreneurship and is backed by a funding commitment of \$10 million.

Comparative Analysis with Traditional Sectors

In terms of gender gaps in cryptocurrency markets, the gap is even wider compared to traditional financial or technological sectors. This statistic begs the question: just 26% of the jobs at the cryptocurrency industry are filled by women, however, only about 6% of these are top leadership roles (Cointelegraph, 2024). Compared to women's 17% of senior roles in the fintech industry and 22% of management in top technology roles in the healthcare service industry, women are vastly underrepresented throughout the healthcare and fintech industries. Yet, this disparity only reinforces the demand for tailored measures to prepare the soil for female representatives in the firmament of cryptocurrency leadership.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although the cryptocurrency industry is based on the moral principles of decentralization and democratization, gender gaps remain apparent. Despite that, women underrepresented for both in participation and leadership in this sector. A number of factors as limited access to financial literacy programs, a lack of opportunities of mentorship, and biases to institutionalize gender inequalities concur in this underrepresentation. In addition, women, for understandable reasons, are more negatively impacted by risks of cyber security when

considering investments into cryptocurrencies.

To overcome these challenges while also improving the participation of gender within the cryptocurrency industry, the following ways are suggested for addressing.

1. Government and financial institution agencies should come together to develop and implement gender responsive policies related to the cryptocurrency business. These policies should strive to an inclusive environment where they not only encourage female taking part, but also address the issue of the bias.
2. Second, blockchain based financial education: By instilling targeted financial literacy programs, women would gain the needed knowledge and skills to effectively maneuver in the cryptocurrency environment. The programs should concentrate on developing digital skills and disentangling blockchain technologies out of it.
3. Integrating artificial intelligence based security implementation can improve the security of cryptocurrency platforms and serve as a solution for security-related issues that can dissuade potential female cryptocurrency investors. They can build trust and encourage more participation in such a robust security framework.

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PUNISHMENT AND PREVENTION: A CLASSICAL AND POSITIVIST CRIMINOLOGICAL DICHOTOMY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

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Abstract

This paper examines the dichotomy between classical and positivist criminological theories and their respective influences on criminal justice systems. The classical school, emerging during the Enlightenment, posits that individuals are rational actors who make choices based on free will. Pioneers like Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham advocated for proportionate punishment as a deterrent, emphasizing that justice should focus on the offense rather than the offender. This perspective emphasizes the importance of clear legal frameworks, due process, and equal application of the law to prevent crime through the fear of consequences. Conversely, the positivist school, which gained prominence in the 19th century, views criminal behavior as determined by biological, psychological, and social factors beyond an individual's control. Figures such as Cesare Lombroso introduced the concept of the "born criminal," suggesting that certain individuals possess innate traits predisposing them to criminality. This school shifts the focus from punishment to understanding the root causes of crime. The Positivist perspective aligns with structural explanations of behaviour. Through a critical comparative lens, this paper highlights how both paradigms contribute to contemporary justice systems, especially in contexts such as Nigeria, where elements of both punishment and rehabilitation are being implemented. Furthermore, the discussion engages with the structure-agency debate, analyzing the extent to which crime is a product of personal choice or structural constraint. Drawing on recent studies and global perspectives, the paper argues for a more integrative approach that balances deterrence with rehabilitative interventions, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness and fairness of criminal justice systems in addressing crime and recidivism.

Keywords: Agency, structure, law, freewill, classical criminology, punishment

Introduction

The administration of criminal justice around the world is profoundly shaped by two foundational schools of criminological thought: the classical and the positivist traditions. These schools represent a longstanding dichotomy in understanding and responding to crime in terms of punishment versus prevention. The persistent and influential dichotomy between classical and positivist perspectives forms a foundational tension that continues to shape the philosophies, structures, and practices of criminal justice systems across the globe. These two contrasting schools of thought, with

their fundamentally different assumptions about human nature and the etiology of crime, provide the intellectual bedrock for ongoing debates surrounding punishment, prevention, and rehabilitation. At their core, a fundamental tension between punishment and prevention: viewing crime as a rational choice to be deterred through punitive measures and understanding it as a product of social, psychological, or biological forces that necessitate rehabilitative or corrective interventions. Criminal justice systems balance multiple ideological underpinnings retributive, deterrent, rehabilitative, and restorative, each

embodying different assumptions about human behaviour and societal goals (Clear, Reisig, & Cole, 2021). The dichotomy between classical and positivist criminology continues to influence contemporary criminal justice systems, shaping policies and practices worldwide. While both schools aim to reduce crime, their methodologies and underlying philosophies differ significantly, leading to varied implementations in legal frameworks and correctional strategies.

Philosophically, the classical school emphasizes rational choice and moral responsibility, advocating for proportionate punishment to maintain order and deter wrongdoing (Tonry, 2019). The classical school views individuals as moral beings endowed with the capacity to understand the difference between right and wrong. When individuals violate the law, they are held accountable for their moral transgressions. This accountability is not simply a matter of social control; it is a recognition of the individual's inherent moral agency and their obligation to adhere to societal rules. As Raine (2013) notes, while biological and social factors can influence behaviour, the classical perspective maintains that individuals retain the capacity for moral reasoning and are therefore responsible for their choices. Such principles continue to shape the justice architecture in countries like the United States, where punitive policies such as mandatory minimum sentencing and "three strikes" laws illustrate the persistence of classical ideals. These approaches prioritize retribution and deterrence, viewing punishment not only as a moral imperative but also as a public safety strategy. In contemporary discourse, the classical school's principles continue to resonate. While modern criminology acknowledges the complexity of criminal behavior and the influence of various social and psychological factors, the emphasis on rational choice, moral responsibility, and proportionate punishment remains central to many legal systems. As Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox (2018) argue, these principles provide a crucial framework for maintaining order,

upholding justice, and ensuring that individuals are held accountable for their actions within a framework of law.

In contrast, many European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, and especially the Nordic nations, have embraced justice models grounded in the positivist tradition, which posits that criminal behavior is influenced by factors beyond individual control such as social disadvantage, trauma, or mental illness and should be addressed through tailored interventions. Norway's use of open prisons is often cited as a paradigm of this approach, combining humane treatment, vocational training, and psychological support in a low-security environment (Pratt, 2016; Ugelvik & Dullum, 2019). This remarkable outcome is attributed to Norway's "principle of normality" open prisons with small capacities where inmates retain most civil rights and live in conditions resembling the outside world. Inmates participate in educational and vocational training, and many gain job skills that translate into a 40% increase in employment post-release. These systems are closely aligned with the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model, which emphasizes the assessment of individual risk levels, criminogenic needs, and responsive strategies for intervention (Andrews & Bonta, 2017). The success of these rehabilitative models, evident in Norway's remarkably low recidivism rates, offers compelling evidence that justice systems rooted in positivist ideals can yield both humane and effective outcomes.

Countries such as Norway and Sweden exemplify a positivist, prevention-focused criminal justice model through extensive rehabilitative programming and exceptionally low rates of reoffending. In Norway, the two-year reconviction rate stands at just 18%, rising only to 25% over five years, among the lowest in the world. Mental health and dynamic security measures, in which officers engage with inmates in daily activities, further support reintegration and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Sweden's correctional system similarly prioritizes rehabilitation through

cognitive-behavioral therapy, tailored treatment plans, and structured vocational programs within its prisons (Roxell, 2024). Swedish recidivism rates hover around 16%, one of the lowest in Europe, reflecting the country's investment in addressing underlying issues such as substance abuse and mental health and in equipping prisoners with qualifications and life skills before release (Akhar, 2020). By focusing on "what works" in reducing relapse into crime rather than on punitive confinement, both Norway and Sweden demonstrate the efficacy of a positivist, prevention-oriented approach.

In **Germany**, a **hybrid system** blends classical deterrence for the most serious offenses with robust rehabilitative measures for less severe and especially juvenile crimes. Under the German **Strafgesetzbuch** (§211 StGB), **life imprisonment** is the harshest penalty indeterminate but allowing parole consideration after 15 years, with extensions imposed for "special gravity of guilt". At the same time, Germany's **juvenile justice system** emphasizes individualized, developmentally appropriate interventions: fewer than **30%** of young offenders return to custody within three years, thanks to a framework that privileges education, therapy, and diversion over incarceration for minor and first-time offenses (Loudenback, n.d). Even adult probation programs, such as the **intensified support** initiative in Cologne, have demonstrated reductions in recidivism among serious youth offenders through personalized case management and social support (Engel, Goerg, & Traxler, 2022).

South Africa's post-apartheid reforms have sought to incorporate **restorative justice** and **community-based interventions** alongside traditional punitive measures. The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**, established in 1995, pioneered victim-offender dialogues, reparations, and symbolic restoration of dignity hallmarks of a restorative paradigm aiming to heal societal rifts rather than merely punish transgressors (Vowles, 2023). More recently, **community**

courts problem-solving tribunals that engage local stakeholders, offer alternative sentencing, and link offenders to social services have been rolled out in seventeen locations, with evaluations indicating improvements in offender accountability and modest reductions in reoffending rates. However, a qualitative research highlights gaps in cohesive policy and inter-agency coordination within the Department of Correctional Services, underscoring the need for more integrated strategies to manage recidivism effectively (Samuels, Roma, & Schoeman, 2024).

Rwanda's Gacaca court system following the 1994 genocide stands as a landmark example of this restorative trend. Blending traditional conflict resolution with transitional justice principles, Gacaca courts enabled the participation of local communities in the adjudication of genocide-related crimes, fostering both accountability and reconciliation (Thomson, 2015). Before colonization, Kenya's various ethnic communities such as the Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba, and Maasai each had well-developed justice mechanisms rooted in communal values, social norms, and consensus-driven processes. These systems emphasized restorative justice, reconciliation, and social harmony, rather than punishment. Disputes were typically resolved by councils of elders (e.g., Njuri Ncheke among the Meru or Kaya elders among the Mijikenda), who were respected for their wisdom and authority. Their decisions were guided by oral traditions, cultural precedents, and the goal of maintaining societal balance (Chiramba & Forsythe, 2020; Odote, 2018). In practice, however, the integration of traditional systems into the national legal framework has been uneven. While traditional mechanisms continue to be used for resolving land disputes, marital conflicts, and inheritance issues, they are often criticized for their patriarchal tendencies, particularly in cases involving women's rights and gender-based violence (Kameri-Mbote, 2019). In Nigeria, for instance, scholars have advocated for the

revitalization of customary courts and reconciliation forums to address community-level disputes, particularly where state institutions are weak or mistrusted (Ubani & Onyeozili, 2020).

Otu (1999) asserts that the roots of Nigeria's criminal justice system lie in 19th and early 20th-century British colonial institutions, which transplanted common law principles, a structured court hierarchy, and prisons designed for punishment and deterrence (police courts, criminal courts, native authority prisons). Under this system, crime was construed as a rational choice: individuals weighed potential gains against the certainty and severity of punishment. Consequently, the state's role was to enact clear statutes (Criminal Code, Penal Code) and ensure swift, certain, and proportionate sanctions to discourage offending a direct legacy of Beccaria's and Bentham's utilitarianism (Aver & Ojienon, 2023). Nigeria's legal system, largely inherited from British common law, reflects classical principles. The emphasis is on the rule of law, due process, and the presumption of innocence. Criminal law is codified, and punishment is generally seen as a means of deterrence. The system relies heavily on imprisonment as a primary form of punishment. While the severity of sentences varies, there's a general belief in the deterrent effect of incarceration. This aligns with the classical emphasis on using punishment to discourage crime. There's also a strong retributive element in Nigeria's justice system, with many believing that offenders should be punished to pay for their crimes. This is evident in societal attitudes towards crime and punishment. The classical perspective's emphasis on rational choice is reflected in how the courts operate, with the assumption that offenders generally understand the consequences of their actions.

However, aspects of the positivist school are present, particularly in juvenile justice. There are attempts to rehabilitate young offenders through remand homes and rehabilitation centers, focusing on addressing

the social and psychological factors that may have contributed to their delinquency. From the late colonial era, thinkers began to question pure deterrence models, advocating for scientific investigation into the causes of crime. Modern Nigeria has seen this positivist impulse manifest in incremental prison reforms and social-work interventions. As early as the 1940s-1950s, colonial prison directors introduced classification, vocational training, and "open" facilities for first-time offenders, foreshadowing later rehabilitation ideals. More recently, research has highlighted the need to transform prisons into true rehabilitative centers, offering education, therapy, and skill acquisition from day one of confinement (Numa, 2025)

Philosophies of Punishment

Punishment within criminal justice systems is not merely a response to wrongdoing but is underpinned by philosophical principles that define its purpose and legitimacy. These guiding ideologies continue to influence sentencing policies and penal reforms globally.

Retribution is a backward-looking theory grounded in the moral principle of just deserts. It posits that individuals who violate the law deserve to suffer proportionate consequences. This principle is rooted in Enlightenment thinking, where justice must be impartial and commensurate with the gravity of the offense. As Roberts and Hough (2018) assert, retributive justice satisfies societal demands for moral balance and affirms the rule of law, reinforcing societal condemnation of crime.

Deterrence serves as a preventive function, seeking to reduce crime through the threat of punishment. General deterrence targets the public at large, aiming to discourage potential offenders, while specific deterrence focuses on discouraging the individual offender from reoffending. Nagin (2013) emphasizes that for deterrence to be effective, the certainty of punishment is often more influential than severity. This has

prompted debates around reforming justice systems to prioritize swift and consistent legal consequences.

Incapacitation: This philosophy seeks public protection by physically restricting offenders' ability to commit crimes, typically through imprisonment. Zimring and Hawkins (1995) highlight that while incapacitation can reduce recidivism, overreliance on incarceration can lead to overcrowding and fail to address root causes of crime, particularly in societies with systemic socio-economic inequalities.

Rehabilitation aims to transform offenders into law-abiding citizens through psychological counseling, education, vocational training, and substance abuse programs. Cullen and Gendreau (2000) argue that effective rehabilitation must be evidence-based and tailored to individual needs, particularly in settings like Nigeria, where resource constraints challenge implementation. Modern criminological thought sees rehabilitation as vital for reducing recidivism and aiding reintegration.

Restorative justice emphasizes healing the harm caused by crime rather than punishment. It involves dialogue among victims, offenders, and community members to foster accountability and reconciliation. Zehr (2015) presents this approach as an alternative to punitive models, especially in contexts of minor offenses and juvenile delinquency. Restorative practices are increasingly recognized for their potential in reducing reoffending and promoting social cohesion.

Classical Criminology on Agency

Classical criminology, born from the intellectual ferment of the Enlightenment, places a significant emphasis on agency, the capacity of individuals to act independently and make free choices (Williams & McShane, 2018). This perspective fundamentally views human beings as rational actors who possess the cognitive ability to weigh options, understand consequences, and make deliberate decisions, including the choice to

engage in criminal behavior (Roshier, 2016). Classical criminology emerged in the 18th century as a foundational paradigm during the **Age of Enlightenment**, a period marked by a growing emphasis on reason, human dignity, and the rule of law. Thinkers such as **Cesare Beccaria** and **Jeremy Bentham** revolutionized the way society viewed crime and punishment by challenging the arbitrary, brutal, and often superstitious practices of pre-modern justice systems. At the core of classical criminology is the belief that **human beings are rational and self-interested agents**. Individuals are seen as capable of making choices by weighing the potential benefits and costs of their actions. In this context, crime is understood not as a result of supernatural forces, innate depravity, or socio-biological factors, but as a calculated decision made when the perceived rewards outweigh the risks or consequences.

Cesare Beccaria's seminal 1764 treatise, *On Crimes and Punishments*, laid the groundwork for classical criminology by introducing a rational and utilitarian approach to criminal justice. Beccaria posited that individuals possess free will and engage in criminal behavior after weighing potential benefits against possible punishments. He contended that the primary objective of punishment should be deterrence rather than retribution, asserting that the certainty and swiftness of punishment are more effective in preventing crime than severity. Beccaria emphasized that laws must be clear and publicly known to ensure individuals understand the consequences of their actions, thereby reinforcing the association between crime and punishment. Building upon Beccaria's principles, Jeremy Bentham introduced the concept of the "hedonistic calculus," suggesting that individuals make decisions by calculating the potential pleasure and pain resulting from their actions. Bentham believed that a rational legal system could deter crime by ensuring that the pain of punishment outweighs the pleasure of the criminal act. He developed the felicific, or

"happiness-making," calculus to measure this balance, advocating for punishments that maximize overall societal happiness (Harcourt, 2013). Together, Beccaria and Bentham's contributions established the foundation for modern criminal justice systems that prioritize deterrence, proportionality, and the rational assessment of human behavior. Their ideas continue to influence contemporary debates on legal reform, sentencing policies, and the ethical administration of justice.

Classical criminological perspective aligns closely with voluntarism, which posits that human behaviour, including criminal acts, results from voluntary decisions rather than external determinants. Voluntarism, in this context, refers to the idea that human behavior, including criminal behaviour, is the result of voluntary actions and conscious choices made by individuals. Cesare Beccaria, a seminal figure in classical criminology, argued that individuals engage in a rational calculation of potential benefits and consequences before committing a crime. Cesare Beccaria's classical criminology fundamentally intertwines with the concept of voluntarism, emphasizing that individuals possess free will and engage in criminal behavior through conscious, rational decisions. In other words, Beccaria's perspective suggests that individuals actively weigh what they might gain from a crime against what they might lose, primarily through the justice system. If the perceived "pleasure" of the crime exceeds the anticipated "pain" of punishment, a rational individual, exercising their free will, might choose to offend.

This focus on agency has profound implications for understanding criminal behavior and designing criminal justice systems:

The Personal Responsibility notion highlights the role of conscious choice, classical criminology underscores the principle of personal responsibility for one's actions (Muncie, 2015). Individuals

are seen as accountable for their voluntary decisions to break the law.

Its rational choice emphasis on agency forms the bedrock of rational choice theory, a prominent perspective within criminology that posits offenders make strategic decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis (Cornish & Clarke, 2014). This theory, while evolving and incorporating situational factors, retains the classical notion of individual agency in decision-making.

Deterrence as a Primary Goal of Punishment. Given the belief in individual agency and rational calculation, the primary goal of punishment in classical criminology is deterrence (Pratt, 2008). By ensuring that penalties are **swift, certain, and proportionate** to the offense, the legal system aims to influence the rational calculations of potential offenders, making the "cost" of crime outweigh the "benefit" and thus discouraging them from exercising their agency in criminal ways

Classical theorists hold that, because individuals freely choose their actions, they merit praise or blame based on their motives and choices. This stance aligns with **retributivist** ethics, which ground punishment in the offender's desert rather than solely in preventing future crimes. Retributivism, as framed by modern philosophers, views punishment as a moral imperative: society owes wrongdoers sanctions proportionate to their culpability, upholding the moral balance disturbed by their offense. By emphasizing desert, the classical school insists that the legitimacy of legal sanctions derives from actors' capacity for moral judgment and their obligation to answer for violations of the social contract.

From these premises emerges the **principle of proportional punishment:** sanctions must align with the gravity of the offense. Bentham's utilitarianism demanded that penalties be no more severe than necessary to deter wrongdoing, thus avoiding excessive cruelty while preserving justice. This

proportionality requirement serves two functions: it constrains state power and sustains public confidence in the fairness of the legal system. Modern ethical analyses confirm that the “minimal amount of pain or loss necessary” to achieve deterrence is both morally preferable and institutionally stabilizing, preventing abuses that can erode social order and the rule of law.

Finally, classical theory conceives **deterrence** as a social good that maintains order by discouraging would-be offenders. The philosophical claim is consequentialist: punishment is justified by its capacity to reduce overall harm. By calibrating sanctions so that the expected cost of crime decisively outweighs its benefits through swift application, high certainty, and appropriate severity legal systems can suppress incentives for lawbreaking. Corporate-crime studies illustrate this logic in specialized contexts, showing that clear, credible sanctions alter decision-making among potential offenders just as classical theorists predicted. Thus, deterrence, proportionate punishment, and moral responsibility form a coherent philosophical framework for a criminal justice system oriented toward both justice and social control.

This perspective emphasizes the importance of clear legal frameworks, due process, and equal application of the law to prevent crime through the fear of consequences. In the Nigerian context, these principles have significantly influenced the criminal justice system, promoting ideals such as equality before the law and the avoidance of cruel punishments. In Nigeria, the ideas of classical criminology have had a notable impact on how the legal system deals with crime. The country's legal framework is built on the classical emphasis on rationality, free will, and personal responsibility. This is reflected in the adoption of key legal documents and processes that align with classical ideals. For example, Nigeria uses the Criminal Code Act (in the south) and the Penal Code Act (in the north), both of which embody

the classical perspective that humans have free will and tend to seek pleasure, and therefore should be punished when they break the law. However, challenges like corruption and inefficiencies have led to criticisms regarding the misapplication of classical principles in practice.

In essence, Beccaria argued that the decision to commit a crime is not a random occurrence but a deliberate choice made when an individual perceives that the advantages of the crime (e.g., financial gain, social status) outweigh the potential negative repercussions, most notably the imposed punishment (Organized Crime Module 6, 2018). Beccaria's approach contrasts sharply with the deterministic views later proposed by the positivist school of criminology, which attributes criminal behavior to factors beyond individual control, such as biology, psychology, or social environment. This emphasis on voluntary choice as the root of criminal behavior stands in stark contrast to the later emergence of positivist criminology. Positivism, pioneered by thinkers like Cesare Lombroso, shifted the focus from rational choice to identifying underlying biological, psychological, and social factors that were believed to determine criminal behavior (Akers & Sellers, 2013).

Positivist Criminology on Structure

In contrast, positivist criminology, which gained prominence in the 19th century, views criminal behavior as determined by biological, psychological, and social factors beyond an individual's control. Positivist criminology marks a significant departure from the classical school by asserting that criminal behavior is not primarily a product of free will and rational choice. Rather, it emphasizes that criminal behavior is primarily influenced by external factors beyond individual control, such as social structures and environmental conditions. Social structures encompass the broader societal organization and the individual's position within it. Positivist criminologists examine how factors like

poverty, inequality, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, and social disorganization within communities can create environments conducive to crime.

Furthermore, positivist criminology acknowledges the role of environmental structures, such as the immediate surroundings and living conditions, in influencing crime. Factors like exposure to violence, negative peer influences, and the physical deterioration of neighborhoods are seen as structural elements that can contribute to criminal behavior (Organized Crime Module 6 Key Issues: Positivism - Environmental Influences, 2018).

Biological Positivism is a foundational perspective within the positivist school of criminology that attributes criminal behavior to inherent physiological and genetic factors. This approach suggests that certain individuals are biologically predisposed to criminality, emphasizing the role of innate characteristics over environmental influences. The genesis of biological positivism is closely associated with Cesare Lombroso, an Italian criminologist of the 19th century. Lombroso introduced the concept of the "born criminal," proposing that criminality is an inherited trait identifiable through specific physical anomalies, termed "atavistic stigmata." These stigmata included features such as sloping foreheads, large jaws, asymmetrical faces, and other characteristics he believed were reminiscent of primitive human ancestors. Lombroso's theory suggested that such individuals represented a regression to earlier stages of human evolution, thereby inherently possessing a predisposition to criminal behavior. His work marked a significant departure from the classical view of crime as a product of free will, positioning criminal behavior within a biological and deterministic framework.

While Lombroso's theories were pioneering, they faced criticism for their deterministic nature and lack of consideration for social and environmental factors. Addressing these limitations, Enrico Ferri, a contemporary and student of Lombroso,

expanded the scope of biological positivism by integrating psychological and sociological dimensions into the analysis of criminal behavior. Ferri argued that crime results from a confluence of factors, including biological predispositions, psychological conditions, and social environments. He emphasized the importance of societal influences such as economic conditions, education, and family structures in shaping individual behavior. Ferri's multifactorial approach acknowledged the complexity of criminal behavior, advocating for a more holistic understanding that transcends purely biological explanations.

Psychological Positivism is a branch of criminology that focuses on individual psychological factors that may predispose someone to criminal behavior. Theories in this area examine aspects such as personality traits, mental disorders, and early childhood experiences. One foundational theory in psychological positivism is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Freud proposed that human personality comprises three elements: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id represents innate, instinctual desires and operates on the pleasure principle, seeking immediate gratification. The ego, governed by the reality principle, mediates between the id's desires and the external world's demands, employing logical thinking to satisfy needs appropriately. The superego embodies internalized societal norms and moral standards, guiding behavior through feelings of pride or guilt. According to Freud, an imbalance among these components such as a dominant id or a weak superego can lead to maladaptive behaviors, including criminal acts.

Focusing on the nexus between personality and behavior, Hans Eysenck developed a theory linking specific personality traits to criminality. Eysenck identified three primary dimensions of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. Extraversion pertains to the need for external stimulation, with extraverts seeking excitement and social interaction. Neuroticism involves emotional instability and a propensity

for anxiety or moodiness. Psychoticism relates to aggressiveness and a lack of empathy. Eysenck posited that individuals scoring high in these traits, particularly neuroticism and psychoticism, are more susceptible to engaging in criminal behavior due to their impulsivity and difficulty conforming to societal norms.

Sociological Positivism is a branch of criminology that examines how societal structures and cultural norms influence criminal behavior. It posits that crime is a social phenomenon resulting from factors such as poverty, lack of education, and social disorganization. One of the foundational concepts in sociological positivism is Émile Durkheim's theory of anomie. Durkheim introduced the concept of anomie to describe a state of normlessness that occurs when societal norms break down, leading to increased deviance. He argued that during times of rapid social change or economic upheaval, individuals may feel disconnected from the collective conscience, resulting in higher rates of deviant behavior, including crime. Durkheim's work highlighted the importance of social integration and regulation in maintaining societal order.

Building upon Durkheim's ideas, Robert K. Merton developed the strain theory, which posits that societal pressure to achieve culturally approved goals without equal access to legitimate means leads individuals to commit crimes. Merton argued that when individuals are unable to achieve societal goals through legitimate avenues due to structural inequalities, they may resort to deviant behaviors as alternative means to attain those goals. This theory emphasizes the role of societal structures in influencing individual behavior and the potential for crime to arise from the strain between goals and means.

Another significant contribution to sociological positivism is the Social Disorganization Theory, developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay. This theory examines how the breakdown of social institutions, such as family, education, and community

organizations, in certain neighborhoods leads to increased crime rates. Shaw and McKay found that areas with high residential mobility, poverty, and ethnic diversity often lacked the social cohesion necessary to enforce communal norms, resulting in higher levels of delinquency. Their work shifted the focus from individual pathology to the environmental and structural factors contributing to criminal behaviour.

Bridging Structure and Agency

The longstanding structure-agency debate in criminology continues to shape how scholars conceptualize criminal behavior. At its core, the debate concerns whether individuals are primarily shaped by **external structures** such as socioeconomic status, culture, and institutions or whether they possess sufficient **agency** to make independent choices. In recent years, criminologists have moved beyond the dichotomy, adopting **integrative approaches** that recognize the **dynamic interplay** between structural conditions and individual agency. Modern criminal justice systems often integrate elements from both schools of thought. The ongoing tension between retributive justice and preventative measures, as well as between individual accountability and societal responsibility, continues to inform debates on sentencing, rehabilitation programs, and crime reduction strategies.

Contemporary theorists increasingly acknowledge that structure and agency are co-constitutive: individuals operate within constraints, but also interpret, resist, and sometimes transform those constraints (Giddens, 1984; Archer, 2000). Anthony Giddens' structuration theory is particularly influential, proposing that while social structures condition action, they are also reproduced through human practices. This duality is central to understanding how systemic forces like poverty or inequality affect behavior, without negating personal responsibility. Archer (2000) furthers this by emphasizing morphogenetic cycles, where

structure and agency interact over time to either reproduce or transform social systems. In criminology, this has informed nuanced accounts of how individuals in marginalized communities may internalize or resist criminal subcultures shaped by deprivation.

Recent scholarship reflects this integration. Cullen, et al. (2018) propose a “criminology of choice within constraints,” blending rational choice theory with social context. This framework posits that while offenders make choices, those choices are bounded by factors such as family structure, peer influences, and neighborhood characteristics. Similarly, Wikström’s (2010) Situational Action Theory offers a compelling synthesis, arguing that crime results from the interaction between moral propensity (individual agency) and criminogenic exposure (structural and situational contexts). This theory has been empirically tested in the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (PADS+), illustrating how environments mediate the translation of intent into action.

This integrative shift has profound implications for criminal justice. It encourages interventions that address both structural inequalities (e.g., improving education, housing, and employment opportunities) and individual-level factors (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy, moral education). As Farrington, Ttofi, & Piquero (2017) suggest, effective prevention strategies are those that tackle the complex web of risk and protective factors, respecting the role of both social environment and personal decision-making. In the Nigerian context, this debate is particularly salient. Structural issues such as unemployment, corruption, and weak institutions combine with individual motivations shaped by cultural, economic, and political dynamics (Okereke, 2022). An integrative approach offers a more comprehensive basis for understanding and responding to crime in such contexts.

Bridging structure and agency involves understanding how the rules, resources, and

institutional frameworks (structure) both enable and constrain actors, while those very actors (agency) in turn reproduce, transform, or resist those structures. In social theory this interplay is often called the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984) or analyzed through multi-level frameworks (Archer, 2003; Sewell, 1992). In criminal justice, bridging structure and agency helps explain how high-level laws and policies become lived realities through the decisions of frontline actors; police officers, judges, probation workers especially in contexts like Nigeria where formal institutions coexist with strong informal norms.

Despite legal reforms, Nigeria’s correctional system still struggles with **severe overcrowding**, limited funding, and high **recidivism rates** over 50% of inmates in some studies are reoffenders undermining rehabilitative goals (Ezeajughu, 2021). Structural issues such as under-trained staff, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-cultural barriers continue to constrain the realization of positivist ideals. Bridging this divide will require sustained political will, resources for evidence-based programs, and a **nuanced blend** of proportional sanctions and individualized treatments that honor both the deterrent logic of classical criminology and the human-centered insights of positivism. Concurrently, recent reformers argue for a **balanced approach** that retains deterrent sanctions for serious crimes while expanding diversionary and restorative mechanisms for minor offences, blending classical and positivist rationales (Alex-Uzoatu, 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendation

In recent years, there has been a growing consensus among criminologists and policymakers that an integrative approach balancing deterrence with rehabilitative interventions can enhance the effectiveness and fairness of criminal justice systems in addressing crime and recidivism. Contemporary criminal justice systems are increasingly characterized by hybrid models that seek to reconcile these two orientations.

While classical principles still inform legal codification and courtroom procedure, positivist insights are influential in shaping correctional policy, especially with regard to offender treatment and recidivism prevention. Yet, the integration of these paradigms is often fraught with contradictions, particularly in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where colonial legal legacies coexist with socio-economically driven crime realities.

This paper advocates for a criminal justice system that moves beyond a singular focus on either deterrence, as emphasized by classical criminology, or rehabilitation, as often prioritized by positivist approaches. Instead, it argues for a **more integrative strategy** that strategically combines elements of both. This balanced approach recognizes the importance of holding individuals accountable for their actions through deterrent measures, such as proportionate punishment, while simultaneously investing in rehabilitative interventions aimed at addressing the underlying factors that may have contributed to their criminal behavior. The rationale is that solely relying on punishment may not effectively address the root causes of crime and could lead to higher rates of recidivism, while an exclusive focus on rehabilitation without adequate accountability might undermine the deterrent effect of the law.

By integrating deterrence and rehabilitation, the paper suggests a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to crime reduction. Deterrent measures can serve as an initial response, establishing clear boundaries and consequences for criminal behavior, thus potentially discouraging others from similar actions. However, to truly address the problem of crime and reduce recidivism, the paper argues for the necessity of rehabilitative programs tailored to the individual needs of offenders. These interventions could include educational and vocational training, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and reintegration support, all aimed at equipping

individuals with the skills and resources needed to lead law-abiding lives upon release.

Ultimately, the paper contends that this integrative approach would lead to **more effective and fairer criminal justice systems**. Effectiveness is enhanced by addressing both the immediate need for accountability and the long-term goal of reducing reoffending. Fairness is promoted by considering the individual circumstances and needs of offenders, moving beyond a purely punitive model that may disproportionately affect certain populations or fail to address systemic issues contributing to crime. By balancing the principles of deterrence with the potential for rehabilitation, the paper envisions a criminal justice system that is both just in its response to crime and strategic in its efforts to prevent future offenses.

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CAMEROON-AMBAZONIA CONFLICT AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN BORDER COMMUNITIES OF KURMI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, TARABA STATE, NIGERIA



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Abstract

Evidence prevail to show movement of refugees from conflict affected area into host communities increases tensions often arise between refugees and host communities, resulting in conflict that impact lives and livelihoods of both the refugees and the host communities. This study examines how the presence of Ambazonian refugees has influenced social change in host communities of Kurmi Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. Using secondary data sources, the findings reveal significant changes in host community social dynamics, meaning interactions within the communities have shifted. Economically, the population increase has strained local resources; and in terms of security, residents experience extensive harassment and extortion at over 11 security checkpoints along the Baissa to Sabogida Akwanwe road. Politically, both government and non-governmental organizations have largely focus only on refugees and failed to address the needs of local communities who also faced same challenges as refugees. The study recommends urgent intervention by the government and NGOs, including establishing refugee camps and enacting policies that benefit both refugees and host populations.

Keywords: Cameroon, Ambazonian, conflict, social change, refugees, border-communities

Introduction

Conflicts across the globe, including in Africa, have led to significant population displacements. Many Sub-Saharan African countries have been affected by civil wars, banditry, insurgencies, and other forms of unrest, causing massive displacement of citizens (Williams, 2017). This has positioned Sub-Saharan nations as either recipients or sources of refugees, and in some cases, as both (Blavo, 1999). Refugees either settle in camps or integrate into host communities where local populations reside. The host communities often face additional challenges when resources and policies focus predominantly on refugees, leaving local communities, who may face similar hardships, overlooked (UNHCR, 2011).

This situation is exemplified in Taraba State, Nigeria, where border communities accommodate Ambazonian refugees fleeing the ongoing crisis in Cameroon. The

Ambazonian crisis stems from colonial legacies. In 1919, after Germany's defeat in World War I, the League of Nations mandated France and Britain to administer different parts of Cameroon. French-controlled Eastern Cameroon adopted assimilation policies with French as its official language. British-controlled Western Cameroon, divided into Southern and Northern parts, was integrated into Nigeria and governed under indirect rule, with English as the official language (International Crisis Group, 2017). By 1960, following the independence of Nigeria and French Cameroon, a plebiscite was held, with British Northern Cameroon choosing to join Nigeria and British Southern Cameroon joining the Republic of Cameroon.

This union, however, sowed the seeds for future discord. Anglophone representatives in Southern Cameroon had expected an egalitarian federal structure that preserved

their autonomy. Instead, they encountered a centralized government that curtailed their influence. Successive policies under Cameroon's first president, Ahidjo, and later under President Biya, increased discontent among the Anglophones through administrative restructuring, language policies, and educational system changes that marginalized English-speaking Cameroonians (Konings, 1997; Agwanda et al., 2020).

In 2016, calls for autonomy intensified, with political representatives like Joseph Wirba openly challenging the status quo in Cameroon's parliament. This ultimately led to the declaration of the self-proclaimed state of Ambazonia and the eruption of violence. The resulting conflict has caused over 3,000 deaths, displaced hundreds of thousands, and pushed over 60,000 refugees into Nigeria's border communities, including Kurmi Local Government Area in Taraba State (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The increasing refugee population strains already limited resources in host communities, leading to economic, security, and political challenges. While humanitarian assistance focuses on refugees, host communities often lack support, even as they bear the effects of resource scarcity and social tension. This study examines the impact of Ambazonian refugees on Kurmi Local Government Area.

Ambazonia Independence Struggles and Population Displacement in Cameroon

Cameroon has long been regarded as one of the few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to experience significant political unrest. The period of political instability under President Biya's leadership has led to a violent quest for independence by the Ambazonian separatists. This movement emerged due to decades of marginalization of the Anglophone regions in Cameroon's political and governance structures (Ekah, 2019; Johnson, 1970). Biya's administration implemented dramatic reforms that transformed the country's governance system from a federal to a unitary state (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). Under British

colonial rule, the Anglophone provinces of North-West and South-West Cameroon were governed as the United Nations Trusteeship Territory of Southern Cameroons (Bongfen, 1975). In 1961, these regions joined the Republic of Cameroon following a plebiscite (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2019; Nwati, 2021). However, the unification failed to deliver the promised socio-political equality, instead reducing Anglophone Cameroonians to second-class citizens in their own country (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003). Under Biya's regime, the country transitioned from bilingual to predominantly Francophone, with French becoming the official language. As a result, Cameroon's political, educational, and legal systems became heavily influenced by French norms, which alienated the Anglophone population (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003). The use of French in government functions and education has long been frustrating for people in the Anglophone regions (Fonkeng, 2019; Nwati, 2021).

The unrest in Cameroon began in November 2016. English-speaking teachers and lawyers in the North-West and South-West regions, frustrated with being forced to work in French, took to the streets, calling for reforms and greater autonomy (Carsten, 2018). The underlying discontent, rooted in political, socio-cultural, and economic marginalization, alongside resentment over Biya's handling of Cameroon's administration and high unemployment in the Anglophone regions, fueled the Ambazonian quest for independence. In South-West Cameroon, the conflict forced people from towns like Ekoh, Kembong, and Mamfe to flee to Nigeria (The Summit Magazine, 2018). A similar situation unfolded in the North-West, where people from regions such as Donga-Mantung, Mezam, and Momo sought refuge in Nigeria. The escalating violence in Cameroon has caused refugees to scatter across four Nigerian states, including Taraba. The number of refugees from Cameroon has steadily increased since 2018, with over 70,000 Anglophone Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria by 2020,

including 37,719 in Cross River, 9,961 in Benue, 1,215 in Akwa Ibom, and 16,541 in Taraba state (UNHCR, 2020). This growing refugee population indicates that the crisis is likely to take longer. The conflict has also led to significant internal displacement in Cameroon, with over 1 million people displaced from the Anglophone regions (Dahir, 2018). Many of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) live in harsh conditions, lacking necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2021).

The origins of the Ambazonian crisis can be traced back to the 1960s, when Anglophones in Cameroon, who make up about 20% of the population, began to feel increasingly oppressed under Biya's leadership, which had spanned more than three decades (Unah, 2019; Deutsche Welle, 2021). By the end of 2016, Anglophone grievances escalated into political demands, including strikes and riots calling for constitutional reforms and the resignation of Biya. The government's coercive response, including the arrest of separatist leaders and the shutdown of the internet, deepened distrust between the Anglophone regions and the central government. This distrust led to general strikes, school boycotts, and sporadic protests (New African Magazine, 2018; Onuoha & Okafor, 2019). The crisis, which had roots in the failure of the Cameroonian government to honour constitutional provisions that recognized the history and rights of the Anglophone people, was exacerbated when the government transitioned from a multi-party to a one-party system in 1966 and later repealed the federal arrangement in 1972 in favour of a unitary system (Dahir, 2018; International Crisis Group, 2017). Further alienation occurred when Biya altered the law in 1984 to strengthen the dominance of the Francophone majority (Dahir, 2018).

The situation reached a boiling point when the government deployed Francophone judges and teachers to the Anglophone regions, further undermining the Anglophone identity.

Protests against this imposition escalated into violence, leading to widespread clashes between security forces and protesters. The government's brutal response to peaceful demonstrations, including the deaths of demonstrators and the imposition of martial law, worsened the crisis (International Crisis Group, 2017). The violence peaked in 2017, with mass protests demanding Biya's resignation, the liberation of political prisoners, and the return to federalism (New African Magazine, 2018). The response from government forces, which included detentions, killings, and assaults on civilians, led to the formation of the Ambazonia Defense Force (ADF), and the conflict degenerated into a civil war by 2018. The government's use of excessive force in response to demonstrations further intensified the demand for Anglophone secession. The military's actions, including property destruction, sexual violence, and the arbitrary detention of civilians, led to significant humanitarian crises in the Anglophone regions (International Crisis Group, 2017). The violence, coupled with the mobilization of the ADF, caused tens of thousands of people to flee to neighbouring countries, including Nigeria, while many more became internally displaced. Since the crisis began in October 2016, Taraba State in Nigeria has become a major destination for refugees, and the conflict continues to displace thousands on both sides of the border (UNHCR, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Several theories can be applied to a study of this nature. One such theory is the Frustration-Aggression Theory, which, according to Ekannem (2021), has been widely used in explaining conflict situations in the social sciences at both micro and macro levels. The theory's central premise is that "aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration, and perversely, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression." This argument mirrors the situation in Cameroon between

the Anglophone and Francophone populations. The frustration experienced by the Anglophone region led to their quest for independence and, consequently, to aggression.

However, the Force Migration Theory is adopted for this study, as it focuses on the impacts of forced migration, particularly the movement of the Ambazonia refugees on the border communities in Taraba State, Nigeria. The Force Migration Theory was first proposed by FitzGerald in the 1930s but gained significant attention in the late 1980s and early 1990s through scholars like Turton, Hein, Brubaker, Cooper, Lee, and others (FitzGerald & Arar, 2018). The theory posits that forced migration is often driven by humanitarian crises, armed conflicts and environmental catastrophes (FitzGerald & Arar, cited in Edibo, 2024).

According to the theory, displaced people are compelled to flee due to natural or artificial disasters, irrespective of whether their destination countries or communities welcome them. It assumes that political violence, genocide, marginalization, foreign interventions, general violence, and environmental disasters are common drivers of forced migration (Roucek, 1939; Stoessinger, 1956; Zolberg et al., 1989; Fein, 1993; Schmeidl, 1997; Castles, 2005), cited in (Edibo, 2023).

This framework is highly relevant to the study as it helps to explain why the Ambazonia migrants in Taraba State's border communities did not migrate for economic reasons but were instead forced to flee due to internal political violence in Cameroon. Their migration was not driven by a desire for better economic opportunities but by the need to escape a violent conflict. Moreover, their presence has significant socio-economic, political, security, and cultural impacts on the host communities, which is the main focus of this study.

Forced migration often leads to various challenges, particularly in the host communities. As Boamah-Gyau (2008) notes, population growth resulting from the influx of

migrants can put considerable pressure on a country's natural resources, especially in host communities. One of the most evident impacts is on food resources, as the local population may need help to meet the increased demand. Thus, the arrival of Ambazonia migrants in Taraba State has economic, political, and cultural implications that must be understood in the context of forced migration. Despite its usefulness, the Force Migration Theory has faced criticism from scholars, particularly those with Constructivist and sociological perspectives. Critics argue that the legal construction of forced migration, based on international and national frameworks, is crucial in determining a migrant's status. Vella (2019) contends that migration theory has significant flaws, including the need for a comprehensive definition and analysis of the migration system's formation dynamics. Nonetheless, the Force Migration Theory provides valuable insights into the situation of the Ambazonia migrants in Taraba State, shedding light on the broader impacts of forced migration on migrants and the host communities.

Methodology

This study focuses on the Kurmi Local Government Area (LGA) in Taraba State, Nigeria. This region has experienced a significant influx of Cameroonian refugees, particularly those fleeing the ongoing conflict in Cameroon between the Anglophone separatists and the Cameroonian government forces. Kurmi LGA, which lies along Nigeria's border with Cameroon, has become a critical area for examining the impacts of forced migration on host communities. The migration of the Ambazonian refugees to this area has led to notable socio-economic, political, and cultural changes within the local communities. These changes include increased pressure on local resources, shifts in security dynamics, and the adaptation of the host communities to new social realities.

Given Kurmi LGA's proximity to Cameroon and the nature of the migration, it provides an

ideal context for exploring the broader implications of forced migration, especially in the face of ongoing conflict. The focus on this LGA allows the study to capture the specific challenges faced by both the refugees and the host populations and the coping mechanisms and responses to the crisis. This study employs an Ex-Post-Facto research design, also known as "after-the-fact" research, which is particularly suited for examining the relationships between independent and dependent variables when the data has been collected and the phenomenon under investigation has already occurred (Asika, 1991). The Ex-Post-Facto design is valuable in this context because it allows for the analysis of existing data related to the effects of forced migration on the host communities in Kurmi LGA after the migration process has already taken place.

The study relied heavily on secondary data from various documents, including books, journal articles, conference papers, unpublished dissertations, and online materials. These sources were obtained from Nigerian libraries and other relevant archives, ensuring that the data reflects the specific socio-political context of the region. Before being analyzed, the secondary data were subjected to content validity checks to ensure the reliability and relevance of the information. This rigorous process helped ensure that the data used in the analysis accurately represents the dynamics of forced migration in Kurmi LGA. The data were then analyzed qualitatively, identifying key themes and patterns related to the refugee's socio-economic, political, and cultural impacts in the host communities. By utilizing qualitative analysis, the study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of both the refugees and the local population and the broader implications of forced migration in the context of a border region.

Findings and Discussions

Impacts of Ambazonia Refugees on Host Communities in Kurmi LGA

Cameroonian refugees, specifically those from the Ambazonia region, in the Kurmi Local Government Area (LGA) of Taraba State have had significant socio-economic, security, and political impacts on the host communities. These multifaceted impacts involve shifts in population dynamics, economic activities, security measures, and political interventions. The following discussion explores the main impact areas, drawing from relevant studies and regional observations.

Social Impacts

The social impact of refugee populations on host communities varies depending on geography, culture, and the duration of the refugees' stay. In the case of Kurmi LGA, three communities Tunga Zehken, Abong, and Eneme, have experienced significant changes in social interactions due to the presence of Ambazonia refugees. The influx of refugees has led to a population surge, with an estimated 7,650 refugees (UNHCR, 2017) arriving in these border communities, representing a two-thirds increase in population size. This dramatic population rise has altered the host communities' social dynamics. The local populations have had to adapt to the newcomers, incorporating changes in social networking and cultural practices. For instance, Miledzi and Asare (2011) note that refugees often bring new lifestyles, such as different ways of dressing, interacting, and eating, which host populations may adopt or adjust to. However, this can lead to tensions, as cultural differences and the adulteration of Indigenous values may be seen as unfavourable by the host populations. These changes could foster social fragmentation and create a sense of loss of cultural identity among the indigenous people.

Furthermore, social integration can be hindered by the linguistic and cultural divide. Refugees from the Anglophone region of

Cameroon bring distinct traditions and languages, which the primarily Tigun-speaking host populations may need help assimilating. Despite these challenges, some mutual adaptation has occurred, with varying degrees of acceptance.

Economic Impacts

The economic impacts of the refugee presence in Kurmi LGA have been both positive and negative. On the positive side, some studies on refugee-host community relations, such as those by Gomez and Christensen (2010) and Jacobsen and Fratzke (2016), highlight that refugees can bring economic opportunities to host regions by attracting humanitarian aid and development organizations. However, in Kurmi LGA, this has not been the case, as there has been no significant presence of aid organizations or development projects in the area to support either the refugees or the host communities.

Despite this absence, the influx of refugees has created some economic benefits for the host communities. The presence of refugees has expanded the local market and provided cheaper labour for agricultural activities. Miledzi and Asare (2011) and Manteaw (2014) argue that an increased population can lead to a larger market, which boosts the demand for agricultural produce from the host communities. Additionally, the availability of cheap labour has helped reduce the cost of farm work, as refugees, often in desperate situations, have less bargaining power.

However, this economic benefit is counterbalanced by the strain on local resources such as food, water, and infrastructure. The increased demand for these resources has created competition between refugees and the host population, leading to resource scarcity and economic tension. Local businesses and traders have also experienced economic disruptions as they contend with a growing population and fluctuating demand for goods.

Security Impacts

The security implications of the refugee presence in the border communities of Kurmi LGA are significant and have heightened tensions in the area. The ongoing Cameroonian conflict between the Ambazonian separatists and the Cameroonian government has had far-reaching consequences for security in neighbouring countries like Nigeria. The Ambazonia refugees, many of whom have fled due to armed conflict, have inadvertently increased the security burden on local authorities.

In Kurmi LGA, the presence of refugees has led to heightened security concerns. The Nigerian government has placed increased security checkpoints along the border, ostensibly to prevent the infiltration of Ambazonian militants into Nigerian territory. However, this has led to intimidation, harassment, and extortion of residents. Security personnel have been accused of exploiting both Nigerian nationals and refugees, demanding bribes and subjecting them to unlawful searches (UNHCR, 2021). This situation has created a sense of insecurity and resentment among both the refugees and the host communities.

Moreover, the militarization of the border area, while intended to maintain territorial integrity, has contributed to a climate of fear and mistrust. Hostile relations between security personnel and the local populations have increased, further exacerbating social divisions. The security challenges have also hindered cohesion between refugees and host communities, with some refugees being treated with suspicion due to their perceived association with the separatist movement.

Political Impacts

Politically, the presence of Ambazonia refugees in Kurmi LGA has significant implications for both local governance and international relations. The Nigerian government has been primarily focused on maintaining security and territorial integrity at the border, which has led to the militarization

of the region. However, as the refugee population grows, the Nigerian government must provide significant economic interventions to support the refugees or mitigate host communities' challenges. Local political stakeholders in Kurmi LGA have raised concerns about the need for more support from the government to address the economic strain and security challenges caused by the refugee presence.

Additionally, international organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGOs, largely absent from the region, must engage more. Without the presence of these organizations, refugees in Kurmi LGA have been left without humanitarian support, and the host communities have borne the brunt of the impact. This gap in intervention has led to a political vacuum, where local governance structures need help to address the needs of refugees and host populations.

The absence of a coordinated international response has also contributed to a sense of political marginalization among refugees and host communities alike. There is a widespread perception that the Nigerian government and international actors have failed to prioritize the well-being of the affected populations.

This study's findings underscore the complex and multifaceted impacts of the Ambazonia refugee presence in the Kurmi Local Government Area (LGA) host communities. The historical and socio-political context of the Ambazonia crisis provides a crucial backdrop for understanding the refugee influx, and these findings are critical to interpreting the socio-economic, security, and political dimensions of this phenomenon.

According to the first objective of this study, the Cameroonian refugee crisis was precipitated by the historical tensions between the Francophone and Anglophone regions of Cameroon. The colonial legacy of this incompatible marriage between these two regions, where the Anglophone population was marginalized politically, economically, and

culturally, played a central role in the emergence of the Ambazonia separatist movement. This marginalization, as suggested by Ekannem (2021), aligns with the frustration-aggression theory, which posits that the existence of prolonged frustration leads to aggression. In this case, the Anglophone Cameroonians' frustration sidelined in key political, economic, and cultural processes manifested in aggressive demands for independence, resulting in the Ambazonia Declaration.

The frustration-aggression theory is crucial in understanding the escalation of the Anglophone crisis into a full-fledged armed conflict that has displaced large numbers of people. The violent response from the Cameroonian government including the deaths of at least 40 demonstrators in 2017 (International Crisis Group, 2017) and the subsequent refugee outflow of more than 70,000 Anglophone Cameroonians into Nigeria by 2020 (UNHCR, 2020) exemplify the dynamics of frustration transforming into aggression, leading to the forced migration of civilians.

The socio-economic impacts of the refugee presence in Kurmi LGA have been mixed. The study found that the influx of refugees has significantly influenced the cultural and social dynamics of the host communities. The lifestyle changes brought by the refugees are particularly evident in areas such as clothing, food patterns, and other forms of cultural assimilation. The adulteration of indigenous values and beliefs due to the introduction of foreign cultural practices has led to a shift in social interactions within the host communities. These changes, while not entirely negative, have generated tension among some segments of the host population who see the refugees' cultural influence as a form of cultural erosion.

Despite these challenges, the study found that the economic contributions of refugees to the host communities were generally positive. The large refugee population significantly boosted local economies by increasing the

demand for goods and services. The growing population created a larger market for agricultural produce, as suggested by Miledzi and Asare (2011) and Manteaw (2014), who argue that an increased population leads to expanded market opportunities. Furthermore, refugees provided cheap labour, which helped reduce labour costs in agricultural activities. This reduction in labour costs allowed local farmers to maintain more affordable production, making it easier for the host population to continue agricultural work. In some cases, the influx of refugees helped boost the local labour supply, benefiting the overall agricultural output of the host communities.

However, the pressure on local resources tempered these positive economic impacts. The significant increase in population has placed a strain on essential services such as water, food, and housing. This competition for scarce resources has often led to resource-based conflicts between refugees and host communities, exacerbating social tensions.

In terms of security, the presence of refugees in Kurmi LGA has generated significant challenges for both the refugees and the host communities. The Cameroonian crisis has contributed to heightened insecurity in the border region, especially in the context of the Nigerian government's response to the influx of refugees. One of the key findings of the study was the exploitation and harassment of both refugees and host community members by Nigerian security personnel. The study revealed that the militarization of the border areas, while intended to curb cross-border insurgency and prevent militant infiltration, led to abuses by security personnel, who used the presence of refugees as an excuse to intimidate, exploit, and extort residents.

The deployment of multiple security checkpoints along the border meant that commuters, including both Nigerian nationals and refugees, were subjected to unnecessary delays and extortion. This security overreach created a sense of insecurity among the local

population, as they were treated as foreigners and subjected to unlawful practices by security forces. These experiences have fostered a climate of mistrust and frustration between the host communities and security agencies, with many feeling alienated and unprotected.

Moreover, the security concerns were further exacerbated by the fear of infiltration by Ambazonian militants, with the local population caught between the pressures of security agencies and the refugees. This dynamic created a volatile situation where both refugees and host communities became vulnerable to military abuse and increased insecurity.

The political impacts of the refugee crisis on Kurmi LGA's host communities have been particularly notable in the absence of adequate humanitarian intervention. The study found that the need for more support from the Nigerian government, international organizations, and NGOs has left the host communities disadvantaged. Despite the clear humanitarian needs of both refugees and host populations, there has been little to no government action to address the economic strain, security risks, and humanitarian gaps caused by the refugee crisis. Many previous studies, such as those by Gomez and Christensen (2010) and Jacobsen and Fratzke (2016), have highlighted the positive economic impacts of refugees on host communities, particularly through the influx of aid and development organizations. However, this has not been the case in Kurmi LGA, where there has been a lack of intervention from international bodies like the UNHCR and NGOs. This absence of external support has worsened the plight of the host communities, who have had to bear the brunt of the crisis without any substantial assistance or support structures. The lack of political will to address the needs of both refugees and host populations has created a political vacuum, leaving the local government unable to manage the crisis effectively. This has also contributed to the political marginalization of the host communities, who feel abandoned by

both local authorities and international organizations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the Ambazonian separatist struggle and its impact on the border communities of Taraba State, Nigeria. It established that the ongoing Anglophone conflict in Cameroon, fueled by years of social, economic, and political marginalization, led to the forced migration of thousands of Cameroonian refugees into Nigerian border areas. The study highlighted the humanitarian crisis created by this migration, as refugees in Kurmi LGA and surrounding areas faced significant social, economic, and security challenges. It also revealed that the international community—including the African Union, former colonial powers, and the United Nations—failed to adequately address the underlying causes of the conflict or effectively assist the refugees. The lack of political will and humanitarian intervention has exacerbated the plight of both the refugees and the host communities, with limited access to education, healthcare, and security services. The failure of the international community to intervene meaningfully has prolonged the Anglophone crisis and compounded the challenges faced by both the refugees and host populations. Based on the findings of this study, the following policy recommendations are proposed to improve the situation of both refugees and host communities in Kurmi LGA and other border areas in Nigeria:

1. **Construct Future Refugee Settlements in Remote Areas:** Future refugee settlements should be situated in rural and remote areas to minimize the potential negative impacts of refugee presence on the host community. Rural areas, typically more homogeneous, often experience less rivalry and competition over limited resources. This will help to ease tensions between refugees and host populations.
2. **Provide Vocational and Technical Training to Refugees and Host Populations:** Aid

agencies should provide vocational and technical training for refugees and host community members. This initiative will help reduce resentment and improve social integration. Furthermore, both groups should be equipped with start-up kits to establish their businesses, encouraging economic self-sufficiency and fostering goodwill between the two communities.

3. **Promote Positive Media Representation of Refugees:** The host community government should take proactive measures to promote the positive image of refugees in the media. This will help counteract negative stereotypes and prejudices about refugees, fostering social cohesion and understanding within the local population. Media campaigns should highlight refugees' contributions to the local economy and their role as victims of a larger geopolitical crisis.
4. **Enhance Livelihoods Through Continued Development Projects:** The government and aid agencies should prioritize projects that enhance the livelihoods of both the refugee and host communities. This includes providing essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Such projects will improve both communities' quality of life and contribute to long-term peacebuilding and economic development in the border areas

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INTERROGATING EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN NIGERIA'S TERROR WAR

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Abstract

While several efforts have been made to examine the Nigerian terror war, the experiences of women in the conflict process have not been adequately interrogated. This study is therefore aimed at investigating the different levels of women involvement in the conflict process with a focus on the Nigerian terror war. Explaining the roles and experiences of women in conflict could take place at three levels of analysis. First, women may be seen as victims who experience greater violations in conflict situations. Second, women may be seen as conflict perpetrators, even though this dimension is often ignored because of their soft psychology. Third, women could play a key role in mitigating conflicts through their participation in post-conflict policy formulations. This study is significant because it contributes to the expansion of knowledge on the experiences of women in the Nigerian terror war in particular, and contributes to building nuances and analytical frameworks for understanding the place of women in the conflict process in general. This study employed interview as an instrument of data collection and other secondary sources of data such as books, journals, reports by local and international bodies, and national dailies/newspapers. The data generated is analysed using thematic analysis.

Keywords: Conflict, policy, lived experiences, gender, terror war

Introduction

The participation and experiences of women in conflict situations have attracted scholars from various fields in recent years, highlighting the roles women play and the unique impacts conflicts have on them. This study seeks to interrogate the experiences of women in the Nigerian Terror War, primarily characterised by the insurgent activities of Boko Haram and the resultant humanitarian crises. The existing literature has been passive on the roles and experiences of women in the conflict process. While it is widely recognised that women are among the worst affected in conflict situations (Pillai et al., 2017), cultural and patriarchal restrictions often relegate them to the status of victims. This orientation ensures that other key roles that women can play as perpetrators of conflicts or during the post-conflict peace process are often not adequately explored. However, emerging discussions have begun to

shift this narrative, acknowledging women as active agents in the conflict process (Ogunyemi, 2020; Amusan et al., 2019).

For instance, during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, women were not only victims but also played active roles in the acts of killing and sexual violence (Cohen, 2013). This evolving understanding is crucial for comprehensively examining the experiences of women in the Nigerian Terror War. Evidence suggests that women's engagement in conflict spans a spectrum of activities, including tactical operations, strategic planning, humanitarian assistance, and psychosocial support. The civil wars in Liberia and Somalia serve as compelling examples of women's active participation in various aspects of conflict, advocacy, and reconciliation. Their contributions have been extensively recorded in scholarly and advocacy literature.

This study examines the roles and experiences of women in the Nigerian terror war, highlighting their varied levels of participation in the conflict. It explores the ways in which conflict profoundly affects their overall well-being. Furthermore, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges women encounter, including disruptions to their social structures and economic opportunities, which exacerbate existing inequalities and increase instances of gender-based violence. It aims to illuminate not only the suffering and vulnerabilities that women face as a result of the Nigerian terror war, it also investigates the roles that women play in perpetrating conflict and their possible roles in post-conflict policy formulation.

The primary data for this study were generated through the use of key-informant interviews. A total of six key-informants – with expertise on the subject matter – were targeted for interview. To maintain anonymity, these informants are designated by codes (KI-1, KI-2, KI-3, KI-4, KI-5, and KI-6). Important data were also generated the secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and others. The method of data analysis is thematic analysis.

An Overview of the Boko Haram Terror War in Nigeria

With the rise of Boko Haram in 2009, the resulting conflict has been marked by widespread violence, suicide bombings, abductions, and human rights violations. Insurgents have targeted armed men and civilians, particularly women and girls, employing methods that instill fear and perpetuate a cycle of violence. The Nigerian terror war has led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands and contributed to a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions. The deliberate and often brutal targeting of women by insurgent groups, coupled with the societal stigmatization faced by survivors of sexual violence, underscores the urgent need for immediate and structured responses. By interrogating these experiences, this study

emphasises the significance of incorporating gender-sensitive perspectives into conflict resolution, post-conflict strategies, and humanitarian interventions. Thus, the study begins with a contextual overview, investigates the intricate dynamics surrounding women's participation in conflict, and concludes with an emphasis on the need for inclusive and empowering strategies in the aftermath of conflict.

The Burden of Victimization and Vulnerability

The Nigerian terror war has dramatically transformed the lives of many, with women shouldering a disproportionate share of the ongoing and devastating effects of the Boko Haram insurgency. This section explores the complex patterns of victimization and vulnerability that characterise women's experiences within this conflict. Confronted with forced displacement and economic hardship, women face challenges that extend far beyond immediate physical threats. The consequences of the conflict are profound, breaking apart families, undermining social structures, and inflicting enduring wounds on future generations. Women are particularly susceptible in conflict situations due to entrenched gender norms and existing power disparities. In the context of the conflict, women frequently experience violence not only as a byproduct of the disorder brought by war but also as a tactic aimed at destabilising community unity and exerting control. By documenting the extensive nature of violence in conflicts, we can gain insights into its root causes, encouraging proactive international interventions and enhancing responses in various arenas, including legal, political, medical, and social sectors.

This dynamic has not gone unnoticed by international organisations, which have initiated measures such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. This resolution advocates for the inclusion of women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes, recognising that they are affected by conflict in multiple ways (UN

Women, 2015). The experiences of women in conflict as victims are rich and complex, shaped by the interplay of factors such as violence, displacement, and societal change that accompanies war. While the narratives surrounding armed conflicts, particularly terrorism and insurgency, often focus predominantly on male experiences (Guarnieri & Tur-Prats, 2023), it is crucial to acknowledge that women also fulfill significant roles – both as victims and as active participants. Women bear the double burden of victimization and vulnerability, facing targeted violence such as abductions, sexual exploitation, and displacement. In addition, many women and young girls have contributed to armed conflicts as combatants, suicide bombers, spies, recruiters, mobilizers, and strategists. They also fulfill domestic roles, such as cooking and caring for property in camps (Amusan et al., 2019). These experiences highlight broader patterns of gendered vulnerability and resilience, offering vital perspectives on the impact of conflict on women's lives. As victims of gender-based violence, forced marriages, and economic deprivation, women endure profound physical and psychological trauma.

Boko Haram has gained notoriety as a leading source of violence in Nigeria since the country's transition to democracy in 1999 (Bloom & Matfess, 2016). The group's violent abuses against women (Yakubu, 2020) have drawn international attention, particularly with the abduction of 276 girls in Chibok, Borno State, in 2014, a pivotal moment that brought Boko Haram into the global spotlight. This incident signified a significant shift in the group's operational strategies and tactics. The consequent outrage sparked the #BringBackOurGirls movement, galvanizing support from NGOs and human rights organisations and prompting military assistance from Nigeria's international allies, including the United States. U.S. agencies provided drones and unmanned aerial vehicles to enhance intelligence gathering, reinforcing Nigeria's surveillance capabilities in the Sambisa Forest, a hotspot for Boko Haram

activities (Oshewolo, Azeez & Jimba, 2023; Bloom & Matfess, 2016; McAllister, 2015).

The attention garnered from these abductions may have reinforced Boko Haram's strategy of increasingly engaging female operatives. Although the Chibok incident was not the first of its kind, it illuminated the objectification and exploitation of women within the jihadist conflict in northeastern Nigeria (Bloom & Matfess, 2016). This was particularly significant considering the minimal international focus on both the overarching conflict and the plight of affected women. As observed by Bloom & Matfess (2016) regrettably, while the global spotlight on the kidnapped girls mobilized international support, it inadvertently overshadowed the essential contributions of women and girls to the insurgency's strategies and ideology, limiting analysts' insights into the group's dynamics. Boko Haram's reliance on female operatives is notably distinct compared to other insurgencies (Osasona, 2022; Bloom et al., 2016). Furthermore, Boko Haram's unique approach including forced conscription distinguishes it from other terrorist organisations that often benefit from the voluntary participation of women. The group's ideologies and methods create a stark contrast to other Islamist movements in northeastern Nigeria, emphasising its claim to represent "true Islam" (Bloom & Matfess, 2016).

It can be argued that the Boko Haram insurgency disproportionately affects women, particularly as the group has increasingly embraced suicide bombing and female operatives (Nnam et al 2018). This development is situated within a broader context of escalating sexual violence against women in many African conflicts, where violence is frequently used to assert dominance, instill fear, and disrupt familial structures. Such violence can involve horrific acts targeting women's reproductive health, including the deliberate transmission of HIV, forcing women to bear children of their aggressors, and more. Sexual violence against women in war and conflict remains one of the

most significant yet often unacknowledged issues in history, despite a growing awareness of its prevalence. Violence against women in conflicts is often systematic; many reports document the sexual assault of women and their suffering in the presence of loved ones (KI-1), underscoring the profound psychological and social impacts. Abducted women capable of bearing children are often coerced into pregnancy and childbirth (KI-3), and this strategy offers Boko Haram multiple benefits, such as increasing its number and fostering loyalty among the next generation of recruits.

As observed by Oriola (2017), the group intricately employs sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women as a calculated tactic. Women are often subjected to rape, coerced marriages, and other forms of sexual exploitation, creating significant terror and fracturing community bonds. Women abducted by Boko Haram often become "wives" of group leaders, enduring ongoing sexual violence and torture, reflecting a ruthless dynamic of dominance and exploitation. This examination of Boko Haram's gendered actions and its utilitarian approach to SGBV occurs within the broader context of Nigeria's political economy and entrenched patriarchal ideologies.

Moreover, Boko Haram's use of SGBV not only serves immediate operational goals but also resonates with its long-term view of women as integral to its future. This strategy includes systemic mass rape and coercion for breeding a new generation, often leading to pregnancies and the kidnapping of children born from these atrocities (Oriola, 2017). In specific situations, militants may propose marriage to daughters or offer a bride price to families, creating an illusion of consent and legitimacy. Despite credible threats of violence, some parents oppose these unions (KI-6). With many men having fled ahead of Boko Haram's invasion, women often found themselves negotiating with fighters. This manipulation of marriage reinforced rigid gender roles, limited interactions between

gender, and ultimately promote recruitment for the insurgents. The women and girls were offered a list of potential husbands (KI-2), allowing them a false sense of choice. Despite claims of consent, these arranged marriages limit options primarily to insurgents, often following the death or dissolution of previously imposed unions.

Finally, research consistently shows that women's sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) suffer significantly during wartime (Lancet, 2019). While much global health research focuses on systematic infrastructure issues as barriers to SRHR in conflict zones, various reports underscore how both state and non-state actors can exert control over women's reproductive choices, further restricting access to maternal and reproductive healthcare services (Hedström & Herder, 2023).

Beyond Victims

The protracted conflict that has gripped Nigeria for over a decade, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency, often paints a grim picture of suffering and turmoil. While narratives surrounding the terror war typically emphasise violence and victimization, they overlook an essential layer of this story: the resilience, agency, and strength of women. To fully comprehend the implications of the Nigerian terror war, it is crucial to shift our focus beyond mere victimhood and recognise the diverse roles women play not only during the conflict but also in the post-conflict period.

The violence unleashed by Boko Haram has resulted in mass displacement (Barau, 2017), societal upheaval, and relentless insecurity, with women bearing a disproportionate burden. Although women are often targeted as victims of violence, they also navigate a complex dynamic within the insurgency, serving both as instruments of conflict and as agents of change (Dutta, 2018). This duality defies the simplistic binary narrative of oppressor versus oppressed and highlights the agency many women have demonstrated in the face of desperation.

The dominant narrative frequently portraying women solely as victims of abduction enduring immense trauma neglects the broader spectrum of women's experiences in the Nigerian terror war. Many women have emerged as sole breadwinners, caretakers, and community leaders while navigating the chaos of displacement and violence. They have forged networks of support and initiated programmes to provide food, shelter, and education for their children, all while striving to rebuild their lives amidst the devastation of the war. Additionally, women have come to represent not only survival but also immense strength, resilience, and agency. Even as they face a range of challenges including economic hardship, they have actively declined to be labeled solely as victims. Their narratives illustrate that conflict, though severely traumatic, can also foster significant personal and collective transformation (Naylor, 2021).

The ingenuity demonstrated by women during conflict is top notch and central to women's responses to terror and displacement. Many have faced the devastating loss of their homes and livelihoods yet have discovered innovative methods to rebuild their lives and communities within internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and host settlements. Amidst limited access to healthcare, education, and essential resources, women have taken on the responsibility of supporting their families, often engaging in informal trade, subsistence farming, or skilled labor (Ezeani & Ajayi, 2022). Their ability to swiftly adapt in challenging circumstances not only underscores their endurance but also demonstrates their capacity for innovation during times of crisis.

Also, the physical and psychological strength that women continue to exhibit is evident in their courageous resistance to the insurgency. Numerous accounts highlight their bravery, showcasing women who have escaped captivity, protected their children from danger, or rescued others during violent encounters (KI-5). Additionally, many of these women have participated in community

defense initiatives, offering intelligence and support to local vigilante groups, all while confronting substantial risks (Ibrahim, 2022).

Moreso, women have demonstrated the ability to make decisions and take action even in situations often marked by powerlessness. They have established cooperative societies and savings groups, successfully negotiated access to humanitarian assistance, and, in some cases, served as informal mediators between their communities and security forces (KI-1). Despite the challenges posed by restrictive cultural norms, many women have managed to secure leadership positions within their communities, actively asserting their voices on critical issues such as safety, relocation, and reconciliation (Ogunyemi, 2020). Additionally, many women have turned their personal traumas into a source of collective action. The emergence of women-led organisations such as advocacy groups for missing persons, associations for widows, and community support networks highlights their dedication to influencing not only their own destinies but also the futures of their communities.

They have also been at the forefront of peace initiatives, acting as mediators and community organisers in their efforts to restore harmony within fractured communities (Arostegui, 2013). Their intimate understanding of local dynamics, combined with their unique experiences, position them as vital stakeholders in the peace process. However, the contributions of these women are frequently undermined by systemic constraints, including cultural norms and institutional barriers (Nnam et al 2019), which challenge their participation and impact. This activism not only disrupts patriarchal structures but also places these women at the forefront of grassroots efforts for peacebuilding and social cohesion (Okafor & Okwuosa, 2021).

Hence, recognising and amplifying women's roles in both conflict and peace processes are essential for fostering a more distinct understanding of the ongoing crisis in

Nigeria. By acknowledging their resilience and contributions, pathways toward meaningful recovery and reconciliation are created. It will also necessitate a deeper understanding of women not just as victims of war but as active participants in resistance, recovery, and renewal. Their experiences urge a rethinking of policy and academic discussions, advocating for a shift from a focus on protectionism to one centered on empowerment. This reframing acknowledges the essential roles women play in sustaining and rebuilding societies affected by conflict (Abiola, 2023).

Moving Beyond the Stereotype, Women as Perpetrators of Conflict

The discussion around women's roles in conflict often focuses on their portrayal as victims, neglecting their role as perpetrators. Many scholars and policymakers overlook women's involvement in terrorism, attributing this oversight to societal perceptions that depict women as inherently soft and innocent. In the complex realm of terrorism, there is little consensus on women's roles, especially in conflict settings where they are typically perceived as victims rather than contributors to violence (Carpenter, 2003).

One of the contentious issues is whether women's involvement in terrorism merits rigorous examination. Available data indicates that women actively participate in conflicts as perpetrators, engaging in crimes, intelligence gathering, and arms trafficking. As noted by a key informant, women can operate more discreetly due to societal perceptions that render them less suspicious, granting them easier access to certain areas, such as border regions (KI-2). This is influenced by gender norms portraying women as vulnerable and unlikely to engage in violent activities.

Moreover, much of the existing literature on terrorism conveniently overlooks female participants, perpetuating the notion that terrorism is predominantly a male domain. This gendering of terrorism is so ingrained in everyday life that it often goes unnoticed by casual observers. Despite a historical trend

where male terrorists significantly outnumber their female counterparts, this perspective has been particularly reinforced in the West since September 11, 2001. After this event, governmental and societal focus shifted disproportionately to male perpetrators, particularly within Islamic extremist groups like Al-Qaeda, thereby relegating women's roles to the periphery.

When scholars do address women's roles in terrorism, the narrative frequently simplifies their involvement, portraying them as victims manipulated into violence by male relatives or constrained by patriarchal societal norms. This oversimplification risks ignoring the complex motivations that drive women to participate in acts of political violence. It is essential to shift the narrative and recognise the multifaceted roles women play in terrorism, acknowledging their agency and impact in this global issue (Mathers, 2012).

To create effective policies and programmes that address the root causes of insurgency and enhance peace strategies, it is crucial to understand how women experience conflict – not just as victims but also as significant contributors. Recently, there has been a growing focus on women's roles in terrorism, particularly concerning suicide attacks, attracting significant attention from journalists and academics. However, this renewed interest often neglects the historical context of women's participation in terrorism, which has been well-documented.

Despite prevailing beliefs that women are primarily caretakers and homemakers, there is increasing recognition of their dual roles in conflict. Evidence suggests that women can be armed and actively participate in violence alongside men. Studies indicate that while women may sometimes assume roles as active combatants, their involvement in wartime sexual violence remains less explored, partly due to researchers' lack of focus on the gender of perpetrators (Cohen, 2013). Women's involvement in wartime violence often parallels the social pressures faced by male combatants; just as men may engage in violent

acts under similar conditions, women can resort to violence when placed in comparable situations (Cohen, 2013).

For instance, women and girls within Boko Haram have participated in various roles related to violence, both directly and indirectly. Their involvement includes logistical support, such as transporting money and weapons to terrorist groups, and serving as recruiters who identify and enlist new members through family connections or personal relationships (Usman et al., 2014). Women have taken on numerous responsibilities within the organisation, such as persuading family members to join and actively recruiting individuals from outside their immediate circles. They also educate new recruits about societal expectations.

In addition to these roles, many women fulfill tasks as informants, cashiers, and in domestic responsibilities like cooking and resource gathering. More directly, their engagement in violence may manifest through building explosives, participating in assaults on communities, and acting as suicide bombers (Nagarajan, 2017). For some women and girls, joining Boko Haram was seen as an act of defiance against enforced marriages. As observed by a key informant, young girls eager to escape predetermined unions would flee into the wilderness, aligning themselves with men of their choice (KI-4). Their decisions were shaped not only by a desire to avoid unwanted marriages but also by the allure of religious education and a sense of purpose that traditional society had denied them.

Empowering Voices: Breaking Barriers for Women in Post-Conflict Policy

The trials of war have disproportionately affected women, whose resilience and strength in facing adversity are often overlooked. In the critical aftermath of conflicts, women possess the potential to significantly influence post-war policies; however, this potential is frequently stifled by deep-rooted patriarchy and cultural constraints (Nnam et al 2019). This systemic

sidelining deprives women of the resources and authority that their male counterparts wield. Given that women represent 49.4% of the Nigerian population (Country Metres, 2025), their active engagement in peace and security efforts is not just advantageous but essential. Women are not merely passive victims of conflict; they stand as powerful peacebuilders and advocates (Okafor & Okwuosa, 2021; Arostegui 2013).

Regrettably, women's involvement in formal peace discussions is still significantly restricted. As societies struggle with the challenges of reconstruction, addressing not only physical and economic infrastructure but also the cultural cohesion that unites communities, the perspectives of women are frequently overlooked in the narratives of post-conflict recovery. Historically marginalized, women endure the most profound impacts of war's devastation, yet they offer invaluable insights and skills essential for cultivating authentic peace and recovery. Enhancing women's participation in these critical processes is not merely a matter of equity; it is essential for achieving enduring stability and sustainable development.

Extensive research underscores the advantages of including women in peace processes. For instance, a 2017 United Nations report found that peace agreements incorporating women's perspectives are 35% more likely to endure for at least 15 years, additionally, De Oliveira Schuck & Brito (2019) noted that incorporating gender perspectives in post conflict peace building will help address the problem of women marginalisation in post conflict policy formulations. This durability results from the rich diversity of experiences that women contribute, enhancing policymaking and nurturing inclusivity. Women often play key roles as mediators within their communities, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation. Their involvement in governance during post-conflict periods ensures that critical issues – such as healthcare, education, and social

infrastructure – are prioritised, thereby laying a stronger foundation for lasting stability.

Despite these clear benefits, significant barriers persist. Cultural norms and entrenched societal structures often impede women's participation in political and public life. In the wake of conflict, these challenges can reinforce traditional gender roles, limiting women's ability to engage fully. Institutional frameworks frequently lack mechanisms to support women's recruitment and retention in decision-making roles. Additionally, escalating gender-based violence in post-conflict environments severely hampers women's contributions to recovery efforts. Limited access to education and economic opportunities further restricts their potential for leadership and agency.

To overcome these obstacles, targeted policy interventions are imperative. These should focus on dismantling structural barriers, promoting gender-sensitive governance, and ensuring active women's participation in post-conflict recovery. A gender-inclusive approach to peacebuilding fosters social cohesion and enhances the resilience of communities emerging from conflict (De Oliveira Schuck & Brito 2019). In the context of the ongoing Nigerian terror war, amplifying women's voices is vital. Their experiences and insights should not be viewed as mere footnotes in the narrative of recovery; rather, they are integral to building a future that is equitable, stable, and resilient. As we pursue healing and reconstruction, we must commit to empowering women, recognising that their involvement is essential for achieving enduring peace

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Nigerian terror war provides critical lessons on the resilience and agency of women in conflict. In examining the experiences of women in the context of the Nigerian terror war, it becomes clear that while contemporary armed conflicts have inflicted immense suffering subjecting women to violence, displacement, and losses, they have also

paradoxically opened avenues for transformation and empowerment. Amidst the chaos of crisis, women's roles have evolved significantly, surpassing traditional boundaries. With many men killed, abducted, or displaced, women increasingly find themselves bearing the responsibility of sustaining their households and communities, becoming breadwinners, decision-makers, and leaders in both private and public spheres.

Conflict, despite its destructive nature, often acts as a catalyst for substantial shifts in gender dynamics. Through the shared trauma of war, many women have formed strong networks of solidarity, leading to the establishment of self-help groups and grassroots organisations that provide emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of collective identity. These experiences have, in some cases, motivated women to engage in activism, whereby they advocate for peace, justice, and long-term resilience within their communities. Hence this study highlights the urgent need for policies that not only protect women from violence but also empower them as central actors in peacebuilding and post-conflict development. Recognising and harnessing the transformative potential of women's experiences in conflict is not only a matter of justice, it is a prerequisite for sustainable peace.

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DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: A CASE OF UNMET EXPECTATIONS

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Abstract

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, the search for egalitarianism has been fruitless, and the state has not evolved into the democratic haven that was expected. This study explored the reasons why Nigeria's democratic practice has not met expectations, utilising a time-series research design and employing the transition paradigm theory, which views democratisation as a transition from authoritarianism involving a process that commences with liberalisation. The study found that Nigeria's Fourth Republic democracy has fallen short of expectations because the essential ingredients required for its success, including poor industrialisation, poor industrial development, a weak national point of convergence, inability to check executive excesses, ideological homogenisation, and politicians' insulation from the consequences of their bad decisions. The study concludes by recommending massive industrialisation, the development of a viable national linchpin, strengthening of institutions and practices to check executive excesses, ideological heterogeneity and subjection of political office holders to the patronage of national public services.

Keywords: Democracy, development, dictatorship, fourth republic, Nigeria

Introduction

Popular governments offer significantly more opportunities than other political systems for citizens to influence the laws they must abide by (Dahl & Stinebrickner, 2010). Ikenberry, Halperin, Halperin, Siegle, & Weinstein (2005) opined that even in comparative terms, poor democratic states generally perform better than their autocratic counterparts in terms of the Human Development Index. This makes democracy appealing to a wide range of people across the world. Democracy emerged in the Ancient Greek city-state in 500 B.C. and has expanded worldwide (Dahl & Stinebrickner, 2010). Only six nations had democratic political systems in 1900, and all but one of them—New Zealand—only allowed male residents to vote. Additionally, until the middle of the 1960s, the majority of African-Americans in the southern United States were effectively denied the right to vote. Twenty-one countries had democratic governments by

1930, but women continued to be disenfranchised in three of them: Belgium, France, and Switzerland. There were 25 democratic nations by the middle of the 20th century, some of which would devolve into dictatorships. More than 70 of the 191 nations in the globe by the end of the century were democracies, and nearly half of humanity lived in those nations (Dahl, 1998). As of 2017, at least 96 out of 167 countries with population over 500,000 were democratic representing 57% (Desilver, 2019). That number has since reduced as a result of recent coups in some countries including Mali, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso.

As stated earlier, with exception of New Zealand, the six countries that practiced democracy in 1900 had limited franchise but through struggles and social movements that aimed at expanding the segments of citizen participation in democracy, the United States

Congress passed a bill in 1919 and ratified in 1920 that recognised women's rights to vote (National Archives, 2022). Through further social actions like the peaceful marches by the likes of Martin Luther King in the 1960s. People at various levels of government equally fought to pass laws and constitutional amendments that would increase voting eligibility based on colour and ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and other considerations. With the passage of the historic Voting Rights Act in 1965, voter suppression was significantly reduced. The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 and voting protections for language minorities and people with disabilities were codified, ushering in a new era of push-and-pull on voting rights (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2019); (Shah & Smith, 2021). This trend went on in other countries with less and less restrictions to political participation across the democratic countries of the world leading to the popularity of the universal adult suffrage (Foley, Iverson, & Lawson, 2009). Democracy did not only expand in terms of the number of countries practicing it, but it has also expanded the space for more people to participate leading to universal adult suffrage. With an expanded space for participation, it is expected that people's participation in democracy will correspondingly increase. It is, however, not always the case.

Throughout Africa, democracies have been practised since colonial times. However, numerous African countries experienced military incursions after independence, especially in West Africa. In the 1960s, there was a second democratic wave that greeted the independence struggles across but was interrupted by military incursions. Incontrovertibly, West Africa experienced the third wave of democracy in the early 1990s, and the nations in this region were compelled to adopt this new political trend. Democracy, a form of government with unique principles and characteristics, honours elections that are free, fair, trustworthy, and based on honesty. Elections to gain political power in this situation were not an option (Aliyu & Ambali,

2021). Nigeria finally adopted democracy in 1999, which has been sustained to date. The first elections in the country were organised by the military in 1999. Since then, the credibility of elections has come to be questioned with a diversity of challenges. Muhammadu Buhari prominently challenged the 2003 presidential election along with other elections that were challenged by other participants (Aziken, 2016).

Elections in West Africa have been marked by blatant violence and irregularities ever since the entrance of the new democratic train, which has been negatively expressed in economic underdevelopment and political instability (Aliyu & Ambali, 2021). Nigeria is one of the countries that has experienced numerous challenges with its democratic transition, especially concerning election management. Numerous violent events have occurred following the conduct of elections in Nigeria, and more litigations have been instituted to challenge almost every election conducted in Nigeria since 1999, with only a few exceptions. The outcome of the majority of elections is only settled by courts of competent jurisdictions to the extent that Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua admitted in 2007 that the election that produced him was faulty. He instituted the reform process that could change that, leading to the electoral act of 2010.

An excellent democratic order must meet the fundamental criteria of free and fair elections. Indeed, democracy cannot exist without elections since they provide a platform for the public to voice their opinions on their leaders. According to Agbaje et al. in Aliyu & Ambali (2021), reliable elections are now a crucial consideration anytime the subject of democracy, democratisation, or good governance is brought up. Meanwhile, the type and character of elections, whether legitimate or not, greatly determine their acceptance and, consequently, the outcome of the created administration (Kolawole, 2020). The sustenance of democratic stability critically depends on election management

(Kolawole, 2020). Fundamentally, though, an excellent electoral management body is necessary to provide the intended results of the election. Omotola in Aliyu & Ambali (2021) asserts that excellent elections are believed to be impossible without efficient electoral governance.

Before the return of democracy in 1999, Nigeria experienced a series of military incursions starting on the 15th January, 1966. Throughout the days of the military in power, Nigerians resisted them and clamoured for the return of democracy. It was indeed returned in 1979, only to be interrupted by another military coup in 1983. Military rule continued in until democracy briefly returned in 1993, only to be interrupted six months later. However, one of the most significant events in the military's incursion in Nigerian politics is the annulment of the June 12 1993, presidential election, which Chief Moshood Abiola was believed to have won. This created one of the strongest resistances to military rule in Nigeria, and the clamour for a return to democracy leading to the formation of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) in 1994 among many other resistance. Many well-known Nigerians, including senior military officers and well-known politicians, were part of this group. They all believed that MKO Abiola, the presumed winner of the June 12, 1993, presidential election, should lead a civilian government in Nigeria in place of the country's military government (Modupe Apoola Encyclopedia, 2024).

The resistance to military rule continued even though Abacha died in June 1998 and then Abdulsalami Abubakar, who succeeded him, returned the country to democracy in May 1999. The resistance to military rule was full of promises for a better society after the military rule. On the one hand, advocates of democracy vilified the military rule and told Nigerians how the country was regressing because of the military in politics. On the other hand, they also made lofty promises about what Nigeria would become once democracy was enthroned. It is, however, looking at

Nigeria after twenty-six years of democratic practice, it is not difficult to see that democracy has not delivered on most of its promises. The prosperous society that was promised was never realised, and the people's ability to shape governance has only declined over the years. It is against this backdrop that this research interrogates the reasons Nigerian democratic practice remains unmet.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the transition paradigm theory to explain its arguments. The Transition Paradigm Theory, posited by Thomas Carothers in 2002, offers a nuanced framework for understanding the divergent trajectories of states transitioning from authoritarianism. Initially conceptualised to explain the post-Cold War democratisation processes, this theoretical framework has undergone revisions to accommodate the complexities and setbacks characteristic of nascent democracies, such as Nigeria.

Carothers critiques the prevailing linear model of democratisation, which neglects the intricacies of transitional processes. Specifically, he identifies three erroneous assumptions underpinning the transition paradigm: firstly, that transitioning countries are uniformly progressing towards democracy; secondly, that democratisation unfolds in predictable stages; and thirdly, that the mere conduct of elections is tantamount to democratic governance. After his critique of the traditional transition paradigm led to several key conclusions regarding post-authoritarian regimes. He advanced that most countries land in a "grey zone": Carothers argued that few states achieve full democracy after transition. Instead, most settle into hybrid regimes that combine democratic and authoritarian features. He also argued that there was a need for new analytical categories. He advocated for abandoning the linear transition model in favour of recognising persistent hybrid regimes as stable, albeit undesirable, systems. He identified common subtypes, including:

- Dominant-power politics, where one party controls formal democracy.
- Feckless pluralism, where multiple parties exist but governance remains dysfunctional.

He also argued that democracy assistance must move beyond elections. He criticised international actors for focusing on elections while neglecting:

- Power structures that undermine democratic governance.
- Institutional weaknesses that hinder effective governance.
- Political culture that may not support democratic values.

Lastly, he argued that structural factors matter more than transitions. He emphasised that long-term historical factors, including colonial legacies, resource dependence and ethnic divisions, shape outcomes more significantly than transition events. This perspective highlights the complexity of democratisation processes and the need for a nuanced understanding of post-authoritarian regimes.

The Nigerian experience, marked by a return to civilian rule in 1999, ostensibly aligned with the "opening" phase of the transition paradigm. However, the anticipated consolidation of democracy has been elusive, with Nigeria instead exhibiting characteristics of a hybrid regime. This is evidenced by the prevalence of flawed elections, institutional weakness, and the persistence of elite dominance.

Carothers' emphasis on structural impediments, including corruption and a nascent civil society, resonates with Nigeria's democratic stagnation. This theoretical framework thus provides a valuable lens through which to examine the complexities of democratic transition in Nigeria.

Justification for Democracy

At the end of World War II, a cold war ensued between the Eastern and Western blocs of the world, led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the East and the United States of America (USA) in the West.

They argued over the best form of government and ideology to govern mankind. The West believed in the liberal or capitalist ideology economically, while the East believed in the Marxist scientific Socialist ideology. The West believed in democracy while the East believed in Dictatorship. This conflict continued from 1945 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Following the collapse, the West saw it as a victory of democracy and liberalism over dictatorship and socialism. Fukuyama (1989) and Fukuyama (1992) argued that the collapse of the Soviet Union showed the triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism over other competing ideologies such as communism, socialism, fascism, monarchism and others. He also argued that market-oriented economics and Western liberal democracy have risen to represent the pinnacle of human political and economic organisation and are going to universalise. He also argued that humanity had reached the end of its ideological evolution, with liberal democracy being its final form.

Although Fukuyama's arguments have been criticised, especially by Huntington (1996), who argued that cultural and religious conflicts, rather than liberal democracy, would shape the future, his arguments have fuelled belief in liberal democracy. Fukuyama's arguments fuelled the universal propagation of democracy not only by individuals and civil society organisations but Western governments as well. Since 1989, Western governments, aided by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Western governments have used both persuasion and force to enthrone supposedly democratic governments across the World, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They have openly and covertly funded rebellions and coups against governments they consider dictatorial to enthrone democracy.

Also, IFIs have also been involved in propagating democracy across the world. Even though they do not openly use force, they go to economically struggling states and advise

them to adopt structural adjustments before accessing any form of assistance. The structural adjustments are designed to enthrone Western liberal democracy, which favours capitalism. Without such adjustments, such countries do not get assistance from these IFIs. Nigeria became one of the countries that bought into this argument and adopted democracy in 1999.

Proponents of democracy also propagate it as the only path to development in modern times. Although Fukuyama recanted some of his arguments, he still believes democracy represents the pinnacle of political development. In his latter books, 2011 and 2014, he argued that the pinnacle of political development is demonstrated by a tripartite balance of the state, the rule of law, and accountability, as seen in Denmark. He believes development occurs when the state acquires a life of its own, far from being the patrimony of a monarch. Also, every citizen is subject to the rule of law under a state. Importantly, all citizens under the rule of law in a state should be accountable to the entirety of the state. Accountability in this case comes in the form of democracy, where a political leader is subjected to periodic elections where s/he will give account and get feedback in the process of the campaign and the ballot. He also gives an account to different institutional mechanisms that are designed to check official excesses.

Fukuyama (2011) believes that these three must exist in an equilibrium for politics to work efficiently. He believes that Denmark is one place where this has occurred. However, not all states have an equilibrium of the three. There are states where one or two are stronger than the other. In the United States, for example, accountability is too strong that it weakens the state. The quest for accountability created too many checks that limit the state's ability to perform. The problem there is that a chief executive cannot work as fast as s/he needs to because they need several layers of approvals that may be excessively scrutinised, leading to delays. This

is one of the problems with democracy. The advantage of this system is that the excesses of chief executives are easily checked.

In China, on the other hand, the state is too strong. There are fewer layers of approvals, so a chief executive can work faster. What a chief executive may get done within 24 hours in China may take two months of debates in the US. The system in China is only good when there's a benevolent dictator. The problem with a very strong and dictatorial state is what he calls 'the bad emperor problem'. If a strong state like China produces a bad emperor, removing him from power will be a herculean task.

What countries gain from democracy is the ability to regulate the excesses of chief executives. This is done through elections and legislative scrutiny. He argues that while a good dictatorship like the one currently in China may achieve more in terms of development, the cost of having a bad emperor makes dictatorship unattractive. The best of a democracy may not achieve as much as a good dictatorship, but the worst of a democracy can never be as bad as the worst dictatorship because there are institutional mechanisms in place that ensure things never get bad beyond a certain level. The good of democracy is seen in the long term with incremental success over time. Democracy is more predictable and always works for the better in the long run.

It is against arguments like this that more nations, including Nigeria, have democratised since World War II. It is, however, clear that not all nations have developed significantly as a result of adopting democracy. Some seem to be doing worse while others are developing. Why do some nations develop after adopting democracy but not others? There are peculiarities about countries that make democracy work in them or not. Nigeria is one of such countries where democracy has not led to an enamoured transformation, especially in the twenty-first century. The popular participation that was expected in Nigeria never saw the light of day as voter turnout

declined steadily, especially in presidential elections. While the country returned to democracy in 1999, voter turnout peaked in 2003 and has since gradually decreased. Turnout was 52.3% in the 1999 presidential election, 69.1% in 2003, and 57.5% in 2007. The 2011 election saw a drop to 53.7%, while the 2015 election saw a drop to 43.7% (Hamalai, Egwu, and Omotola, 2017). The turnout in the 2019 election was 34.75% (YIAGA Africa, 2022). The presidential election of 2023 had the lowest turnout, at 26.72% (Amata, 2023). GDP/capita has not tremendously increased compared to other countries in the same space of time, such as China, India, and the United Arab Emirates, among many. According to the IMF WEO in StatiSense (2025), the GDP per capita under successive presidents since 1999 was as follows: Obasanjo in 1999: \$481.95 = ₦44,505; Obasanjo in 2007: \$1,790 = ₦223,055; Yar'Adua in 2007: \$1,790 = ₦223,055; Yar'Adua in 2010: \$2,330 = ₦346,734; Jonathan in 2010: \$2,330 = ₦346,734; Jonathan in 2015: \$2,720 = ₦689,450; Buhari in 2015: \$2,720 = ₦689,450; Buhari in 2023: \$1,640 = ₦1,060,129; Tinubu in 2023: \$1,640 = ₦1,060,129; Tinubu in 2025*: \$807 = ₦1,236,324. This shows that although GDP per capita rose under democratic rule, the increase was not significant, peaking in 2015 and declining ever since. This and many more have made Nigerians disillusioned with democracy, leading to apathy. Things got so bad to the extent that when coups broke out in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Gabon, many Nigerians openly prayed for it to happen in Nigeria as well. Why did democracy not work in Nigeria or produce the type of society that was envisioned? The next segment will delve into that.

Why Democracy is not Producing Favourable Outcomes in Nigeria

As stated earlier, Nigeria's experience with democracy since 1999 has not been very productive. Even though a number of achievements have been recorded, the

general transformation expected is far from reality. This was occasioned by the reasons to be discussed below.

Poor Industrial Development

The modern economy that powers the capitalist liberal democracy was built on the back of manufacturing. Manufacturing is the process of creating goods from raw materials that are required in contemporary life. Manufacture is derived from the Latin words manus (hand) and facere (to make). Originally, manufacturing was done by hand, but most contemporary manufacturing operations are highly mechanised and automated (Brookstein, 2009). Manufacturing industries are described as the backbone of development in general and economic development in particular because they help modernise agriculture and reduce people's heavy reliance on agriculture by providing employment in secondary and tertiary sectors. Manufacturing sectors transform raw materials into finished goods. The finished products are produced using machinery or labour. The development of manufacturing sectors measures the country's economic dominance and standing. Industrial development is a critical precursor to the abolition of poverty and unemployment in a nation. Establishing industries in 'tribal' and other 'backward' regions is critical to reducing regional disparities (Ananyasaikiintern, 2023).

Almost all production involves three major processes: assembly, extraction, and alteration. The combination of components to create a product is known as an assembly. An aircraft, for example, is assembled when the manufacturer assembles the engines, wings, and fuselage. Extraction is the removal of one or more components from basic materials, such as gasoline from crude oil. Alteration is the process of modifying or shaping raw materials into a finished product, such as sawing trees into lumber (Brookstein, 2009). Manufacturing is largely responsible for creating the modern working class, increased productivity, extensive specialisation, and

extensive urbanisation (Nduonofit & Emina, 2022).

According to Marxian thinking, the capacity to produce wealth is greatly enhanced by the growth of industrialisation. In his view, it creates different kinds of values, especially use value and exchange value. Use value is the extent to which a phenomenon goes in satisfying human needs, wants, and desires. While exchange value is the value a phenomenon exchanges for, in other words, the price of a phenomenon. Wealth is created when humans are able to create use value out of raw materials that hitherto had little or no exchange value. With the creation of use value, they are commoditised or infused with an exchange value, which, when sold brings wealth. The more the industries in a polity, the greater the capacity to create use value, hence wealth. This can serve as the channel for wealth creation and distribution. Upon Nigeria's return to democracy, intensive efforts were not made to industrialise the country as way to create and distribute more wealth. Rather, the country maintained the same oil-driven rentier economy it inherited from the military. The military left the oil and gas industry as the only viable industry in the country and as a rentier state, the Nigerian state only served the function of collecting and distributing oil rent. This was not changed by the successive democratic regimes (Agwadu, 2020).

As a result of the maintenance of the rentier economy inherited from the military, the surest way out of poverty in Nigeria was access to state power. This made contestations for state power fierce, with the possibility of a zero-sum outcome where winners get access to tremendous wealth and the losers suffer tremendous economic losses unless they joined the party in power. Even with that, the wealth circles only within a small elite circle, thereby eroding the chance of Nigerians to see the real economic transformation and escape from the wealth that democracy had promised them. There are few entrepreneurial opportunities and high

unemployment, as the state alone is not capable of employing all eligible citizens without a heavy diversification of the economy.

The result of this is the rise of extreme poverty in Nigeria. Pulse Report 2025, World Bank in StatiSense (2025) reported that in 2024, the number of people living in extreme poverty globally was 695 million. Sub-Saharan Africa has 556 million of them, while The Rest of the World has the remaining 139 million. They also reported that 50% of Sub-Saharan Africa's poor reside in 4 countries: Nigeria, 106 million (19%); Congo DR, 78 million (14%); Ethiopia, 50 million (9%), and Sudan, 33 million (6%). This shows Nigeria has the highest amount of poor people in the world. Even though the constitution which returned the country to democracy made the welfare of citizens a major objective of the state. A wide range of socio-economic goals are covered in Chapter II, including national ethics, the mass media's responsibility, economic policy, political goals, social goals, foreign policy, educational goals, environmental goals, directives on Nigerian culture, and citizen duties.

Economic Goals: The government should focus its policies on guaranteeing a decent standard of life for all Nigerians and efficient management of the country's resources.

Educational Goals: Free elementary, secondary, and university education are among the equitable and sufficient educational opportunities that the government will work to offer at all levels.

Social Goals: The government should focus its policies on guaranteeing social fairness and the absence of discrimination against any Nigerian.

Foreign Policy Goals: The government should focus its efforts on advancing world peace and cooperation.

However, these were made non-justiciable so that when a government does not provide them, it cannot be sued. This has failed to compel the government to work towards providing a decent life for Nigerians.

Poor National Linchpin

Democracy is built on the foundation of popular participation; however, this participation is driven towards certain national aspirations that serve as the linchpin driving political engagement. This point of gravitation cuts across ethnicity, religion, race, and other heterogeneous elements to form a national identity and aspiration. In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, this was not achieved. Starting from the point of transition, the individual chosen to be president in 1999 was perceived as a gesture of compensation to the Yoruba nation for the loss it suffered following the annulment of the June 12, 1993, election, which one of their own was presumed to have won. The fight for the return to democracy in the 1990s was itself dominated by the Yoruba people.

The party that took over from the military, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), also had zoning as part of its constitution. Since then, political parties have largely mobilised support through the use of suitable identities, whether ethnic, regional, or religious. The result has been the inability of the country to engender national cohesion. Elections, appointments, and even the siting of capital projects are assessed through the lens of ethnic or religious balancing. When General Muhammadu Buhari was president, he was accused of making lopsided appointments that favoured individuals from his region and, specifically, his religion. Agwadu (2024) argued that this perception is one of the major forces that gave the secessionist movement in the country's Southeast region its popularity and traction. Now that Senator Bola Tinubu is president, he is also being accused of making lopsided appointments that favour only his ethnic group. One of the major persons accusing him is Senator Ali Ndume from Borno State. These kinds of accusations are ubiquitous in the country's democracy. The challenge with this is that it creates a difficult atmosphere for building a national aspiration upon which politicking is done. There is hardly a comprehensive idea about the type of nation

Nigeria aspires to be and the type of political leaders that may drive the country there. In effect, it is difficult to find a point of convergence where citizens may vote for a leader for the sole purpose of actualisation. The major political activities are centred around different identities standing guard to ensure they are not outdone in the sharing of the national cake. With this development, it is difficult for Nigeria to build a great country in this democratic dispensation.

Inability to Check Executive Excesses

As stated earlier, Fukuyama (2011) argued that democracy is commendable because it has mechanisms for checking executive excesses and general abuse of state power. This is a strong argument in favour of democracy, and this check is carried out by both state institutions and civil society organisations. Some of the institutions that check executive excesses include the legislature, the judiciary, political parties, and the law enforcement arms of the executive, which may include the police, the military, and anti-graft agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in Nigeria. Electoral management bodies also play this role by regulating political parties and ensuring that laws govern how people enter and exit political offices. As democracy performs poorly in Nigeria, with Chief Executives excessively abusing power, it is pertinent to study how these institutions have failed in checking executive excesses.

The Legislature

One of the major differences between a democracy and a military government is the existence of the legislature. In a military government, the executive and the judiciary exist, but not the legislature. The legislature exists to make laws that guide the executive through lawmaking. They also perform oversight functions to ensure the executive works within the law. However, in Nigeria, the

legislature has moved further away from this over time. At the beginning of the democratic dispensation, the relationship between the executive and the legislature was very turbulent (Nwanegbo, Odigbo, & Namo). The legislature made the passage of bills, especially budgets, difficult for the executive. Okonjo-Iweala, the Minister of Finance in 2003, said they overcame this impasse by creating the constituency project, where legislators received some budgetary allocation to execute capital projects in their respective constituencies (Okonjo-Iweala, 2018).

Since then, the legislative bodies across the country have lost their ability to check the executive. The chief executive now openly decides the leadership of legislative bodies so that they produce leaders that do their bidding. President Buhari actively worked towards ensuring that Senator Ahmad Lawan emerged as the Senate President in 2019 and Rt. Honourable Femi Gbajabiamila as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The National Assembly they led was described by many as a rubber stamp. This was also replicated at the state level by governors. In 2023, President Bola Tinubu also actively and openly supported the emergence of Senator Godswill Akpabio as the Senate President and Rt. Honourable Tajudeen Abbas as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. They are today described as even more of a rubber stamp than the previous National Assembly.

The implication of this is that the executive gets away with terrible acts and abuse of power. Members of the National Assembly are sometimes seen identifying with President Tinubu, vowing to support anything he does. Some even dress like him and wear his signature cap to the National Assembly. Dele Momodu once commented that National Assembly members were behaving as if the National Assembly is a branch of the executive rather than an arm of its own. One of the worst things they did recently in support of the executive's abuse of power is the support for the state of emergency declared in Rivers State on 18th March 2024 would be wrong since the

date provided March 18, 2025, seems to be in the future from the current year 2024 isn't mentioned in the prompt but assuming the date is correct and the prompt is being written in 2024. However one of the worst things they did recently in support of the executive abuse of power is the support for the state of emergency declared in Rivers State on 18th March 2025. The president did not only declare a state of emergency in the state, he also suspended the governor and the state assembly. The 1999 constitution is very clear about how governors and state assemblies come into or go out of power; the president is in no way empowered to send either of them out of office. The National Assembly did not only step in to support the president in this unconstitutional act, they bent the rules to support him. The law makes it clear that a state of emergency must be supported by nothing less than 2/3 of all National Assembly members; the National Assembly under Akpabio used voice votes, which cannot really define the number of legislators that voted for the state of emergency. The legislators cosy up to the executive to get some favour or other. They are mostly driven by personal interests rather than the need to check the executive, so the executive is left to enjoy powers almost as limitless as those of the military. Opposition members of legislators tend to defect more to the party of the chief executive to be in bed with them rather than check them.

The Judiciary

The judiciary exists to interpret the law to ensure that all political actions comply with the law. A famous legal maxim attributable to Lord Hewart CJ says, "Justice must not only be done, but it must be seen to be done" (Oakes & Davies, 2016). The judiciary, just like the legislature, is no longer seen as a check on the executive. This is because the leaders of the judiciary are nominated by the executive, and their decisions are seen to favour the executive more. Lately, the phrase "go to court" has become famous among chief executives and people in positions of

authority. Whenever they appear to either rig elections or forcefully deny underdogs of their properties or rights, they are not frightened by the possibility of a court stopping them; rather, they take what they can by force and even tell the victim to go to court, because they are sure of getting the court on their side, no matter how weak their case may be.

The courts have finality in their pronouncements. Lately, we have seen incidents, especially on electoral matters, where the losing party believes the courts have cheated them. There are cases where the courts have overturned electoral victories by opposition parties in favour of parties in power. Also, many rigged elections have been seen to enjoy the official endorsement of courts. Furthermore, some courts have become markets where desperate politicians go to obtain different forms of court orders to stop one arm of a political institution from functioning or to stop disciplinary action against them. The judiciary is seldom performing the function it needs to perform to regulate the political system and ensure that the best of it is obtained.

Political Parties

The 1999 constitution requires people seeking political office to be sponsored by political parties. Political parties sponsor candidates to implement their preferred policies and programmes. This means that the job of the political party does not stop at winning elections; it is expected to check the persons it sponsored to power to implement its policies and programmes and to also market the party. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) regulates political parties, and they are in turn expected to regulate their members in power.

Political parties have their leadership structures with all members subject to them. However, since 1999, an anomaly has emerged where candidates in power often become more powerful than their parties. Positions such as party leaders have emerged out of thin air. All parties have their National Chairmen,

state chairmen, local government chairmen, and ward leaders; however, the new anomaly creates the position of party leader, which is not in the constitution. This position is usually reserved for the chief executives or the last chief executive from the party. At the national level, parties in power see the president as the national leader of their parties, and parties with former presidents see the last president on their platform as the national leader. Parties with neither of the two see their last presidential candidate as the national leader. At the state level, the same is applicable with governors, former governors, and gubernatorial candidates or ministers.

These party leaders assume positions higher than party chairmen and dictate what is done in the parties. Party leaders handpick party officials and candidates, allowing them to pick people subject to them. Political parties hardly discipline their erring members, especially those who do not stick to the party's programmes or adhere to democratic ethos. One of the reasons why this anomaly of party leadership emanated is because of party funding. Political parties have different sources of funds, but one of the most important sources is levies from party officeholders. In the PDP, for example, public officeholders pay a certain percentage of their income to the party. In all three tiers of government, elected legislators, chief executives, and appointed public officers and ambassadors pay 5% of their annual basic salary to the party. Board chairmen at the federal level pay 5% of their basic allowances or remuneration (Nwanegbo & Anekwe-Chive, 2014). The higher the office a person holds, the more they fund the party. In every state, the office of the governor pays the highest because they receive the highest salary. The same applies to the president and local government chairmen. This is why party chairmen surrender control to them because, without them, the party's funds would be substantially lower. The contribution of chief executives is particularly significant because they control all their appointees, who at the

federal level must come from all states and at the state level must come from all local governments. If party executives try to check chief executives, they may cause more harm to their parties because the chief executive, like a governor, may defect to another party along with all their appointees, thereby reducing the party's funding substantially.

Anti-Graft Agencies

Anti-graft agencies are also one of the institutions that are meant to regulate how public funds are managed or spent by ensuring that funds are used as stipulated by the law. These agencies check the spending of public officials and arrest and institute cases against them once corrupt practices are identified. Some of them were created out of the police or independently to allow them to focus on that task. However, their presence has failed to dramatically reduce corruption. They are perceived as tools that the parties in power use to intimidate viable members of opposition parties. Most of their arrests do not end in successful prosecutions but serve as a tool for media trial where oppositions are badmouthed to reduce the opposition. The result of this is that several opposition figures defect to the ruling parties to either avoid public harassment or enjoy impunity by evading punishment for mismanaging public funds. As the National Chairman of the ruling APC, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole once said that politicians would have their sins forgiven once they joined the APC (Oshiomhole, 2019). As a result of this, anti-graft agencies are not minimising corruption as they should, which is supposed to be a strength of democracy.

Elections

One of the major ways democratic systems regulate politics is through elections. A significant advantage of democracy over military rule is that people have a chance to select the types of leaders they want. Additionally, when a leader underperforms and the people no longer want them, they can vote them out of power. In the case of

Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the credibility of elections is continuously doubted. The majority of elections go through litigation, where other candidates contest the outcomes. Since 2003, the only presidential election that did not face a legal challenge was the 2015 presidential election. Increasingly, apathy characterises Nigerian elections, where a smaller and smaller percentage of Nigerians vote for leaders. This is partly because millions of people no longer believe that their votes count, so they do not bother to cast their votes. Agwadu, Namo, and Amakoromo (2024a) argued that in the 2023 presidential election, 64% of voters voted against the eventual winner of the election. This came from summing up all the votes garnered by opposition candidates. This clearly shows that the majority of Nigerians did not want them to be president, but they are. More worrisome is that they were voted in by only 8.9% of eligible voters.

Several elections conducted by INEC have been overturned by courts, and many more that were not overturned left the losing parties with the bitter feeling that they were rigged. Elections in the Fourth Republic are failing to produce the type of leaders that Nigerians want, making the experience similar to military governments. Democracy as practised in Nigeria's Fourth Republic is not so different from the military government that imposes leaders on people; a far bigger problem is that it is expensive and costs the country a lot. A lot is spent on conducting elections that do not produce favourable outcomes. In military coups, nothing is spent on the conduct of elections, but in democracy, billions are spent, yet the outcomes are similar. Apart from the money spent on election materials, personnel, and logistics, money is also spent on buying votes and bribing election officials, agents of opposition parties, and security forces. Political parties also waste money on campaigns and logistics. Yet, the outcomes are hardly acceptable. Furthermore, several elections have been overturned for non-compliance with electoral laws; however, no

electoral officer has ever been punished for messing with an election. Once the court procedures are over, the case ends with no punishments that could deter future election manipulators.

Ideological Homogenisation

Multiparty democracy offers citizens the opportunity to choose between different political options. These options are usually embedded in party ideologies. Ideologies offer mental images of what a society should be or how it should be structured. Ideologies come about when these ideas are believed by a set of people who use them to try to build the kind of society they envision. These ideologies often contest with other alternative ideologies for the soul of a political system (Agwadu, 2023).

The problem with democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic is that the ideological divides between political parties have blurred over time. At the beginning of the Fourth Republic, some parties exhibited enough differences to fit into the left and right divides of the political spectrum, with the left favouring more state presence in the economy and the right favouring less state presence in the economy. Over time, the parties have homogenised, with left-wing parties drifting towards the right. With the exception of the Social Democratic Party, all major parties in Nigeria campaigned on implementing right-wing neoliberal policies such as privatisation, commercialisation, and austerity measures like fuel subsidy removal. This even included the candidate of the Labour Party, which is a known socialist party. In the last presidential election, the manifestoes of all major political parties looked almost identical, with little difference in language (Agwadu, 2023).

Although citizens clamour for better elections to gain the ability to vote in and out leaders of their choice, that capacity in Nigeria is diminished by the ideological homogenisation of political parties. Even if citizens' votes were to count, the options they have are driven by the same ideology and

mindset, and although different people may be voted for, the policies and programmes remain the same. Agwadu, Namo, & Amakoromo (2024b) argued that neoliberal policies propagated by the Nigerian political class only favour a few at the top. They destroy the middle class, make upward class mobility difficult, and deepen inequality. They make it possible for a few people to make stupendous wealth while the majority wallow in poverty. The general ideology that Nigerian political parties are adopting cannot engender the kind of economic prosperity that Nigerians hoped to get by adopting democracy.

Politicians' Insulation from Bad Decisions

One of the ways leaders are checked in democracies is by making them live with the impacts of their decisions. Nigerian political leaders have managed to insulate themselves from the effects of their bad decisions, so that they are not compelled by their living conditions to make things better for everyone else. When Nigerian public services such as education, healthcare, and electricity supply fail to serve the public interest, political leaders in charge escape that consequence by either patronising private sector providers for better services or going abroad to get better services for themselves, and thus feel no need to fix Nigeria. It is no news that President Buhari patronised hospitals in the United Kingdom for his treatments, President Tinubu patronised hospitals in France, and President Yar'Adua died in a Saudi Arabian hospital. No leader from these countries has sought such services from Nigeria. Additionally, many politicians send their children to school abroad or patronise expensive private schools while allowing the schools in Nigeria to decay. One of the most recent cases of Nigerian politicians immunising themselves from the consequences of their bad decisions is the proposal by the Aso Rock Presidential Villa to spend ten billion Naira to fix solar electricity in the villa, allowing Nigerians to suffer electricity price hikes as a result of their austerity

measures in the power sector (Sahara Reporters, 2025).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria adopted democracy with the hopes of transforming its society; however, this did not materialise due to certain realities in the country, including poor industrialisation, poor industrial development, a weak national framework, inability to check executive excesses, ideological homogenisation, and politicians' insulation from the consequences of their bad decisions. This study concludes that democracy cannot achieve effective results in Nigeria as long as these problems remain unsolved.

Following the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. A massive industrialisation of Nigeria to produce and distribute more wealth, thereby reducing reliance on the state alone.
2. Developing a national aspiration to drive Nigerians towards a unified direction, instead of the identity fragmentation that disperses political efforts.
3. Strengthening the mechanisms for checking executive excesses to reduce the current level of rascality. Measures such as empowering legislators to check the executive, public funding of political parties, and judicial independence should be pursued vigorously.
4. Emphasising ideological heterogeneity to widen the democratic options for Nigerians. A law should be enacted to compel parties to demonstrate their ideological differences from existing parties before registration.
5. Compelling political leaders by law to utilise public services. Laws should be put in place to prevent politicians from sending their children to private schools or foreign schools. Additionally, politicians should be required to patronise only Nigerian public hospitals and other public services, thereby incentivising them to improve the country's infrastructure.

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IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD IN OKE-OGUN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Climate change has intensified socio-economic vulnerabilities worldwide, with rural women in Oke-Ogun, Oyo State, Nigeria, facing disproportionate challenges in their struggle for survival. This study explores the impact of climate change on women's livelihoods, food security, health, and access to resources, like water, in the region. The research is grounded in the feminist political ecology theory, which highlights the intersections between gender, power, and environmental change. Using a mixed-method approach, a survey of 100 women farmers was conducted, followed by in-depth interviews with 30 women and 10 key informants. The research highlights the ways in which erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts and rising temperatures have exacerbated poverty, reduced agricultural productivity, and increased migration pressures. As staple crops fail due to unpredictable weather conditions, women are often forced to seek alternative, yet precarious, means of sustenance, further entrenching cycles of poverty. Additionally, the study examines the significant burden of water scarcity, where women, after exhaustive farm work, are compelled to walk long distances to fetch water for domestic use, further straining their health and time resources. Findings reveal that women, who play crucial roles in farming and household sustenance, are particularly affected due to limited adaptive capacity, socio-cultural constraints, and inadequate governmental support. Concluding, the study advocates for gender-sensitive climate policies, improved access to agricultural education, and financial empowerment programs to enhance resilience. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensuring sustainable development and gender equity in climate adaptation strategies.

Keywords: Climate change, women's livelihood, agricultural education, Oke-Ogun, Nigeria

Introduction

Disaster is defined as a "serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic, or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources, thus necessitating the assistance of external support." Empirical evidence from different heterogeneous ecologies and social systems suggests that women are more affected or made more vulnerable by environmental degradation and the impacts of climate change. The prevalence of droughts, melting of glaciers, and Arctic ice globally, climate change is affecting the poor, and women are concentrated in these groups.

Females represent the majority of the world's poor due to their lack of access to resources, including credit and land, which results in heavy workloads and low income and food security.

Therefore, it is essential to understand the influence of climate change and the growing disaster period on the daily realities of women. Underlying the "feminization of poverty" to a large extent is the discrimination of women in every sphere of life. Women are often made more vulnerable than their male counterparts due to gender-based segregation of tasks and responsibilities. Many regions in developing countries of Asia and Africa are highly sensitive to changing climate, and their normal cycle

across time and space is being individually affected. Consequently, the reproductive role of women in their private life is inextricably linked to their public role. These are intrinsically coupled to the domestic needs and basic food security of communities that sustain life. Under the section that follows, the legal and policy context to climate change, the possible impacts of climate change or global warming on women, along with possible policy mechanisms to ameliorate the situation, are discussed. In the final section, suggestions for a gender-sensitive climate and women's rights agenda have been forwarded. Climate change is increasingly emerging as a major issue affecting the global sphere, either directly through environmental degradation or indirectly through political instability and terrorism. The phenomenon has become global and long-term, affecting every individual on our planet in some way. The far-reaching impacts of climate change have been studied extensively and shown to be especially detrimental for the weakest members of society around the world.

In many geographical and social contexts, women are the poorest of the poor. Women's poverty is compounded by the fact that they are legally marginalized and oppressed due to male dominance over economic resources. As a result of the polarization of roles and responsibilities, patriarchal culture has effectively presented women with a multitude of challenges. These challenges deepen women's most difficult vulnerabilities to environmental crises. Although the majority of scientific literature and case studies have confirmed the gendered impacts of climate change policies and practices, very little gender-disaggregated data are available. Estimates suggest that about 70% of the world's poor are women, and poverty is increasing due to the ways in which women are most affected by climate change rather than men. Over 55% of the world's women are affected by climate change due to global warming and weather. This paper looks at the very real impacts of gender-based climate

change on women in other socio-economic, cultural, regional, and political contexts.

This study focuses on examining the impact of climate change on the livelihoods of women farmers in the Oke Ogun area of Oyo State, Nigeria, with particular attention to three agrarian towns: Iseyin, Saki, and Igboho. The study specifically investigates how shifting climatic conditions, such as erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged dry seasons, and increased environmental degradation, affect agricultural productivity, food security, and income-generating activities among women. The study is geographically limited to the three selected towns due to their high dependence on rain-fed agriculture and their vulnerability to climate variability. Within this context, the study targets women farmers, recognizing their critical but often underrepresented role in rural agriculture and community sustainability.

Conceptualizing Climate Change and Women's Struggles

Climate change refers to the long-term warming of the planet due to an increase in average global temperatures. This warming is primarily caused by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and land-use changes, which release large amounts of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere (IPCC, 2013). Women's struggle for survival is a complex and multifaceted issue that affects millions of women worldwide. This struggle is deeply rooted in societal, economic, and cultural factors that perpetuate inequality, discrimination, and violence against women. This conceptual review aims to provide an overview of the key concepts, theories, and debates surrounding women's struggle for survival.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, with far-reaching consequences for human societies and the environment. While climate change affects everyone, its impacts are not gender-neutral. Women, particularly those in developing

countries, are disproportionately affected by climate change due to their social, economic, and cultural roles. This literature review examines the impact of climate change on women's struggle for survival, with a focus on the intersectionality of climate change, gender, and poverty. Women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to their limited access to resources, education, and decision-making power (IPCC, 2014). Climate-related disasters, such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves, exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities, leaving women more exposed to poverty, hunger, and violence (UN Women, 2015). Climate change affects women's livelihoods in multiple ways. Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns impact agricultural productivity, leading to reduced crop yields and decreased food security (FAO, 2017). Women, who are often responsible for household food production and preparation, bear the brunt of these impacts. Climate-related shocks also affect women's access to paid work, leading to reduced income and increased poverty (ILO, 2019).

Climate change has significant health implications for women, particularly in developing countries. Warmer temperatures increase the spread of diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever, which disproportionately affect women and children (WHO, 2018). Climate-related disasters also lead to increased rates of mental health disorders, such as anxiety and depression, among women (Psychological Science, 2018). Climate change is a significant driver of migration and displacement, particularly for women and children. Rising sea levels, more frequent natural disasters, and decreased agricultural productivity force women to migrate to urban areas or other countries in search of safety and economic opportunities (IOM, 2019). However, women migrants often face increased risks of violence, exploitation, and trafficking (UNHCR, 2019). Climate change has a disproportionate impact on women's struggle for survival, particularly in developing

countries. Women's limited access to resources, education, and decision-making power exacerbates their vulnerability to climate-related shocks. The impacts of climate change on women's livelihoods, health, and migration patterns are far-reaching and devastating. It is essential to recognize the intersectionality of climate change, gender, and poverty and to develop policies and programs that address the specific needs and challenges of women in the face of climate change.

Theoretical Framework

Climate change is one of the most pressing global challenges of our time. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that unchecked climate change could increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, disrupt food systems, and exacerbate poverty and inequality. While climate change affects everyone, it has disproportionate impacts on women, especially those who are poor and living in vulnerable communities. This literature review investigates the intersection of gender and climate change, with a focus on how women's struggle for survival is affected by climate change.

Feminist Political Ecology

Feminist political ecology has emerged as an important theoretical framework for analyzing the relationship between gender and environment. This approach emphasizes that gender shapes the ways in which people use and manage natural resources, and how they are impacted by environmental change. Studies have shown that women's limited access to resources, such as land, water, and forests, increases their vulnerability to climate change. Women's involvement in decision-making processes related to natural resource management has been found to be crucial for developing successful climate adaptation strategies. For example, a study by Chandra and De (2017) found that women's participation in forest management in India

improved their resilience to climate change impacts.

Environmental Injustice Theory

Environmental injustice theory suggests that marginalized communities, including women, are more likely to bear the brunt of environmental threats due to systemic inequalities. Women are often disproportionately affected by climate change because they have less access to resources and education, lower incomes, and are more likely to live in poverty. Climate change exacerbates existing gender inequalities by increasing women's unpaid care work, contributing to food and water shortages, and exacerbating health and safety risks for women. A study by UN Women (2014) found that women in rural communities in Malawi reported increased risks of illness and poor health due to declining water and food security, increased exposure to disease, and reduced access to health care.

Impact of Climate change on Oke Ogun in Oyo State, Nigeria

The Oke Ogun region, located in the northern part of Oyo State, Nigeria, comprises several agrarian towns including Iseyin, Saki, and Igboho. This region lies within the Guinea Savannah ecological zone and is characterized by a tropical wet and dry climate. Over the past few decades, Oke Ogun has been increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with significant consequences for rural livelihoods, particularly for women. The climate in Oke Ogun is marked by distinct wet (April–October) and dry (November–March) seasons, with mean annual rainfall ranging between 1,000 mm and 1,300 mm and average temperatures around 27–30°C (Adefisan et al., 2021). However, in recent years, climatic variability has increased, manifesting in erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged dry spells, and higher incidence of extreme weather events. These changes have direct implications for agricultural productivity, which is the backbone of the region's economy.

Agriculture in Iseyin, Saki, and Igboho is predominantly rain-fed and practiced on a subsistence basis. Women play a crucial role in this economy—engaging in crop farming (cassava, maize, yam), agro-processing, and informal trading (Oladeji & Oladipo, 2020). However, climate change is exacerbating pre-existing gender vulnerabilities. In Iseyin, the decline in rainfall has reduced the availability of water for both domestic use and farming, impacting women who are primarily responsible for water collection and food production. In Saki, increased frequency of droughts has reduced crop yields and livestock productivity, with women farmers reporting more food insecurity and income instability (Akinyele et al., 2022). In Igboho, gully erosion and land degradation—amplified by unsustainable farming practices and deforestation—have led to the loss of arable land, disproportionately affecting women who often lack secure land tenure (Ajani, 2019).

Women in these communities have limited access to climate adaptation resources such as improved seedlings, irrigation technologies, and agricultural extension services. Moreover, socio-cultural norms restrict their participation in formal decision-making processes that influence adaptation strategies at the local level (Nnadi et al., 2018). Despite these constraints, women have adopted informal adaptation mechanisms such as crop diversification, food preservation, and small-scale trading to buffer against climate shocks. However, these measures are often insufficient in the face of intensifying climate risks. The limited capacity of women to cope and adapt is closely tied to structural inequalities in access to education, credit facilities, and land ownership (FAO, 2021). The feminization of poverty in the region is thus both a cause and consequence of climate vulnerability.

Methodology

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. In the first stage, three towns were purposively selected based on their agrarian

nature and vulnerability to climate variability. Within each town, women farmers were identified through local agricultural cooperatives and community leaders. A total of 100 women farmers were randomly selected and surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire covered areas such as farming practices, climate-related challenges, income sources, coping strategies, and access to resources. To complement the survey data, 30 in-depth interviews were conducted with women farmers selected from the survey pool to gain deeper insights into their lived experiences, gender-specific challenges, and indigenous adaptation mechanisms. Additionally, 10 key informant interviews (KIIs) were held with local agricultural officers, traditional leaders, women's group leaders, and NGO representatives. These interviews provided contextual understanding and expert perspectives on gender dynamics, climate change adaptation policies, and institutional support in the area.

Discussion of Findings

Climate Change and Its Disproportionate Impact on Women

Climate change directly impacts the well-being and livelihood of women in several non-quantifiable ways—including cultural, subjective, experiential, and otherwise—that are left out of formalized assessments of the risks of climate change for both women and men. Social and cultural institutions impede the ability of women to maintain control over and access vital resources. Gender roles in different agricultural and human survival processes in many ecosystems are defined by gender divisions of labor and thereby segregate resources among genders. They also preclude or discourage women from participating in decision-making processes at community, regional, and national forums, despite evidence in many contexts that women's participation leads to solutions that are reflective of and responsive to the needs of the people. The differential ability of women

to generate income can further deteriorate their psychological and emotional state as both financial and natural resources, including water, increase in scarcity.

Women in African societies also tend to reprioritize expenses during environmental shocks, essentially choosing to protect their families from exposure to diseases. Some women prioritize their meager finances on school fees first and food second. The convergence of such financial and environmental shocks may have consequences for rural African children, given the devastating impacts on the health of women generally. Furthermore, the social safety net programs in most farming communities are often gender-neutral, which increases the vulnerability of women and their dependent children. It is important to systematically assess the linkages among gender roles, gender assets, and consequences of climate change for affected non-urban, informal sectors. Recent studies highlight the gender dimensions of asset disinvestment, demonstrating that persistent gender-role and asset inequalities and discrimination will thwart domestic and collective climate adaptation efforts.

Increased Vulnerability to Natural Disasters

The impacts of climate change often combine with socio-economic, legal, and cultural factors to disparately increase the vulnerability of some women. Though the impacts will manifest differently in every locale, some factors often present in increasing women's vulnerability during natural disasters include socio-economic status, cultural mitigation capacity or obligations, and legal rights and norms protecting against the psychological or physical effects of a disaster. Often, women's experiences of disasters are notably different and can leave them most vulnerable. For example, during a tsunami, women were five times as likely to die as men. Other case studies also suggest women have higher mortality rates during such disasters. A gender

perspective may reveal that preventing women from using the community communications system might occur where, for example, they are denied access to certain types of information. Indeed, disasters can expose and exacerbate the prevailing inequalities between women and men. A shift in perspective is required to reflect the increasing realization that gender-blind laws and policies can actually work to denaturalize women and girls, creating the illusion of knowledge and respect in practice while interpreting experience according to the perspectives of men and boys—those who are seen as the standard, the norm. The contribution of women to disaster mitigation has been demonstrated, and they are often described as central to community coping strategies in discussions on national disaster management, suggesting that they are somehow superhuman.

At present, women from rural and poor communities have minimal representation at decision-making levels and consequently become subservient to decisions and aid control made by those in authority. Many women are also discouraged or inhibited from participating in training programs, community education, or leadership roles. Even formal involvement in any decision-making discussions may not result in equal control or respect and is often subject to personal reprisals. Women's rights are often dismissed in gender-blind national disaster management frameworks and policies that fail to understand the particular situations and needs of women and girls or acknowledge their capacities—a major obstacle to women's human security. Interventions are often gender-blind, with a one-size-fits-all blanket response.

Loss of Livelihoods and Food Security

Recent studies have argued that climate change could lead to an aggregate increase in food production. One of the main reasons cited for this is that the frequency of extreme climate events will reduce along with the

surface area in agricultural use. Many have claimed that food production could possibly increase because higher carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere would stimulate photosynthesis in plants. Such arguments are bogus, especially in the contemporary global context. This is because climate change is not just about the increase in the average temperature and CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere. Three-quarters of the impacts of climate change are felt through changes in rainfall patterns, which cause drought, floods, and changes in the frequency and/or the distribution of pests and diseases. There are also changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions such as storms and winds, and also the rise in sea levels.

The preceding sections indicate that women are at the center stage when it comes to the provision and management of food supplies essential for human survival. Yet, available evidence shows that they and the children under their responsibility face increased risks of food insecurity and malnutrition in periods of drought, floods, or failure of the rains. Women, the main food and subsistence producers in many parts of developing countries, play particularly important roles in the functioning and resilience of these systems. Yet, with changes in farming patterns, which lead to more involvement of women in cash cropping, they have lost some control over income-generating activities, as a result of the intervention of both governments and global trading systems in the latter. Moreover, as they are not considered important in this area, they tend to regulate and enforce policy, access to capital, or services for men above women. The situation of women in Malawi as learners of new irrigation and farming technologies has been reported. According to the report, female farmers had been left out in the interpretation of new information on what to grow and how. There is a direct relationship between agricultural resources (land in particular) and rural women's livelihoods.

Most of these women produce close to 70% of the food consumed in the home, the market, and used as emergency food when so required.

Women's Adaptive Strategies and Resilience

Women's adaptive strategies are a key area of adaptation research. Women have long been recognized as resourceful innovators in responding to the adverse effects of climate change on the land upon which their subsistence depends. In the United Republic of Tanzania, women affected by drought have reportedly diversified into rain-fed rice and livestock to maintain their livelihood. Where land and water have become more scarce, women have diversified into basket weaving and small storekeeping. The women of La Gonave have been planting trees to combat a degrading environment.

In other parts of the world, women are taking on work and economic opportunities previously seen as male role domains and making them their own. In the American Midwest, local women took over farms when their men went off to fight. Women got involved in non-traditional areas of employment such as engineering and construction, or women became self-sufficient, growing gardens to feed their families. In one part of Sumatra, women have even started to trade offspring, those who cannot house the cattle needed for their income hire out as temporary midwives on nearby islands in return for young breeding females. This illustrates not only the resilience of women in a changing climate but the empowerment of contrarian thinking.

Community-led initiatives or women's group activities show that gender and social equity concerns have already become part of home-grown adaptation developments, not only addressing gender concerns but also child and vulnerable community populations. Induction of early warning relay systems is a familiar field of action for women in the Solomon Islands and women's groups in Vanuatu, often working in collaboration with

the state meteorological service. These experience-based relational networks have proven profound far beyond their originally intended purpose of watching the sea and stars. Traditional knowledge can also show cultures strong mitigation skills. A century ago, Australia placed forbidden knowledge in the wrong hands when a traditional owner's group was responsible for a cool fire program that stretched across two states and escaped into a bushfire – only to have the most catastrophic bushfire season on record a year ago. Other little-known examples of successful man-made fire management exist in countries such as Thailand.

Policy and Advocacy Efforts for Gender-Responsive Climate Action

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action called for increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making, including participation in policy dialogues and setting priorities in the development of climate policies. Since the adoption of the Platform for Action, advocates have used it to strengthen their arguments for gender-responsive climate policy. There are several advocacy frameworks that exist at the international and national levels; below are some highlighted agreements and policies that address gender and climate issues. Some studies have provided evidence to suggest that advocacy by women's organizations for gender-responsive approaches to climate policy is starting to show some results. They provide successful case studies, showcasing good practices in various areas, which suggest that gender-inclusive climate policy is more effective. At their heart, these governance structures provide spaces to create working relationships and partnerships between governments, civil society, and women's organizations at every level to lobby for better, more effective policy and monitoring interventions in the areas that matter to them. Organizations continue to face challenges in advocating for successful strategies institutionalized to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in adaptation and

mitigation interventions. Political commitment and will are required to change the dominant discourse, rethink international development and economic growth, and put mechanisms in place that ensure gender equity. To be transformative, advocacy should be taken to the grassroots level to build resilience and empower women to take ownership of climate policies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Today's climate change poses an acute threat to survival. Women in developed and developing countries – in tropical, subtropical, and temperate zones – have been impacted by natural disasters and changing climatic patterns in different but universally profound ways. There is a critical need for specific attention to the situation of women, both to honor their right to protection and to enable them to protect themselves. There are also many examples of how women are leading and supporting local climate action initiatives. Many women have experience and knowledge of adapting to climate change impacts. Yet there is, as yet, little systematic research on women as experts and climate change educators.

Given the urgency and complexity of the need to act in addressing human-made climate change, it is important to provide suggestions for improving our contribution to the future empowerment of women. The need for action is urgent. There are several lines of research and education that suggest themselves as beneficial for the future rights and roles of women, and hence for alleviating human-made contributions to climate change. One pathway is to embark on engineering and income generation research to support the broad adoption of low-impact agriculture, integrated pest management, safe family planning methods, women's small group-based development programs, and female economic micro-enterprises. This type of research offers the potential to be expanded following successful approaches in climate development and human rights for women.

These are beneficial approaches often perceived to bring benefits to communities as a whole. Clarity as to how and why this is possible can be highlighted through researching and publicizing this work, testing it, improving it, and suggesting its adoption at a range of levels, from the individual level up to international policy reform.

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the nexus between agricultural development and economic growth in Nigeria by employing the ordinary least square (OLS) method. Multiple regression models were explored to measure the relationships. The result showed that a positive relationship exists between agricultural development and economic growth in Nigeria, same also with agricultural development and employment. The null hypotheses of no significant relationship between the variables were all rejected. The researcher concluded that agricultural development has a positive significant effect on Nigeria's economic growth despite the observed neglect of the sector over the years. It recommends improvement in agricultural policies, diversification, agricultural modernization among others to make it more attractive to school leavers, prospective and intending agriculturists.

Keywords: Agriculture, economic growth, diversification, development

Introduction

Agriculture since independence, held the key to Nigeria's rapid economic transformation, poverty alleviation, stable civil and good governance as well as national and food security (Omorogbe Omorogiuwa, 2014). The Nigerian agricultural sector has remained a resilient sustainer of the economy and the Nigerian people in terms of food supply, employment, national income generation and industrialization. By the time Nigeria became politically independent in October 1960, agriculture was the dominant sector of the economy, contributing about 70% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employing about the same percentage of the working population, and accounting for about 90% of foreign earnings and Federal Government revenue (CBN, 2010). The early period of post-independence up until mid-1970s saw a rapid growth of industrial capacity and output, as the contribution of the manufacturing sector to GDP rose from 4.8% to 8.2% (CBN, 2010). This pattern changed when oil suddenly

became of strategic importance to the world economy through its supply-price nexus.

Crude oil was first discovered in commercial quantities in Nigeria in 1956, while actual production started in 1958. It became the dominant resource in the mid-1970s. The massive increase in oil revenue as an aftermath of the Middle-East war of 1973 created unprecedented, unexpected and unplanned wealth for Nigeria, heralding the dramatic shift of policies from a holistic approach to benchmarking. In order to make the business environment conducive for new investments, the government began investing the newfound wealth in socio-economic infrastructure across the country, especially in the urban areas. The service sector as well grew. The relative attractiveness of the urban centers made many able-bodied Nigerians to migrate from the hinterland, abandoning their farmlands for the cities and hoping to partake in the growing and prosperous (oil-driven) urban economy. This created social problems

of congestion, pollution, unemployment and crimes.

A strong agricultural sector, it is increasingly recognized, is essential to economic development both in its own right and to stimulate and support the growth of industry. Economic growth has gone hand in hand with agricultural progress: stagnation in agriculture is the principal explanation for poor economic performance, while rising agricultural productivity has been the most important concomitant of successful industrialization (Ukeje, 1999). The labour-intensive character of the sector reduces its contribution to the GDP. Nevertheless agricultural exports are a major earner of foreign exchange.

Like in most developing countries, agriculture remains the backbone of the Nigerian economy. Typically, it is the largest source of employment; often two thirds or more of the population is dependant for its livelihood on farming. It is a well-known fact that Nigeria possesses comparative advantages in the production of certain foods and other agricultural commodities that can earn foreign exchange for the import of other foods. It has long been recognized that sustained agricultural development requires striking an appropriate balance between investments that are directly productive and investments in infrastructure. The physical isolation of farmers makes them especially vulnerable to the efforts of poor infrastructure service. Much of the high productivity of agriculture in the developed countries is the result of massive farm Investments, over many years, in physical and institutional infrastructure (Manyong, et al. (2003).

Conversely, the low productivity of agriculture in many developing countries reflects, among other things, limited investments in rural roads, water, and electricity. This stems from a concentration of public investment in urban area where the unit cost of providing services is typically less and the logistical problems fewer.

Vogel (1994) examined the strength of agriculture as a factor of growth for 27 countries. He discovered that agriculture through its linkages leads to positive integration of the sector with the broader economy and in all 27 countries, agriculture served as a great source of economic growth in the early stages of development and its significance begins to diminish as the countries started advancing industrially.

Gollin et al (2002) showed the importance of agriculture in the early stages of development. Analyzing data for 62 countries for the period 1960 – 1990, the authors found that growth in agricultural productivity was quantitatively important in understanding growth in GDP per worker. Both the cross-section and Panel data analyses showed that countries experiencing increases in agricultural productivity were able to release labour from agriculture into other sectors of the economy.

Agriculture and Poverty Reduction

Based on 33 household surveys in India from 1957 to 1990, Ravallion and Datt (1996) found that there is a strong evidence that agricultural development causes reduction in poverty in the urban and rural communities. Thorbecke and Jung (1996) using social Accounting Matrix for Indonesia found that the agricultural sector contributes the most to overall poverty reduction.

Using data for 1985 to 1996 for China, Fan et al (2005) estimated an econometric model to compare the relative contributions of rural and urban agricultural growth to poverty reduction in those areas. The authors discovered that higher growth in agriculture reduced both rural and urban poverty. Bourguignon and Morrison (1998), using cross-country regressions for each time period separately and then for the pooled data observed that increasing agricultural productivity was the most effective path for many countries to reduce poverty and inequality.

Agriculture and Nutrition

As Thomas Malthus (1766 –1734) stated that “food is necessary to the existence of man”. An economy cannot develop well if

their populace is starved as the productivity of the labour force will be below optimum.

Period	Indicators			
	Agric GDP as % of total GDP	Index of agric. Production	Agric Exports as % of total exports	Share of agric in total employment
1970	n.a	126.0	72	75
1975	n,a	104.3	6.4	64
1980	34.7	92.5	3.7	60
1985	40.3	104.6	2.3	58
1990	39.0	167.5	2.2	56
1995	38.6	216.8	1.6	55
1996	39.0	224.8	1.3	54
1997	39.4	234.1	1.6	54
1998	40.4	242.4	n.a	53
1999	40.4	252.0	n.a	52

Agriculture makes important contribution to national food security and macroeconomic stability. At the macro level, inadequate and irregular access to food reduces labor productivity and decreases investment in human capital (Bliss and Stern 1978, Strans 1986, Fogel 1994).

Drawing a sample of 97 countries, Vadar (1996) noted that nutritional levels had a large and highly significant impact on economic growth. This finding is consistent with Fogel (1991) report which states that increased calorie intake reduced mortality and raised productivity amongst the working poor during the early stages of Western Europe’s development.

Lastly Yang and Zhu (2004) used growth theory to capture the inter-temporal dynamics of the development process. The authors demonstrate that without agricultural productivity, a traditional economy cannot overcome the fixed supply of natural resources and thus cannot generate sustained economic growth. Regardless of how fast the non-agricultural sector grows,

stagnant agricultural production during the early stages of development prevents the structural

transformation from a traditional to a modern economy.

Emphasizing the importance of agriculture generally, Gunner Myrdal (1977) notes “it is the agricultural sector that battle for long-term economic development.” This assertion has been supported by both historical and contemporary development experience.

In the classical tradition, Ricardo (1777 – 1823) noted that the problem of diminishing returns to agriculture would set a limit to the growth of other sectors of the economy. In the same vain, the validity of Malthusian law of population rests on agricultural stagnation in the face of growing human numbers. As is in many developed countries, the initial developmental push has always been agriculture driven. The Federal Government efforts in ensuring agricultural development have been through many policy programs, which were designed to ensure that the impact of agricultural development is felt in the desired areas of this vast country.

Finally, table 2.2 is the contribution of agriculture to the national economy.

In conclusion, as already pointed out, the main objective of the research is a detailed study of the impact of agricultural

development to economic growth and development.

METHOD OF STUDY

The study will employ the use of ordinary least square (OLS) method of data analysis. The choice of the OLS is guided by the fact that it has optimal properties which include linearity, neutrality, sufficient least variance and mean square error.

SPECIFICATION OF MODEL

The model adopted for this investigation is implicitly stated as follows:

$$ECGT = F(AGD, CFN, INF, RIR) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Equation (i) can be stated in econometric form as:

$$ECGT = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 AGD + \alpha_2 CFN + \alpha_3 INF + \alpha_4 RIR + E \quad (2)$$

$$\alpha_0 > 0, \alpha_1 > 0, \alpha_2 > 0, \alpha_3 > 0 \text{ and } \alpha_4 > 0$$

Where:

ECGT - Economic Growth. AGD - Agricultural Development. CFN - Capital Formation.

INF - Inflation Rate RIR - Real Interest Rate.

E - A Stochastic Variable. E is a variable representing other factors that may determine agricultural output which are not captured in the model: α_0 - Autonomous agricultural outputs.

$\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3, \alpha_4$ - Parameters of the slope.

Model II

$$UMP = F(AGD, CFN, INF) \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

This equation can be stated in econometric form as:

$$UMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AGD + \beta_2 CFN + \beta_3 INF \dots \dots (4)$$

$$\beta_1 < 0; \quad \beta_2 < 0; \quad \beta_3 > 0$$

Where: UMP - Unemployment Rate
AGD - Agricultural Development CFN - Capital Formation

The indirect channel which is exchange rate channel, here, Inflows of foreign direct investment constitute the supply of foreign exchange that tends to meet the domestic demand for foreign exchange in the host country. This will stabilize the exchange rate and promote economic growth in the

economy and hence boost in Agricultural productivity.

Thus, the transmission which is the pass-through effect of foreign direct investment to economic growth to Agriculture via exchange rate is specified as follows:

$$FDI \longrightarrow EXR \longrightarrow GDP \longrightarrow AGR DEV \quad -$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad 5$$

Where FDI is foreign direct investment inflows, EXR is foreign exchange, and GDP is economic growth (proxy by gross domestic product).

Transposing the transmission yields,

$$GDP_t = f(GDP_{t-1}, EXR_{t-1}, FDI_{t-1}, EXR_t, FDI_t) \quad -$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.1)$$

$$EXR_t = f(GDP_{t-1}, EXR_{t-1}, FDI_{t-1}, GDP_t, FDI_t) \quad -$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.2)$$

$$FDI_t = f(GDP_{t-1}, EXR_{t-1}, FDI_{t-1}, GDP_t, EXR_t) \quad -$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.3)$$

Therefore, the exposition of the normalized SVAR (4.39) system of equation yields the following,

$$GDP_t = \alpha_{11}^1 GDP_{t-1} + \alpha_{12}^1 EXR_{t-1} + \alpha_{13}^1 FDI_{t-1} + \alpha_{12}^0 EXR_t + \alpha_{13}^0 FDI_t + \varepsilon_{1t}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.4)$$

$$EXR_t = \alpha_{21}^1 GDP_{t-1} + \alpha_{22}^1 EXR_{t-1} + \alpha_{23}^1 FDI_{t-1} + \alpha_{21}^0 EXR_t + \alpha_{23}^0 FDI_t + \varepsilon_{2t}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.5)$$

$$FDI_t = \alpha_{31}^1 GDP_{t-1} + \alpha_{32}^1 EXR_{t-1} + \alpha_{33}^1 FDI_{t-1} + \alpha_{31}^0 GDP_t + \alpha_{32}^0 EXR_t + \varepsilon_{3t}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.6)$$

Collecting the contemporaneous effects to the Left Hand Side (LHS) becomes,

$$GDP_t - \alpha_{12}^0 EXR_t - \alpha_{13}^0 FDI_t = \alpha_{11}^1 GDP_{t-1} + \alpha_{12}^1 EXR_{t-1} + \alpha_{13}^1 FDI_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{1t}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.7)$$

$$-\alpha_{21}^0 GDP_t + EXR_t - \alpha_{23}^0 FDI_t = \alpha_{21}^1 GDP_{t-1} + \alpha_{22}^1 EXR_{t-1} + \alpha_{23}^1 FDI_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{2t}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.8)$$

$$-\alpha_{31}^0 GDP_t - \alpha_{32}^0 EXR_t + FDI_t = \alpha_{31}^1 GDP_{t-1} + \alpha_{32}^1 EXR_{t-1} + \alpha_{33}^1 FDI_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{3t}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad - \quad \quad \quad (5.9)$$

Expressing equation 4.46 to 4.47 in matrix form

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 - \alpha_{12}^0 & -\alpha_{13}^0 \\ -\alpha_{21}^0 & 1 - \alpha_{23}^0 \\ -\alpha_{31}^0 & -\alpha_{32}^0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} GDP_t \\ EXR_t \\ FDI_t \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \alpha_{11}^1 & \alpha_{12}^1 & \alpha_{13}^1 \\ \alpha_{21}^1 & \alpha_{22}^1 & \alpha_{23}^1 \\ \alpha_{31}^1 & \alpha_{32}^1 & \alpha_{33}^1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} GDP_{t-1} \\ EXR_{t-1} \\ FDI_{t-1} \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_{1t} \\ \varepsilon_{2t} \\ \varepsilon_{3t} \end{bmatrix} \quad - \quad - \quad (6..0)$$

$$\text{Hence, } A_0 Z_t = A_1 Z_{t-1} + \varepsilon_1 \quad (6.1)$$

Where $A_0 = 3 \times 3$ matrix of contemporaneous effects of endogenous parameters

$Z_t = 3 \times 1$ column vector matrix of estimable endogenous variables,

$A_1 = 3 \times 3$ matrix of lagged estimable endogenous variables,

$Z_{t-1} = 3 \times 1$ column vector matrix of lagged estimable endogenous variables, and

$\varepsilon_{1t} = 3 \times 1$ column vector of error term in the system.

The model above is an over-parameterized model, which cannot be estimated using SVAR. However, based on economic theory and institutional knowledge, certain restrictions are imposed on some parameters of the A_0 matrix in order to overcome the problem of identification in SVAR. Following the recursive approach, restrictions were imposed on the upper elements above the matrix diagonal to zero as follows.

$$-\alpha_{12}^0 = -\alpha_{13}^0 = -\alpha_{23}^0 = 0$$

Following the restrictions, the parsimonious form of the SVAR is given as:

$$A_0 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{21}^0 & 1 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{31}^0 & -\alpha_{32}^0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} GDP_t \\ EXR_t \\ FDI_t \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_{1t} \\ \varepsilon_{2t} \\ \varepsilon_{3t} \end{bmatrix} \quad (6.2)$$

Where $\varepsilon_t = \beta \eta_t$, and

$$\beta = \begin{bmatrix} \delta_1^2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \delta_2^2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \delta_3^2 \end{bmatrix} = \text{Unit Variance i.e.,}$$

$$\text{Var}(\eta_t) = 1$$

$$A_0 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{21}^0 & 1 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{31}^0 & -\alpha_{32}^0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} GDP_t \\ EXR_t \\ FDI_t \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \delta_1^2 GDP & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \delta_2^2 EXR & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \delta_3^2 FDI \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mu_t^{GDP} \\ \mu_t^{EXR} \\ \mu_t^{FDI} \end{bmatrix} \dots (6.3)$$

This means that the normalized SVAR of the form $A_0 Z_t = A_1 Z_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$ reduces to $A_0 e_t = \beta \eta_t$. But $\beta \eta_t = \beta \mu_t$ therefore, the baseline for estimable SVAR model can be specified in the reduced form as:

$$A_0 e_t = \beta \mu_t \quad (6.4)$$

Where A_0 = matrix of long-run contemporaneous effects

e_t = column vector matrix of error for the respective variables

β = matrix of structural shocks in the model, and

μ_t = column vector of structural shocks in the model.

Hence, the 'S' matrix is specified as follows:

$$e_t = A_0 \beta \mu_t = \begin{bmatrix} e_t GDP \\ e_t EXR \\ e_t FDI \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{21}^0 & 1 & 0 \\ -\alpha_{31}^0 & -\alpha_{32}^0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mu_t^{GDP} \\ \mu_t^{EXR} \\ \mu_t^{FDI} \end{bmatrix} \quad (6.5)$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

Descriptive Statistics for Model 1

	RGDP	AGD	CFN	INF	RIR
Mean	3.71047	103598.1	2.816000	20.24571	2.816000
Median	4.27927	23328.00	3.300000	12.70000	3.300000
Maximum	33.7357	485244.0	25.30000	72.90000	25.30000
Minimum	-13.12790	203.2000	-43.60000	4.700000	-43.60000
Std. Dev.	7.67305	152295.4	15.37557	17.65382	15.37557
Skewness	1.16356	1.394502	-1.083466	1.461041	-1.083466
Kurtosis	8.55854	3.462522	4.261487	4.104500	4.261487
Jarque-Bera	52.9564	11.65569	9.168458	14.23112	9.168458
Probability	0.00000	0.002944	0.010212	0.000812	0.010212
Sum	129.866	3625934.	98.56000	708.6000	98.56000
Sum Sq. Dev.	2001.77	7.89E+11	8037.873	10596.35	8037.873
Observations	35	35	35	35	35

Source: Eviews 7.0 Output

Measures of central tendency include the mean and median while measures of dispersion include standard deviation and range (maximum-minimum). They are all summarized in the Table above. The test for normality is conducted using skewness, kurtosis and Jarque-Bera. Skewness from the Table above shows two of the series to be

positive and three of the series to be negative. Kurtosis shows only AGD to have satisfied its condition of the expected value of three.

All the probability values for Jarque-Bera test are statistically significant at 1% level of confidence. The data set have thus passed the test for normality easily at 1% level of significance.

Descriptive Statistics for Model 2

	UMP	AGD	CFN	INF
Mean	6.340000	103598.1	2.816000	20.24571
Median	5.300000	23328.00	3.300000	12.70000
Maximum	15.70000	485244.0	25.30000	72.90000
Minimum	4.100000	203.2000	-43.60000	4.700000
Std. Dev.	3.110911	152295.4	15.37557	17.65382
Skewness	1.799292	1.394502	-1.083466	1.461041
Kurtosis	5.647215	3.462522	4.261487	4.104500
Jarque-Bera	29.10476	11.65569	9.168458	14.23112
Probability	0.000000	0.002944	0.010212	0.000812
Sum	221.9000	3625934.	98.56000	708.6000
Sum Sq. Dev.	329.0440	7.89E+11	8037.873	10596.35
Observations	35	35	35	35

Source: Eviews 7.0 Output

Skewness from the Table above shows three of the series to be positive and one of the series to be negative. Kurtosis shows only AGD to have satisfied its condition of the expected value of three. However, all the probability values for Jarque-Bera test are statistically significant at 1% level of confidence. The data set for model 2 have also passed the test for normality easily at 1% level of significance.

OLS Result for Model 1

Dependent Variable: RGDP
Method: Least Squares
Date: 06/03/25 Time: 15:25
Sample: 1990 2024
Included observations: 35

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
AGD	131.1054	18.27040	7.175837	0.0000
CFN	-48659.81	46729.69	-1.041304	0.3058
INF	6979.523	41069.99	0.169942	0.0662
RIR	220.6353	96.81897	2.278843	0.0297
R-squared	0.825980	Mean dependent var		13025934
Adjusted R-squared	0.809140	S.D. dependent var		21434184
S.E. of regression	9364073.	Akaike info criterion		35.04987
Sum squared resid	2.72E+15	Schwarz criterion		35.22762
Log likelihood	-609.3727	Hannan-Quinn criter.		35.11123
Durbin-Watson stat	1.919994			

Source: Eviews 7.0 Output

Table above shows a positive relationship between AGD, INF and RIR and economic growth in Nigeria. AGD is our main variable. It thus implies that increase in agricultural

OLS Result

To estimate the impact of agricultural development on economic growth and employment creation in Nigeria, two separate OLS regression models are used. The result is depicted and explained in the following tables below:

production will result into increase in economic growth and development in Nigeria. All the positive variables are statistically significant at 10% level of confidence.

The R^2 and adjusted R^2 of 82% and 80% all show the robustness of the model. In fact, the model has a good fit. The Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.9 shows little serial autocorrelation but is within an acceptable bound of 2. In summary, the result is quite

good and consistent with a priori theoretical criteria and practical reality in Nigeria.

The result of model 2 contained in Table below where unemployment is presented as a dependent variable exhibit similar trend to model 1 in Table 4.3 above.

OLS Result for Model 2

Dependent Variable: UMP
Method: Least Squares
Date: 06/03/25 Time: 19:03
Sample: 1990 2024
Included observations: 35

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
AGD	2.66E-05	3.77E-06	7.062953	0.0000
CFN	-0.068135	0.043533	-1.565148	0.1274
INF	0.122621	0.023261	5.271580	0.0000
R-squared	-0.607065	Mean dependent var	6.340000	
Adjusted R-squared	-0.582506	S.D. dependent var	3.110911	
S.E. of regression	3.523038	Akaike info criterion	5.438341	
Sum squared resid	397.1774	Schwarz criterion	5.571656	
Log likelihood	-92.17096	Hannan-Quinn criter.	5.484361	
Durbin-Watson stat	1.922936			

Source: Eviews 7.0 Output

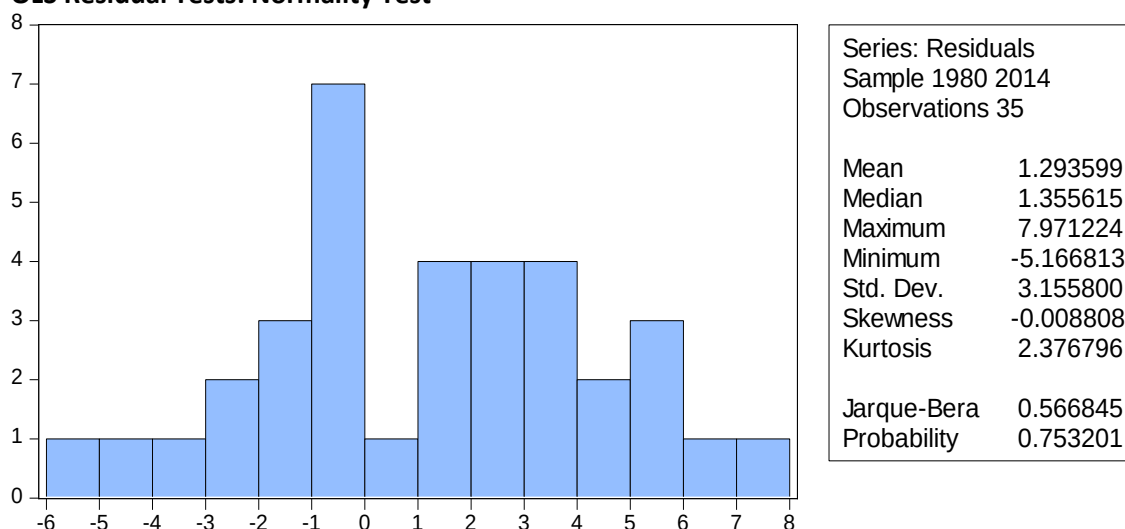
The result shows a positive relationship between AGD, and INF and unemployment in Nigeria. AGD being the target variable, it implies that increase in agricultural production will result into increase in employment

opportunities in Nigeria. All the positive variables are statistically significant at 10% level of confidence. There is a negative and statistically insignificant relationship between fixed capital formation and employment level. The good reason attributable here is the poor

attitude to save and invest in Nigeria which has resulted into poor capital formation for productive activities.

The R^2 and adjusted R^2 of 69% and 58% all show the robustness of the model. In fact, the model has a good fit. The Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.92 shows little serial autocorrelation but is within an acceptable bound of 2. In summary, the result is quite good and consistent with a priori theoretical criteria and practical reality in Nigeria.

OLS Residual Tests: Normality Test



The plot of the distribution indicates a symmetrical bell shaped. The mode has successfully passed the normality test with a negative skewness and peaky distribution. The model has also passed successfully the test for serial autocorrelation at 5% level of significance and hetereskedasticity test at 5% level of significance. Summary of the tests are displayed below with details attached in the appendices.

Autocorrelation Test

Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:

F-statistic	4.718055	Prob. F(2,30)	0.0165
Obs*R-squared	3.769283	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.0519

Hetereskedasticity Test

Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey

F-statistic	0.565351	Prob. F(3,31)	0.0420
Obs*R-squared	1.815566	Prob. Chi-Square(3)	0.0116
Scaled explained SS	1.132863	Prob. Chi-Square(3)	0.0691

Tests for Hypothesis

Some hypothetical statements were made during the preliminary stage of this work. We thus confront these statements with empirical evidence otherwise called hypothesis testing. To do that, we used the OLS result for both model 1 and 2 to test hypothesis 1 and 2 respectively.

Hypothesis 1: H_0 : there is no significant relationship between agricultural development and economic growth in Nigeria.

The OLS result from model 1 shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between agricultural development and economic growth in Nigeria during the period of analysis. We thus reject the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between agricultural development and economic growth in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: H_0 : there is no significant relationship between agricultural development and employment generation in Nigeria.

Again, the OLS regression result from model 2 shows a positive and statistically

significant relationship between agricultural development and employment generation in Nigeria during the period of analysis. We thus reject the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between agricultural development and employment generation in Nigeria.

The discovery of oil in Nigeria no doubt led to the neglect of agricultural sector in Nigeria. In spite of this neglect, the sector still contributes reasonably to economic growth, revenue, export earnings and employment creation. On this premises, the research was undertaken to assess the impact of agricultural development on economic growth and employment creation in Nigeria during the period of 1990 and 2024. Using annual time series data, the study employed an OLS multiple regression models to measure the relationship with some supporting residual tests like normality test, serial correlation test and test for hetereskedasticity. The result shows a positive relationship between agricultural development and economic growth and a positive relationship between agricultural development and employment generation in Nigeria. The two hull hypotheses formulated on this basis of relationship were all rejected.

Conclusion Recommendations

The contributions of agricultural sector to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy shows the sector to be the main stay of the Nigerian economy. Despite the perceived neglect over the years, the sector still holds the potentials for boosting the growth rate of the Nigerian economy.

- i. Agricultural development should remain the main policy thrust of every government in Nigeria. The policy should be well implemented to ensure that agriculture occupy its place in Nigeria's development agenda.
- ii. There is every need to diversify and modernized agriculture to make it more encouraging to woo participation from the

younger generation and even the elite class who prefers white collar jobs.

- iii. Soft loans at affordable interest rate and farm inputs like hybrid seeds and fertilizer should be provided by the government and should be made to reach the farmers during farming season to encourage agricultural production in Nigeria.
- iv. Farmers on their part should form cooperative societies to ease access to funds from financial institutions. This will also serve as collateral security and would ease access to farm capital.
- v. The rate of capital formation should be improved. At present, this seems to have a negative relationship with economic growth. As such, if improved, growth can also be improved.

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APPRAISING EXCESS WORK LOAD AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF NURSES WORKING IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study appraised the psychological wellbeing of Nurses working in public hospitals in Benue State Nigeria. The participants of the study comprised 286 nurses which included 122 (42.7%) males and 164 (57.3%) females with mean age of 44.4%. A cross sectional survey design was used for the study. Participants for the study are from the 3 geopolitical zones were selected using cluster and purposive sampling techniques. The hospitals had a population of 1,120 nurses when the data were collected. To achieve the study objectives standardized instruments was used for data collection. Carol Ryff psychological wellbeing scale. The study tested one hypothesis across six dimensions of Ryffs psychological wellbeing at a significant level of 0.05 using multiple regression. The result of the finding indicated that there was significant negative influence of stress on psychological wellbeing of nurses in public hospital in Benue State ($\beta = -.130$, $t = 2.087$, $p < .05$), implying that increase score on stress can result to decreased psychological wellbeing of nurses. With this result, hypothesis one was accepted. However, an exploration of stress on the dimensions of psychological wellbeing revealed that only the autonomy dimension ($\beta = .352$, $t = 6.101$, $p < .01$) Based on this finding, it was recommended that there is need for the government to employ the services of clinical psychologist in public hospitals to periodically access, diagnose and treat nurses with psychological issues so as to ameliorate the negative effects on their psychological wellbeing and train them on both social and occupational norm.

Keywords: Stress, psychological wellbeing, Nurses, Public Hospital, Benue State

Introduction

Psychological wellbeing is an important concept among nurses who work in the hospitals and other health institutions to alleviate the sufferings of the patients with medical conditions. A person who has a high degree of psychological wellbeing, excels in all

fields, carries higher levels of satisfaction and self-esteem and is able to think about himself or others. It emphasizes positive characteristics of growth and development (Sinha & Verma, 2019). According to Ryff's model of Psychological Wellbeing, the concept

includes subjective, social and psychological dimensions as well as health related behavior. This is because psychological wellbeing is not merely about happiness, or positive emotions but a good life that is balanced and whole, engaging each of the different aspects of psychological wellbeing, instead of being narrowly focused and rooted this principle in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the goal of life is not feeling good, but instead about living virtuously.

According to psychological wellbeing theory, individual's psychological wellbeing depends on his positive functioning in certain aspects of his life. The individual should experience positive relationship with others; should be dominant over the environment; should accept himself and his past; should have a goal and meaning in his life; should have personal development and the ability to make his own decisions (Özen, 2012). The individual wellbeing could also be in form of the individual's relationship with life goals; if he is aware of his potential; the quality of his relationship with others; and what he feels about his own life (Ryff and Keyes, 1995).

Psychological wellbeing can be defined as the internal experience of a person or group of people about their lives (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2002). Psychological wellbeing can also be referred to as a general term used by psychologists to explain the general condition of an individual or group of people, as it relates to pleasant or unpleasant state. According to the studies conducted by Trudel, Robinson and Laban (2019) found out that a rich and fulfilling social life and a network of close social support with family and friends as being strongly correlated with psychological wellbeing. This aspect of psychological wellbeing include subjective experience or Subjective wellbeing which reflects dimensions of affect judgments of life satisfaction. Psychological wellbeing in general term can also be referred to an individual overall functioning in relation to his or her feelings. Increasing evidence from available studies suggests that psychological wellbeing is associated with lower disease and

mortality risk, and may enhance good health and general life satisfaction (Trudel, Robinson & Laban, 2019).

Although, baseline psychological wellbeing may be fairly stable, day to day events and experiences also exert an impact. For instance, even the most resilient person may eventually become very low, or depressed, if his or her daily experiences are constantly troubling (Ivan, 2018). There is strong evidence to show that exposure to work-related stressors over long periods of time will have a negative impact on psychological wellbeing, so short periods of adversity may be helpful in building resilience; meanwhile, long-term stress is not good for psychological wellbeing. In turn, this lower level of psychological wellbeing and may well lead to serious illness, including cardiovascular disease, problems with blood sugar control, such as diabetes and immune system malfunctions (Chandola, 2008). Relevant studies on psychological wellbeing revealed an undisputable view that, early experience and underlying stressors create a platform for psychological wellbeing (Trudel, Robinson & Laban, 2019); however, everyday experiences can help to maintain a good level of psychological wellbeing (if they are positive) or, if they are negative, reduce levels of psychological wellbeing, leading, in turn, to poor health outcomes. Psychological wellbeing is viewed as inter and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes which include one's sense of mastery and personal growth (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Psychological wellbeing in general term can be referred to an individual overall functioning in relation to his or her feelings.

Among several factors that may influence psychological wellbeing of nurses in public hospital in Benue State such as demographic factors, like sex, age, cadre, marital status years in service, this present study seek to examined stress on psychological wellbeing of

nurses in public hospital in Benue State and see if it is feasible.

Review of Relevant Literature

Psychological wellbeing on the other hand, has also been viewed as “all about lives going well and the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively (Lewis & Bates, 2012). At the most basic level, psychological wellbeing is quite similar to other terms that refer to positive mental states, such as happiness or satisfaction, and in many ways it is not necessary, or helpful to worry about fine distinctions between such terms (Diener & Seligman, 2002). This implies that, If an individual say that; “I’m happy or very satisfied with my life you can be pretty sure” that his or her psychological wellbeing is quite high.

Although, baseline psychological wellbeing may be fairly stable, day to day events and experiences also exert an impact. For instance, even the most resilient person may eventually become very low, or depressed, if his or her daily experiences are constantly troubling (Ivan, 2018). There is strong evidence to show that exposure to work-related stressors over long periods of time will have a negative impact on psychological well-being. Although short periods of adversity may be helpful in building resilience; meanwhile, long-term stress is not good for psychological wellbeing.

Stress

One among several factors that impact psychological wellbeing is the perceived stress. The concept of stress is defined as an emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world. Stress from a psychosocial perspective, results from one’s perception of imbalance between one’s demands and resources, or from pressure that exceeds one’s perceived ability to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation may leads to distress, which may translate into anxiety, pain, physical suffering, and withdrawal (Selye,

1975). It is impossible to live without some stress, because it gives life some spice and excitement. However, if stress gets out of control, it may harm health, your relationship and your enjoyment of life. Common stress reactions identified include tension, irritability, inability to concentrate and a variety of physical symptoms which include headache and fast heartbeat.

Stress is a normal part of everyday living (Canadian Mental Health Association (2013). It is neither negative nor positive. It is people’s perceptions of stressors and their perceived ability to cope that makes stress a positive or negative experience. At the right level, stress can heighten motivation and increase chances of success (Gibbins, 2010; Freeburn & Sinclair, 2009). There is eustress, or positive stress which predicts positive psychological wellbeing or result in “mental lift in comparison to stress that leads to mental distress (Gibbins, 2010). Stress is categories into two namely negative and positives. The negative form is known as distress, which causes the body to react in a negative way and can eventually lead the body to breakdown. The second one is positive or eustress. This form results from challenges and motivators in daily life and tends to encourage optimal performance which leads to success and positive self-esteem (Fevre et al., 2006 and Suedfeld, 1997).

Psychological wellbeing is compromised when negative emotions are extreme or very long lasting and interfere with a person’s ability to function in his or her daily life. Therefore, psychological well-being can be referred to as general term used by psychologists to explain the general condition of an individual or group of people, which includes psychological, social, economic, spiritual or medical state

Stress of nurses may results from daily activities and routine in hospitals which are monotonous and more so, that they occur on a daily bases, some of these stresses include caring for acutely ill patients, night shift, witnessing death, monitoring labour outcomes

and engaging in emotional labour etc. Other sources of stress that could affect the psychological wellbeing of nurses occur in the area of treatments especially when patients do not agree with or fear that treatment procedures might cause unintentional pain to them. Patients and their families may show sign of anger, depression, helplessness and fear all of which can be mentally distressing to a nurse. Nurses have a higher burden of knowing that their action could harm or distress others as in area of administering the wrong medication or failing to recognize a sign or symptom (Pisell, Elisei, Murgia, Quartesan & Abram, 2009). All of these stressful activities by nurses are often perceived negatively leading to a possibility of psychological distress and decrease in overall psychological wellbeing (Ireland & York, 2019).

Nurses are a very important component of the Health Care system in Nigeria and the world at large in the actualization of health care delivery target of any nation as such their psychological wellbeing is paramount for them to be more productive, provide compassionate care in order to add value to their communities. As a result of inadequate infrastructure and poor compensation packages, a sizeable number of Nigerian nurses and other health professionals are being lured away to developed countries in search of fulfilling and lucrative positions. Related to the problem of brain drain is the problem of geographical distribution of nurses which is a disproportional concentration of nurses in urban areas resulting in nurses and other health workers having individual problems due to too much work load manifested in lack of care to patients, failure to turn up at work on time, poor process quality such as failure to conduct proper patient examination and failure to treat patients in a timely manner due to poor psychological wellbeing (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2013).

Hypothesis

- i. There will be significant impact of perceived stress on psychological

wellbeing (overall) of nurses in public hospital in Benue State

- ii. There will be significant impact of perceived stress on psychological wellbeing (all dimensions) of nurses in public hospital in Benue State

Methodology

This study adopted the Cross Sectional Survey design and this type of design examines data at one point in time and is best used to describe the status of the phenomena or the relationships among phenomena or variables (Shindi 2017). This design did not manipulate variables but examined the relationship that exists between the variables of interest (perceived stress, age and psychological wellbeing) as used in the study.

The setting of this study is the public hospitals in Benue State. Benue State is a state in the North-Central Region or mid-belt region of Nigeria with a population of about 4,253,641 in 2006 census. It is inhabited predominantly by the Tiv, Idoma and Iggede people, who speak the Tiv language, Idoma and Iggede respectively. There are other groups, including the Ufias (Utonkon), Etulo, Abakwa, Jukun, Hausa, Igbo, Akweya and Nyifon. With its capital at Makurdi.

The participants of this study were 286 nurses working in public hospitals in Benue State across the 3 geopolitical zones comprising of Zone A (Nurses in General hospital Kwande, Tse-Agberagba and Konshisha) Zone B (Federal Medical Centre Makurdi, General Hospital North Bank and Benue State University Teaching Hospital and Zone C) (General Hospital Otukpo, Okpokwu and Ugbokpo), obtained through simple random sampling.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is one of the instrument that was used in this study. It is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It was developed by Sheldon Cohen and colleagues (1983) to detect how stressful respondents find their lives; it is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as

stressful. Items were designed to tap how unpredictable; uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress.

Ryff Scales of Psychological Well Being

Ryff Scales of Psychological Well Being was developed by Ryff and Keyes (1998). This instrument consists of six dimensions with 42 items (7 per scale) measured on a 6 point Likert scale 1= indicating strongly disagree 2 disagree somewhat 3 disagree slightly 4 agree slightly 5 agree somewhat 6 strongly agree. With internal consistency alpha Cronbach of the following after test retest Self-acceptance .

Permission for the research was provided by the Research Ethics committee Benue State Hospital Management Board headed by the Executive Secretary Hospitals Management Board, the Research Ethic Committee of Benue State University Teaching Hospital and the Research Ethic Committee of Federal Medical

Centre Makurdi. These bodies gave permission for the research to go on.

Cluster and accidental sampling techniques were adopted to select participants for the study. The nurses were first of all proportionately divided into clusters A, B and C representing Zone A, B and C respectively. This was done according to their numbers and clusters and then systematic sampling was used to select the participants (nurses) from each of the clusters using a sample interval of 3 until the required sample for each cluster was gotten.

Cluster A (Benue North East)

$$157/1120 \times 286/1 = 40$$

Cluster B (Benue North West)

$$778/1120 \times 286/1 = 199$$

Cluster C (Benue South)

$$185/1120 \times 286/1 = 47$$

This Chapter presents the data collected from the questionnaire administration. In the first instance, the chapter presents the descriptive statistics of the participants as follows:

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	20-30	43	15.3%
	31-40	65	22.7
	41-50	105	36.7
	51-60	73	25.5
Sex	Male	122	42.7
	Females	164	57.3
Marital Status	Single	33	11.5
	Married	141	49.3
	Divorced	50	17.5
	Widow/widower	61	21.3
Religion	Christians	253	88.5
	Muslim	33	11.5
Cadre	Junior	162	56.6
	Senior	124	43.4
Years of Service	1-5	68	23.6
	6-10	87	30.4
	11-15	103	36.0
	16 and above	26	9.6

Table 2: Multiple Linear Regression Showing result for the Independent and Joint Influence of Perceived Stress, Emotional Intelligence and Personality Traits on Psychological Wellbeing of nurses in Public Hospital in Benue State

DV	Variables	R	R ²	Df	β	F	T	Sig
Constant		.234	.055	3,257		4.890	17.821	.003
Overall DV	Perceived stress				-.130		-2.087	.038
	Emotional intelligence				-.031		-.505	.614
	Personality traits				.207		3.374	.001

Constant		.396	.157	3,266	16.329	3.066	.000
Autonomy	Perceived stress				.352	6.101	.000
	Emotional intelligence				.053	.921	.358
	Personality traits				.174	3.052	.003
Constant		.045	.002	3,266	.177	73.673	.912
Environmental mastery	Perceived stress				.020	.319	.750
	Emotional intelligence				.037	.583	.560
	Personality traits				.001	.018	.986
Constant		.123	.015	3,266	1.348	16.593	.259
Personal Growth	Perceived stress				.064	1.028	.305
	Emotional intelligence				-.032	-.512	.609
	Personality traits				.110	1.791	.074
Constant		.102	.010	3,266	.915	8.343	.434
Positive Relations	Perceived stress				-.095	-1.517	.131
	Emotional intelligence				-.006	-.089	.929
	Personality traits				.028	.452	.651
Constant		.204	.042	3,266	3.670	5.836	.013
Purpose in Life	Perceived stress				-.102	-.188	.851
	Emotional intelligence				-.085	-1.358	.176
	Personality traits				.188	3.041	.003
Constant		0.76	.006	3,266	.515	8.755	.672
Self-acceptance	Perceived stress				-.064	-1.020	.309
	Emotional intelligence				-.006	-.093	.926
	Personality traits				-.044	-.710	.478

Hypothesis one stated that stress will significantly influence psychological wellbeing (overall) of nurses in public hospital in Benue State

Result in Table 2 indicated that perceived stress significantly and negatively influenced the overall psychological wellbeing of nurses in public hospital in Benue State ($\beta = -.130$, $t = 2.087$, $p < .05$), implying that increase score on perceived stress can result to decreased psychological wellbeing of nurses. With this result, hypothesis one was accepted.

Hypothesis two stated that stress will significantly influence psychological wellbeing (Autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, positive, relation, personal growth and environmental mastery) of nurses in public hospital in Benue State.

Result in table 2 indicated that perceived stress on the dimensions of psychological wellbeing revealed that only autonomy dimension ($\beta = .352$, $t = 6.101$, $p < .01$) was significantly influenced, perceived stress did not have significant influence on environmental mastery ($\beta = .020$, $t = .319$,

$p > .05$), personal growth ($\beta = .064$, $t = 1.028$, $p > .05$), positive relations ($\beta = -.095$, $t = -1.517$, $p > .05$), purpose in life ($\beta = -.102$, $t = -.188$, $p > .05$) and self-acceptance ($\beta = -.064$, $t = -1.020$, $p > .05$). Based on this finding, hypothesis two was partially confirmed

Discussion on hypothesis

Hypothesis one stated that perceived stress will significantly influence psychological wellbeing (overall) of nurses in public hospitals in Benue State. The finding of this study implies that the hypothesis one was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding collaborate with the study of Selye, 1975 which revealed that Persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation may leads to distress, which may translate into anxiety, pain, physical suffering, and withdrawal and hence reduce individual psychological wellbeing. According to him, it is impossible to live without some stress, because it gives life some spice and excitement. However, if stress gets out of control, it may harm health, your relationship and your enjoyment and negatively affect

psychological wellbeing. In contract view, Canadian Mental Health Association (2013) finding revealed that stress is a normal part of neither everyday living which may neither negative nor positive. The finding also revealed that it is people's perceptions of stressors and their perceived ability to cope that makes stress a positive or negative experience. This is so because at the right level, stress can heighten motivation and increase chances of success (Gibbins, 2010; Freeburn& Sinclair, 2009).

Hypothesis two stated that stress will significantly influence psychological wellbeing (environmental mastery, purpose interfere, positive relations with others, personal growth, self-acceptance) of nurses in public hospitals in Benue State.

The first dimension of hypothesis two shows that stress significantly influenced psychological wellbeing (Autonomy). This confirms the hypothesis two **(A)** that nurses emotional and physical strain caused by excessive workload has significantly effect on feelings and functioning effectively. This could be explained by the fact that nurses exposure to stressor such as shift work role conflict with colleagues and emotional labour can have significant impact their psychological wellbeing in negatively ways such that their sense of autonomy, beliefs and ability to make decision for themselves in the course of their job is swayed by stressful situations. This finding is in line with the works of Chan, Ko, Goh and Lin (2010) who found that majority (5.4%) of the nurses in Singapore considered occupational stress as high (2.7%) considered it as moderate, and another (2.8%) considered it as low. Role conflict has also been found to have a negative relationship with psychological wellbeing (Lepine& Jackson 2014) in their study of the relationship between stress and autonomy of nurses. According to them, Nurses sense of autonomy is not necessary dependent on whether they are stressed or not. This finding could be possible due to the individual differences that exist in individuals. Some individual strive

better under stressful situations and have the ability to make independent decision about themselves and others in stressful situation they also discovered that individuals who are high in their sense of autonomy and are optimist are likely to utilize more effective and adaptive coping strategies such as humour, seeking emotional support from colleagues and appropriate goal directed behaviour when they experience stress in the course of their work. Also, Lepine (2004) in challenge-hindrane model stated that stressors can be positive or negative. According to him, challenges can improve functioning and performance. Since the Nurses are also faced with positive challenges that will bring better outcome, this may be the reason why their autonomy and overall psychological wellbeing was not affected.

The second dimension of hypothesis two provided result to show that perceived stress did not significant influence psychological wellbeing (Environmental mastery) of nurses. With this result hypothesis **two (B)** was rejected. This means that when nurses are stressed, there is every possibility that their ability to master their environment will not be affected, stress which comes from their routine activities in the hospitals environment, can be controlled through team work and effective communication with colleagues and doctors hence complex environmental and life situations are handled effectively whether in emergency ward, labour ward or psychiatric unit. This finding corroborates with the findings of Mokanes (2010) and Nguyen-Michel et al., (2006) in their work titled: perceived stress and psychological wellbeing of nurses. According to them perceived stress have no influence on the psychological wellbeing (environmental mastery) of nurses. The study found out that the nature of the hospital environment and the subjective experience of stress decreases the likelihood that events will be perceived as stressful. The result confirms that adaptation of the nurses to environment is linked to improvement in their mastering of the environment. This

finding however contradicts the findings of Chandraaiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu and Manoharan (2013) that heavy workload and stress leads to decline in environmental mastery of nurses.

The third dimension of hypothesis two indicated that there is no significant influence of stress on psychological wellbeing (personal growth) with this result hypothesis two(c) was rejected. This means that the various forms of stress passed through by Nurses has no strength to affect or influence the desire for them to engage in activities that improve their personal growth and development, academically, intellectually, socially, economically and otherwise. This study corroborates with the study conducted by Grunter (2004) long and protracted stress make some individuals to develop resilience, coping skills, determination, willingness and desire to engage in activities that will improve them physically, socially, intellectually and psychologically. He added that nurses who are so stressed in the course of doing their job still have the needed strength and time to engage in intellectual and other activities which will help them to develop their potential thereby enhancing their personal growths and psychological wellbeing.

The fourth dimension of hypothesis two indicated that there is no significant influence of stress on psychological wellbeing (positive relations with others). With this result, hypothesis one(D) was not accepted. This indicates that stress experienced by nurses can in no way influence the nurses positive relationship with others. This could be due to the fact that positive relationship and communication with fellow nurses, doctors and even patients is a viable social support and coping strategy that helps to improve psychological wellbeing of Nurses. Positive relationship and communication of nurses keeps them going and help them build a network of team interaction and preventing them from frustration and idleness which are against the ethics of the nursing profession. This is why stress does not seem to be strong

enough a factor that is capable of influencing them.

The fifth dimension of hypothesis two shows that there was no significant influence of stress on psychological wellbeing (purpose in life). With this result, hypothesis two (E) was rejected. This finding indicates that stress had no ability to influence or affect purpose in life and goals that nurses could be due to the fact that most nurses may tend to use stress they go through as a challenge to booster their goals in aim in life. Most of them due to challenge from stress are energized to pursue their goals and purpose in life are attending online courses in nursing so as to build their capacity psychologically, emotionally, socially and intellectually, making it hard for their purpose in life to be influenced. This could also be due to the fact that at the entry level Nurses are given orientation about the tedious and stressful nature of the profession. Hence, most of them might have prepared their minds to adapt and face the numerous tasks ahead. This view is supported by; Selye who explored the "fight or flight" reaction through the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). The GAS has three stages; alarm resistance and exhaustion. During the alarm phase, a person uses current resources to face the threat, the resistance the person actively copes with the stressful event. In exhaustion phase, the individual depletes the resources to cope with the stressor (Selye, 1956).

The sixth dimension of hypothesis two revealed that there's no significant influence of stress on psychological wellbeing (self-acceptance). Based on this finding hypothesis two (F) was rejected. This means that stress had no ability to affect self-acceptance of nurses, self-acceptance as we know is the most recurring aspect of psychological wellbeing which entails accepting the past and the present as well as maintaining direction for the future, taking yourself for who you are and taking responsibilities for your action and inactions. There are definitely certain aspects of the lives of Nurses that stress cannot change or influence and accepting one's self for which

he or she is one of them. A possible reason for this finding could be due to the fact that nurses self-acceptance is an integral aspect of mental health and an element of optimal functioning. Also Nurses who are high in self-acceptance are high in self-esteem and less stress as such their self-acceptance (psychological wellbeing) is enhanced.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study appraises stress on psychological wellbeing of nurses in public hospital in Benue State. The findings of this study revealed that there was significant negative influence of stress on Psychological wellbeing (overall) and autonomy dimension of psychological wellbeing of nurses of public hospital in Benue State. In the other hand stress did not significantly influence other dimensions of psychological wellbeing (environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationship with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance) of nurses in public hospital in Benue State. Based on this conclusion, it was recommended as follows:

- i. Government should employ the services of clinical psychologist to periodically assess, diagnose and treat nurses with stress using any of the standardized psychological techniques such as psych education, progressive muscle relaxation and cognitive technical approaches so as to ameliorate the negative effect of stress on their psychological wellbeing.
- ii. The Government should collaborate with non-governmental organization to organize yearly training and retraining programs for its nurses in areas that challenge their psychological wellbeing especially the newly employed nurses to enable them function effectively
- iii. There is need to inculcate certain aspect of stress in nurse curriculum to enable them success in their chosen

career since it is not all stress that are bad.

- iv. Future researchers who intend to replicate this study should focus on other variables such as sex, years of service, cadre and marital status to see their influence on psychological wellbeing of nurses in public hospital in Benue State.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN LAFIA METROPOLIS, NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Gender-based violence is the most extreme manifestation of unequal gender relations in society and represents one of the most widespread violations of human rights. Several factors contribute to gender-based violence, including poverty, discriminatory cultural laws, harmful norms and practices, gender stereotypes, prejudice, and the general acceptance of violence in the public sphere. This study examines the impact of gender-based violence on children's mental health in Lafia Metropolis, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, with the aim of proposing strategies to prevent such violence against children. A social survey design was employed, and a sample of 381 respondents was selected through cluster sampling from the study area. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed with simple frequency, percentage, and Pearson correlation coefficient using SPSS version 27. The findings indicate that children who witness or experience violence are more likely to develop fearful tendencies and other mental health disorders, such as self-harm, anxiety, depression, and low self-worth. The study recommends enforcing laws to punish perpetrators of gender-based violence against children, as well as raising awareness to promote a clear message of zero tolerance for all forms of violence against children. Additionally, victims should be informed about their rights and the support services available to them.

Keywords: Mental health, child protection, gender violence, support services, anxiety

Introduction

Gender Based Violence (GBV) in children is one of the most heinous and age-old violations of human rights, which has plagued our society for a long time. Violence against children is a global problem as over one billion children are exposed to violence annually. This includes all forms of violence against persons under 18 years of age either perpetrated by parents, strangers, peers, or other care givers (Ujunwa et al, 2019). The period of childhood is marked by physical and emotional dependence on adults especially parents, caregivers, and teachers. This power imbalance or dependency makes children inherently

vulnerable to violence especially when adults impose harmful gender norms or use violence to enforce them. (Maltra and Sharma, 2020) Childhood vulnerability in relation to gender-based violence is shaped by various factors making

Children particularly susceptible to harm. These vulnerabilities are influenced by their developmental stage, dependence on adults, and the societal norms that govern gender roles.

(Adeyemi, 2020)

Alika,,(2019) stated that Certain factors contributes to vulnerability of children

to gender based violence, this includes the fact that children rely heavily on adults for care and protection making them vulnerable to abuse from family members, teachers, or care givers; also cultural norms place the girl child in subordinate position making them more susceptible to sexual violence and exploitation while the boy child may be forced into harmful gender roles or subjected to physical violence to “toughen up”. There is also the problem of lack of autonomy which limits children’s decision making power making them vulnerable to being coerced or manipulated into abusive situations, particularly in cases of trafficking or forced marriage.(Adeyemi, 2020) Furthermore, children are physically and psychologically immature as they are in a critical development stage and as such are highly susceptible to the traumatic effect of GBV; also is the fact that children may not fully understand what constitutes abuse or their right to protection making it easier for perpetrators to exploit their innocence.(Alika, 2019) Children and adolescents exposed to violence may display severe psycho- social, emotional, and mental problems and these results into an alarming global health care issue for our society. (Hills et al,2019). The stress caused by childhood experiences of violence leads to the production of cortisol; causing the child’s body to be in a constant state of high stress. This toxic stress can disrupt brain development and causes change in brain’s activity causing lifelong negative impact on learning, behavior, and health. The younger the brain of the child, the more damaging the effect of toxic stress. (Matra and Sharma, 2020) Gender based violence is violence committed against a person because of his or her sex. it is the exposure of a child or adolescent to any incident of violence or threatening behavior which could include physical aggression such as striking, kicking, and beating as well as mental abuse through behaviors like humiliation, negligent treatment, intimidation, and sexual violence. (Alika,2019). The cause of the violence is founded in cultural norms, patriarchal beliefs,

inadequate law enforcement and gender-based discrimination. (Hills, et al, 2019). GBV occurs in every regions of the world and affects individuals and families of diverse income and socio demographic groups, it undermines the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of affected persons yet remains a culture of silence. (Oriola, 2019).

Gender identity and expression are key dimensions in understanding gender-based violence in children. This is essential as children who do not conform to societal gender expectations are at risk of experiencing different forms of violence either in the home, school, or in the community. (Afolabi, 2018) Gender identity is an individual’s sense of being male, female, both male and female, or neither male nor female (Akintayo, 2020). Gender identity can be expressed as cis gender, transgender, and non-binary gender. Cis gender children are those whose gender identity aligns with the sex aligned to them at birth, for instance a child assigned female at birth identifies herself as a girl. Transgender is a situation where the child’s gender does not align with his or her assigned sex at birth, while the non-binary children do not identify as male or female. Both the binary and transgender categories face bullying in schools and rejection by family members or violence in public spaces. (Michele,2019)

Gender expression is how people outwardly expresses their gender; this could be through their dressing, hair style, body decoration, behavior, among others.(Michele, 2019) Children who express their gender in ways that do not fit into the traditional male or female norms often become targets of violence or discrimination for instance, a boy who enjoys dressing in ways culturally associated with girls may face verbal abuse, or punishment by family members for not conforming to traditional masculine expectations, similarly, a girl who exhibits more masculine behaviors may face harassment or exclusion (Akintayo, 2020)

There are several factors that contributes to why children identify and express their

gender differently from traditional societal expectations, these reasons are rooted in the complex interplay of biology, sociology, socialization, and personal experience (Afolabi, 2018)

Biologically, factors such as genetics, pre-natal hormone levels, and brain structure contribute to a child's sense of gender, some children are born with intersex traits meaning that they have physical, hormonal or genetics characteristic that don't fit typical definition of male or female hence, such children express their gender in ways that differ from societal norms. (Akintayo, 2020)

Furthermore, a person's deeply held sense of being male, female, both or neither emerges early in life; children begin to understand and assert their gender identity by the age of 3 or 4 years, this sense of identity may not always align with societal gender expectations (Akintayo, 2020) A child's self-perception plays a significant role in how they understand and express their gender, some children simply feel more comfortable expressing themselves in ways that deviate from gender norms and as such may challenge or reject traditional gender roles and expectations (Afolabi 2018) Children's sexual orientation can also affect their gender identity; for instance children who later identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual may adopt gender expressions that reflect their sense of identity even if those expressions don't align with societal expectations for boys and girls. (Akintayo, 2020) Children who experience GBV due to gender identity and expression can suffer from anxiety, depression, and self-harm; particularly, transgender, and non-binary children face higher rates of mental health issues due to violence and discrimination. (Afolabi, 2018).

Addressing the issues of gender identity and expression requires creating inclusive, supportive, and protective environments that respect and affirm the diverse ways children express their gender. (Akintayo, 2020)

Children's mental health refers to their emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing and the ability to cope with the challenges of growing up. (Matra and Sharma, 2020) It encompasses how children think, feel, and behave as well as how they interact with others and manage stress. A good mental health in children allows them to develop healthy relationships, handle setbacks, and build resilience for future challenges. (Umar, 2022) Certain factors affect children's mental health; which includes: family environment, school and social life, physical health, and trauma or adverse experience. (Adama, 2019)

A stable family relationship contributes to a child's emotional security while negative environments like abuse or conflict can lead to mental health issues; In the school environment, positive interactions with peers and teachers at school can foster self-esteem and social skills, however, bullying, peer pressure and academic stress can negatively impact mental health., also, a child's physical wellbeing including nutrition, sleep and exercise plays a role in their mental health. Exposure to traumatic events such as the loss of a loved one, violence or natural disaster can lead to emotional difficulties or conditions like anxiety and depression (Maltra and Sharma).

Children experience various forms of gender-based violence ranging from: sexual violence, domestic violence, child labor and trafficking among others. (Alika, 2019).

Gender based violence has been recognized as an international public health crisis and human rights issue. Prevalence of gender-based violence is often caused by various factors such as the perpetrator's sense of power, control, and entitlement; certain cultural factors such as the mentality that the family sphere is private and under male authority and a general acceptance of violence as part of the public sphere. (Ujunwa et al, 2019).

Experiencing violence in childhood has a negative impact on lifelong health and well-being, because violence in a child formative year have far reaching consequences on a

child's physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing. (Alika, 2019). Childhood is a social construction that varies across different cultures.

Globally, gender-based violence is the leading cause of death in mostly the female gender who are more vulnerable to chronic diseases such as the Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome(HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome(AIDS), and also experience unintended pregnancy which in turn leads to rejection, stigma and shame. (Miller, 2018). Although the girl child is more vulnerable to many forms of gender-based violence it is important not to overlook the impacts of violence against the male child. Mickle (2019) stated that although globally, the male gender is more likely to perpetuate most forms of violence against females they also are victims and are likely to face abuse from non-family members who are older than them. This could result in physical consequences such as injuries to the genital areas, urinary and bowel incontinence sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, sexual dysfunction and infidelity.

Psychologically, male survivors may feel shame and guilt and due to abuse some survivors struggle with gender identity and sexual orientation given the common myth that they could become gay.(Akintayo,2020) Furthermore, socially, the boys may be ridiculed and blamed for the assault and this may lead them to leaving school, developing behavioral problems, or engaging in negative coping strategies such as substance abuse.(Michele, 2019) It is estimated global that up to one billion children aged two to seventeen years have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence or neglect in their lifetime. (Hills et al,2019).

In Nigeria, Gender Based Violence is one of the most prevalent human rights violation It is a common social problem especially in the Northern part of Nigeria and significantly affects mental health of children. The human rights violated by gender-based violence includes: the right to life, the right not to be

subject to torture, or cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to equal protection, according to humanitarian norms in time of international or internal armed conflict, the right to liberty and security of person, the right to equal protection under the law, the right to equality in the family, and the right to highest standard attainable of physical and mental health.(Human Rights Watch, 2023). Gender-based violence is a pervasive problem with cultural, social, and economic factors contributing to its persistence; couple with the incidents of insurgency in the north east in the year 2015 which caused a major humanitarian crisis that resulted in the displacement of more than two million persons as a consequence of the insurgency., and in turn increased incidents of gender-based violence in Nigeria. (Miller, 2018).

Lafia the Nasarawa State capital is not exempted from this challenge; the state has witnessed significant cases of gender-based violence creating an environment where children are often exposed to violence either as direct victims or as witnesses (Mohammed, 2021).

According to a report in the Punch News Paper of April 2024,byIshaku,(2024) on "Addressing Gender Based Violence in Children in Nasarawa state" there have been a lot of issues concerning gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment in Nasarawa State, hence the World Bank supported the Nasarawa State Government through the Center for Disease control to carry out a one-day sensitization workshop for stake holders on the dangers of gender-based violence and female genital mutilations. The report further revealed that Nigeria recorded 27,698 cases of gender and sexual based violence between 2020 and 2023 according to the data manager Ministry of women affairs.

Gender Based Violence takes place all over the world in homes, schools, work-places and communities, and adolescent girls are more likely to experience sexual abuse in and

around the school environment. School Gender based violence is of utmost consideration because violence that takes place in the school environment reflects what occurs in the home and community. (Onasoga, 2020). School related gender-based violence (SRGBV) involves acts or threats of sexual, physical, or psychological violence occurring within and around the school, environment. (UN, 2018). Direct exposure to school related GBV (SRGBV) includes sexualized bullying, sexual harassment, forced sexual acts in exchange for good grades or male dominance or aggressions within the cause of gender norms and stereotypes. (Babatunde, 2019). In many schools in Nigeria, Corporal punishment is prevalent and students may often get beaten for things they cannot help, such as not being able to afford to pay School fees or get a uniform or a book. (Sunday, 2021) Experiencing violence within school settings can make children afraid of going to school and interfere with their ability to concentrate and participate in school activities. (Abdu and Usman, 2020)

The Nigerian Government has made efforts to address the issues of gender-based violence in children through the enactment of the Child Right Act 2003, which protects the rights and wellbeing of a child in accordance with the International convention on the rights of the child. The aim of the law is to create a safer and more conducive environment for children across the country.

In the same vein, the Violence Against persons prohibition Act was enacted in 2015, to address various forms of violence against individuals with a focus on protecting individual's fundamental right. The law aims to combat different forms of gender-based violence such as sexual related violence, domestic violence, female genital mutilations, among others.

The 2014 Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) by the National Population Commission (NPC) showed a high prevalence (approximately 60 percent) of violence among adolescents before the age of 18, the survey

found that 25% of females and 11% of males experienced sexual violence in childhood (National Population Commission of Nigeria 2016)

In Lafia Nasarawa State, according to the womanity index GBV ranking report by Chiroma (2023) the government inaugurated a Sexual Assault Referral Centre(SARC) at the Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital to tackle the menace of gender-based violence in the state. The sexual assault referral centers provide crucial service for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and 50 sexual assault cases were recorded and offenders arrested between January and April 2023.

The general objective of this study is to analyze the effect of gender-based violence on children's mental health. Specifically, to

1. Access how the mental health of children is affected by gender-based violence in Lafia Metropolis
2. Explore the perpetrators of GBV in children are in Lafia Metropolis.
3. Suggest Strategies to prevent the occurrences of gender-based violence in children in Lafia Metropolis.

Psychodynamic theory

This theory is rooted in the work of Sigmund Freud and was first proposed in the late 19th century. It emphasizes the influence of early childhood experiences, and interpersonal relationships on individual's behavior and emotional development. The theory explains both the psychological impact of violence on the child and the origin of abusive behaviors within the perpetrators of violence. The psychodynamic theory offers a deep and insightful frame work for understanding the effects of gender-based violence in children as it highlights how early traumatic experience especially in a child's formative years can shape his or her self-identity and future behaviour. According to this theory, an individual's behavior is riven by unconscious forces and repressed memories; experiences of gender-based violence in childhood can lead to repression of the trauma

experience which can manifest in various ways such as aggression, nightmares, and difficulty in trusting people

The theory suggests that children who are subjected to violence based on their gender may unconsciously internalize harmful beliefs about gender roles. Psychodynamic theory also emphasizes the intergenerational transmission of violence; as children who experience violence may unconsciously absorb this pattern of behavior and carry them into adulthood hence repeating the cycle of violence. Furthermore, the theory posits that a child's early relationship with parents or care givers, shapes his or her sense of self perception and self-worth., A child that has experienced GBV may internalize feelings of shame, guilt, or worthlessness and unconsciously believe that they deserve the violence.

Methodology

The Population of this study constitutes residents of Lafia Metropolis; both male and female; Adults, and Secondary school students who are in their adolescent age. The 2006 census (National Population Commission) reported about 330,712 residents in the Lafia metropolis, by recent estimates, the population has continued to rise reaching approximately 388,000 in 2024 due to consistent annual growth rates near 3.7%. Lafia's expanding population is reflective of broader urban growth trends in Nigeria where cities are experiencing increased migration and birth rates. The population for this study will be a sample size derived from the entire population of 388,000 residents in Lafia. This will be obtained using Yamani Taro sample size determination formula.

The sample size for this study will be calculated using Taro (1967) sample size determination formula to determine adequate sample size.

The formula is given as:

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

Where n is sample size

N is the population size

e is the margin of error (expressed as a decimal)

$$1 = \text{Unity (constant)}$$

Given the population of Lafia metropolis as 388,000, $e=0.05$

The sample size for this study therefore will be

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(0.5)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{388,000}{1 + 388,000(0.0025)}$$

Given that $N=388,000$

$$e = 0.5$$

$$n = \frac{388,000}{1 + 388,000(0.5)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{388,000}{1 + 388,000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{388,000}{1 + 388,000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{388,000}{1 + 970}$$

$$n = \frac{388,000}{971}$$

$$n = 399.6$$

Approximately $n = 400$

The multi-stage sampling technique is used to select respondents for this study, this is suitable because the population of the study is dispersed across different geographical areas: both urban and rural settings, different communities and regions. The multistage sampling technique helps ensures that diverse samples that accurately represents the subgroup within the population. Lafia Metropolis was divided into 16 political wards namely; Anrwan Rogo, Angwan Kade, Angwan Shehu, Angwan Doka, Bukan sidi, Lafia East, Lafia south, Lafia North, Mafara, Yelwa, Wuye, Gidan biyu, Kilema, Gwandara, Tunga, And Wurukum..Thereafter, the proportional sampling formula will be used to determine the number of respondents from each ward. Simple frequency distribution, simple percentage and correlation methods were adopted in the data analysis of this study. The

frequency distribution and simple percentage methods were used in analyzing the data obtained from respondents of various issues asked in the questionnaire, while the correlation formula was used in testing the hypotheses. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 27 was used in the

generation of different statistical tools to analyze the data. The rationale for using this software is anchored on the fact that the primary data used for the research, and it gives comprehensive and quantitative clarity to the study.

Data presentation and Analysis

Table: 1 Socio demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	N	Percent (%)
Age	18-23	91	24
	24-29years	69	18.1
	30-35years	19	19.6
	36-41	65	17
	42 and above years	81	21.3
Gender	Female	174	45.7
	Male	207	54.3
Marital status	Single	156	41
	Married	187	49
	Divorced	16	4.2
	Widow/widower	22	5.8
	Separated	100	9.8
Occupation	Farming	98	25.7
	Civil servant	102	26.8
	Entrepreneurship	33	8.7
Religious affiliation	Tertiary	487	47.5
	Christianity	195	51.2
	Islam	176	46.2
	Traditional African religion	10	2.6
Education qualification	Primary	150	39.4
	Secondary	138	36.2
	ND/HND/BSc	70	18.4
	Post-graduate	487	47.5
		23	6

Source: Fieldwork 2025

Distribution of respondents age shows 24% were between 18-23 years, 18.1% were between 24-29 years, 19.6% were between 30-35 years, 17% were between 36-41 years, while 21.3% were 41 years and above. This indicates that majority of the respondents were between 18-23 years of age. Distribution of respondent's sex shows 54.5% were males while 45.5% were females. This shows that most of the respondents were females.

Distribution of respondents' marital status shows 40.8% are single, 48.9% are married, 4.5% are divorced, while 5.8% are widows/widowers. This indicates that most of the respondents are married. The distribution of respondents based on religion shows that majority, 51.2% were Christians, 46.2% were Muslims while 2.6% were traditionalist. Distribution of respondents based on their occupation shows that 38.7% were students, followed by 26.7% who were civil servants, 26% are farmers, and 8.6% Entrepreneurs. This

shows that most of the respondents were students.

Distribution of respondents based on their highest educational qualification shows that majority of the respondents by 39.4% had primary school education as their highest qualification, followed by 36.2% who had

secondary school education as their highest qualification, 18.4% have either BSc or HND certificate, while 6% have post graduate qualification. This indicates that most of the respondents had primary school leaving certificates as their highest qualification.

Table 2: The impact of GBV on children's mental health in Lafia Metropolis

Variable	N	Percent (%)
Fear		
Strongly Agree	318	83.5
Agree	40	10.5
Undecided	10	2.6
Disagree	8	2.1
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
Total	381	100
Anxiety		
Strongly Agreed	212	55.6
Agree	94	24.7
Undecided	68	17.8
Disagree	4	1.1
Strongly Disagree	3	0.8
Total	381	100
Guilt	85	22.3
Strongly Agreed		
Agreed	61	38.3
Undecided	103	28.9
Strongly	172	5.8
Disagree	26	4.7
Strongly Disagree	19	5
Total	380	100
Shame		
Strongly Agreed	206	55
Agreed	66	17.3
Undecided	39	10.1
Strongly	29	7.6
Disagree	38	10.1
Strongly Disagree		
Poor self-worth		
Strongly Agreed	146	55
Agreed	137	17.3
Undecided	51	10.1
Strongly	37	7.6
Disagree	10	10.1
Strongly Disagree	380	100
Total		

Source: Fieldwork 2025

From the table 2 83.5%(n=381) of the respondents strongly agreed that the impact of GBV on children's mental health in Lafia Metropolis is fear, 55.6% strongly agreed that the impact is anxiety, 16% strongly agree that the impact of GBV on children's mental health

is guilt, 55% strongly agreed that the impact of GBV on children's mental health is shame, 38.3% strongly agreed that the impact of GBV on children's mental health is poor self-worth, 57.2% strongly agreed that the impact of GBV on children's mental health is poor academic

performance, while 79.3% strongly agreed that the impact of GBV on children's mental health is depression. This shows that fear is a

significant impact of GBV on children's mental health in Lafia Metropolis.

Table 3; The perpetrators of GBV in children in Lafia Metropolis

Variable	N	Percent (%)
Family members		
Strongly Agree	106	27.8
Agree	95	24.9
Undecided	39	10.2
Disagree	59	15.5
Strongly Disagree	82	21.5
Total	381	100
Neighbours/ community members		
Strongly Agreed	298	78.2
Agree	62	16.3
Undecided	9	2.4
Disagree	8	2.1
Strongly Disagree	4	1
Total	381	100
Strangers		22.3
Strongly Agreed	85	16.5
Agreed	63	19.4
Undecided	74	25.4
Strongly	96	5.8
Disagree	95	25
Strongly Disagree	380	100
Total		
Other Acquaintances		19.2
Strongly Agreed	73	21
Agreed	81	24.4
Undecided	93	22
Strongly	83	13.4
Disagree	51	
Strongly Disagree		
Total	380	100

Source: Fieldwork 2025

Table 3 shows that 78.2%(n=381) of the respondents strongly believe that neighbors and community members are the perpetrators of GBV in children, 27.8% strongly believe that family members are the perpetrators, 19.2% strongly believe that other acquaintances such as peer groups and religious leaders are the

perpetrators, while 16.5% strongly believe that strangers are the perpetrators of GBV in children in Lafia Metropolis. This indicates that neighbors and community members are the highest perpetrators of GBV in children in the area.

Table 4: Strategies to prevent GBV in children in Lafia Metropolis

Variable	N	Percent (%)
Enforcement of laws to punish perpetrators		
Strongly Agree	305	80
Agree	65	17.1
Undecided	8	2.1
Disagree	2	15.5
Strongly Disagree	1	21.5
Total	381	100
Awareness on GBV		
Strongly Agreed	258	67.7
Agree	98	24.1
Undecided	22	5.8
Disagree	8	2.1
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3
Total	381	100
Community Based Support Programs		
Strongly Agreed	113	29.7
Agreed	80	21
Undecided	127	33.3
Strongly	32	8.4
Disagree	29	7.6
Strongly Disagree	380	100
Total		
Establishing mental health services		
Strongly Agreed	84	25
Agreed	95	24
Undecided	92	14
Strongly	52	15
Disagree	58	
Strongly Disagree		
Total	380	100

Source: Fieldwork 2025

From Table 4, it is seen that 80% (n=381) of the respondents strongly agree that enforcement of laws to punish perpetrators is the strategy to prevent GBV in children in Lafia Metropolis, 67.7% strongly agree that awareness on GBV is the strategy to prevent GBV in children, 29.7% strongly agreed that community based program is the strategy to prevent GBV in children, while 22% strongly

agree that establishment of mental health services is the strategy to prevent GBV in children in Lafia metropolis. This shows that enforcement of laws to punish perpetrators is the most significant strategy to prevent GBV in children in Lafia Metropolis.

Test of hypotheses

Regression analysis.

	Gender based violence in children in Lafia Metropolis	impact of gender based violence on children mental health in Lafia Metropolis
Gender-based violence in children in Lafia Metropolis	1	.886**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	381
impact of gender-based violence on children mental health in Lafia Metropolis	.886**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	381

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient between gender-based violence and the effect on children's mental health is 0.886, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This suggests a strong positive relationship between gender-based violence and children's mental health.

This suggests that the more children experience gender-based violence, the more the negative impact is on their mental health.

Discussion of Findings

Effects of Gender Based Violence on Children's Mental Health in Lafia Metropolis

The findings of this study indicate that fear is the most significant and damaging consequences of gender-based violence on children's mental health in Lafia Metropolis. Children who are victims of GBV often live with the fear that the violence will happen again, they tend to feel a constant sense of danger especially if the perpetrator is someone they depend on. The effect of fear because of GBV in children is a significant psychological and emotional outcome which can have long lasting impacts on children's mental health and overall development. This can be ascribed to the fact that fear from GBV leads to a constant state of apprehension where a child remains on high alert anticipating further violence, a state known as hypervigilance

which is a common reaction to trauma, a child may feel as though danger is always present even in safe environments. Also, fear resulting from GBV can damage a child's ability to form healthy relationships with parents guardians, or care givers, the child may develop trust issues believing that the people that are supposed to protect him or her can also be sources of harm, this can subsequently lead to difficulties in relationships throughout their lives. In addition, fearful children may become withdrawn and isolate themselves from peers, family and social activities, this avoidance behavior can stem from a desire to escape environments where they feel unsafe or from fear of retaliation if they speak about the violence. Furthermore, children who live in fear due to the experience of GBV may express their distress through aggression or deviance, they may struggle to regulate their emotions and subsequently lash out at others when they feel powerless or threatened. The development of fear can also manifest in risky behaviors such as substance abuse and self-harm in a bid to cope with or escape the overwhelming emotional pain caused by their fear.

Perpetrators of Gender Based Violence in Children in Lafia Metropolis

The finding of the study indicates that neighbors and community members are the highest perpetrators of gender-based violence in children. This could be because neighbors have easy access to children, especially in tightly knitted communities where extended families live close to one another. This physical proximity can create opportunities for abuse since neighbors interact regularly with children making it easier for abuse to occur unnoticed. As regards physical punishment, some neighbors may feel entitled to discipline or control children by seeing themselves as an extended social system where they have the rights to intervene in a child's upbringing. For instance, a neighbor may believe they have the right to scold or even physically discipline a child if they perceive the child as misbehaving, thinking they are merely helping to "raise" the child in line with community values especially in absentee parents. Although typically, the majority of GBV in children occurs within the family because the family is the closest and the most influential social unit with direct consistent access to children, however the close and unquestioned authority parents or guardians have over their children, and also the fact that family members are less likely to be scrutinized by outsiders making allowance for hidden violence that is difficult to detect; this is especially true in incidences of sexual abuse within families where children might fear social stigma if they speak out, hence such cases are either under reported or not reported at all.

Strategies to prevent Gender Based Violence in children in Lafia Metropolis

The findings of this study indicate that enforcement of laws to punish perpetrators of GBV in children is the measure to address gender-based violence in children in Lafia metropolis, this could be attributed to the fact that law enforcement provides an immediate response to GBV in children and sends a clear message that GBV is not tolerated in society

this is particularly impactful in societies where abuse is normalized and there is little social pressure to stop it, the law can act as a force for change in such context. If perpetrators know that the legal system will hold them accountable for their actions it may discourage potential abusers from committing GBV, also enforcement of laws provides an official mechanism to protect the victims and ensure justice. When the culprits of GBV face consequences such as imprisonments, fines, or other penalties, it serves both as a punishment for the individual and a signal to the wider society that GBV is unacceptable.

Law enforcement helps to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and provide opportunity for rehabilitation of offenders ensuring they don't continue to harm others. From the study, there is also a need for effective awareness campaigns of GBV such that there is a raising of awareness about the rights of children, the forms of GBV, and the harmful effects of abuse, can be a powerful tool for prevention. While law enforcement provides a critical deterrent and protection for children, awareness campaigns are necessary to change cultural attitudes, educate communities, and prevent violence from occurring in the first place. Awareness ensures long term cultural shift and foster culture that does not tolerate GBV in children. It is the foundation upon which the law can be effectively enforced as law enforcement ensures perpetrators face consequences when abuse occurs, therefore a combination of both measures is highly effective to comprehensively address GBV in children.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that GBV in Lafia Nasarawa State has a profound negative impact on children's mental health. Children exposed to much violence face a range of psychological issues that can persist into adulthood potentially affecting their future wellbeing and development. Addressing GBV is crucial not only for the victims themselves but

also for the mental health and safety of children in these environments.

1. Community based awareness campaign on the negative impacts of GBV on children's mental health.
2. Establishment of mental health services including counselling and therapy sessions to help victims of GBV cope with the psychological trauma.
3. Training of educators, law enforcement officers, and health workers on recognizing and responding to signs of GBV in children.

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INSTITUTIONALIZED GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND LABOUR ARBITRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines gender discrimination cases in labour arbitration, exploring the systemic challenges and effectiveness of arbitration in resolving workplace disputes. The research aims to investigate how gender biases influence arbitration outcomes and whether the process adequately addresses gender-based disparities in employment decisions. Using a qualitative approach, this study analyzes a sample of gender discrimination arbitration cases across multiple industries. The main findings reveal that while arbitration can resolve disputes, there are notable gaps, particularly regarding the representation of female claimants and the understanding of gender-related issues by arbitrators. The paper concludes that although labour arbitration offers a faster alternative to litigation, it is not immune to gender bias and calls for policy changes to enhance its fairness. Future research could focus on comparative analyses between arbitration and litigation outcomes in gender discrimination cases.

Keywords: Arbitration, gender bias, labour, law, employment

Introduction

Gender discrimination in the workplace remains a significant and persistent issue, despite numerous legal frameworks aimed at ensuring equality. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), women worldwide continue to face barriers such as unequal pay, limited career advancement opportunities, and discriminatory practices, especially in male-dominated industries (ILO, 2020). Gender discrimination manifests in various forms, ranging from overt acts like sexual harassment and unequal wages to more subtle forms, such as implicit bias and microaggressions (McCullough & Smith, 2021). These disparities not only perpetuate economic inequality but also undermine workplace diversity and inclusivity.

In many cases, workers facing gender discrimination are required to resolve disputes through labour arbitration, a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) used to settle employment-related conflicts outside

the formal court system. Labour arbitration is often favored by employers because it is quicker, less expensive, and less adversarial than litigation (Horton, 2020). However, for employees—particularly women—arbitration may not always offer a fair or equitable process for resolving disputes. Recent studies have raised concerns that labour arbitration, as currently practiced, may disadvantage female employees due to structural biases and a lack of transparency (Wright & Johnson, 2022). As arbitration proceedings are often confidential, outcomes rarely contribute to the development of legal precedents, making it difficult to establish systemic change (Jordan & Lee, 2019). This paper explores the issue of gender discrimination in labour arbitration, focusing on how structural factors within arbitration processes may hinder women from achieving equitable outcomes.

Evaluating the treatment of gender discrimination as a significant issue in labour arbitration is useful for scholars,

legal employment and human-resource practitioners, and business operational manage and organizational leaders. Arbitration can be called one of the most effective means of resolving disputes in labour relations, but its objectivity, particularly in cases concerning gender discrimination, is still doubtful. As such, this study will add to the current discourse on how best to make arbitration a fair process especially to women and other vulnerable persons who already have to jump several extra hurdles to get justice. Furthermore, this research is relevant as mandatory arbitration agreement in employment contracts has become more common in recent years. As of the Economic Policy Institute (2021), over two thirds of the US private sector workers are at the mercy of mandatory arbitration clauses, preventing them from seeking discriminate cases in court. This trend has raised serious alarm on adequacy of access to justice especially for women sidelined at workplace due to discrimination.

This paper deals with labour arbitration in relation to gender discrimination situation, in particular, examining how some characteristics of arbitration disadvantage women. The study will use empirical data and literature countries that make use of arbitration. However the small sample size and the light's shed on the specific issues men face through out their lives may not be applicable in different legal jurisdictions and perhaps cultures, different from the ones presented here. The paper will also only be largely concern with legal labour arbitration disputes and not something else like mediation. Nonetheless, these limitations should not undermine the expected significance of the findings, as they can provide important information about the role and operation of labour arbitration as a legal resolution of gender discrimination cases and suggest which changes would help improve the efficiency and fairness of this approach.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Fundamental to analysing gender-biased arbitration processes therefore lies in the theories of gender bias and workstation discrimination. One of the most appropriate theories is intersectionality which was forwarded by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to employ the gender discrimination cannot be analyzed separately but ought to be analyzed in a synergy with race discriminations class or age discrimination. Employing intersectionality as a theoretical framework enables one to understand better how different barriers accumulate the difficulties that women experience within labour markets and arbitration included.

Furthermore, feminist legal theory is centrally implicated in analyzing and challenging legal and quasi-legal institutions such as arbitration that are frequently gendered by patriarchy. Catharine MacKinnon (2019) thinks that gender discrimination pervade the legal framework in a manner that results in a discrimination of women. This perspective is important especially in labour arbitration where organizational bias can be hidden by the structures of informal systems.

Since limitations in the promotion of women are basically discussed based on the glass ceiling theory, similar barriers may be also observed in arbitration in relation to the outcomes of gender discrimination cases. Similarly, the theory of organizational justice and procedural justice in particular forms the theoretical lens through which the fairness of arbitration is conducted. Colquitt et al. (2019) seek to point out that for any system of conflict resolution to be fair, it must guarantee that determinations of a particular case or controversy were made using procedural fairness that parties to that case had equal rights of access to information and presentation. Both of these theoretical frameworks emphasize the need to examine how labour arbitration works in the context of gender discrimination; and how structural and procedural factors enhance or diminish gender bias.

Review of Previous Research

Several recent authors have attempted to address several issues related to gender discrimination in labour arbitration; arbitration effectiveness, possibility of bias of the arbitrator, and employment contracts that contain such clauses as mandatory arbitration. A study conducted by Zhang and Kalev in 2020 showed that there are substantial differences between success rates of gender discrimination cases within arbitration. Their case review from 2015 to 2019 and covering 150 cases revealed that women stood a 25% lower chance of success as compared to men with increased disparity in male dominated sectors. In the same way, McCullough and Smith (2021) investigated the effectiveness of arbitration at tackling gender discrimination in the workplace and noted that arbitrators themselves may miss the often subtle form of discrimination, including microaggressions or implicit bias.

The use of mandatory employment arbitration clauses has recently become more common in the case of gender discrimination. A study that was conducted by Horton in 2020 established that mandatory arbitration has adverse effects on female employees than on male employees: this is mainly because most of the time, mandatory arbitration denies females the chance to seek justice through courts of law. The study revealed that through arbitration, the employer benefits as compared to arbitration where the employee has minimal legal remediation rights.

Turner and Simmons (2021) make similar assertions that mandatory arbitration disproportionately undermines justice for women especially in areas with severe employment sexism. Another criticism of labour arbitration, and especially gender discrimination, is the discretion and secrecy of the results. In the closed arbitration system, Wright & Johnson(2022) noted that the arbitration system does not set public legal precedence that can be used to direct future arbitration cases. This lack of an established

history also implies that while arbitration decisions are still rather rare and Italian, their overall result does not substantially transform the culture of discriminative practices at the places of work. Jordan and Lee (2019) also posit that lack of publicity in arbitration conceals employer misconduct from the public domain hence denying them the taste of the whip when they mistreat employees, especially one based on discrimination. There are several articles which have looked at the compare of gender discrimination and arbitration and litigation, and all the articles have shown that arbitration is disadvantageous to female claimants. Recognizing that there is a significant literature published on each of the two methods, Harper and Smith (2022) focused on the comparison of outcomes of arbitration and litigation and concluded that women were more likely to succeed at trial than they were in arbitration; also, they received greater dollar amounts when they did. This study indicate that arbitration may not afford the parties the same measure of protection and fairness as does litigation, especially in gender discrimination cases.

Critique of the Literature

Several gaps have thus been identified in the literature regarding the dynamics of gender discrimination in labour arbitration; Several important questions however remain unanswered or under-examined. One of the newer areas of interest within the role of bias originates on the aspect of gender discrimination against arbitrators. However, more often the literature circles around the arbitral awards and away from the procedures which led to the awards. As pointed by McCullough and Smith (2021), gender stereotype performed by the arbitrators will in equal measure influence the fairness of arbitration results. Although it is substantiated by the existent archival data, there is a call for qualitative investigation of the actual decision-making process in gender discrimination arbitrage. For example, what kinds of evidence

do arbitrators pay most attention to and to what extent may this differ from court-based procedures? Furthermore, despite offering strong evidence of bias, Zhang and Kalev (2020) fail to investigate how compound factors such as race or class may serve to compound discrimination against women in arbitration similarly to how they do in court. To the extent that the use of mandatory arbitration clauses has been explored in the literature, works such as Horton, (2020) and Turner and Simmons, (2021) make important points regarding the constraints these clauses place on employees. Nevertheless, these studies mostly concern the legal consequences of mandatory arbitration leaving the social or psychological effects unanalyzed. That is why the goal of the present study is to answer the following research questions: Do they dissuade women from seeking justice by filing claims of discrimination? As for the two categories there is a need for future research in how these clauses influence the claimants' approach to arbitration over other mechanisms or legal actions.

One of the constant complaints over arbitration is its private nature, as acknowledged by Wright and Johnson (2022) and Jordan and Lee (2019). All these studies assert that that formalization does not allow for creating legal norms to establish authoritative legal precedents to guide behavior hence contributing to change in organizational behavior. But they do not suggest practical means of making organizations more transparent without such negative consequences as compromising the parties that desire privacy. Thus, the literature suggests various solutions for improving public arbitration that are yet little-discussed; one of them is the development of state-integrated arbitration databases that would contain basic information on the case but retain its decisions and rationale in anonymized form. It could be used to enlighten following claimants or arbitrators without violating the aspect of confidentiality. Analyses of empirical data on arbitration and litigation, including those by

Harper & Smith (2022) demonstrate that litigative processes are gender biased towards females in discrimination cases. However, much of this research is carried out especially under the Anglo-American legal systems of the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Still there detailed studies of how arbitration operates in non-Western locations are scarce and hence it is difficult to comprehend how arbitration may operate within a environment that is different legal and probably also gendered, and where it has not been prototypically implemented.

It would be useful to extend comparative work in different jurisdictions to consider the transnational relevance of today's criticisms of arbitration. As for the theories concerning gender discrimination in labour arbitration there are also scarce advice on the practical measures for reforming the system for the better. The studies done by Patel and Evans (2021) also recommend gender-sensitivity training for arbitrators but such training appeared to have a positive on the issue of bias. But little research based on the systematically beneficial consequences of such interventions in the longer span of intervention has been proved. Additionally, there are several works that call for complete repeal of mandatory arbitration clauses; and, again, this remedy is unworkable in many contexts or industries. Further studies should be conducted to establish practical measures to reform arbitration while retaining its strengths of rapidness and lesser cost than that of the judicial system, comprehensive fairness and openness.

The scholarship of gender discrimination in labour arbitration crystallises several cognisable issues including the bias of arbitrators, the effects of mandatory arbitration clauses and lack of disclosure in the arbitration procedures. Though arbitration is relatively cheaper and less formal than litigation, the research indicates that it will not completely guard female employees against discriminatory practices. Specific research areas still require filling, most notably the

analysis of arbitrator decision-making, of applicability of these insights on an international level and of possible changes in the arbitration system to make it more fair. Future research direction should be directed towards these areas in order to design better grievance handling systems in combating gender inequality at the workplace.

Methodology

This work adopts an explorative research approach based on the use of case studies. Primary data is gathered from actual arbitration awards present to the public as well as other data obtaining from other secondary sources like, journal papers, laws reports and numerates. Using a purposive sampling approach, cases will be included if the industry belongs to high-profile sectors with frequent gender discrimination complaints including finance, manufacturing and healthcare sectors. Coded qualitative data analysis was chosen as the method for data assessment of the presented themes with the focus on bias, fairness, and claimant representation.

Results

The investigation conducted provided information on apparently reduced chances of victory for women in gender discrimination claims in arbitration as opposed to general labour disputes. Among the decisions analysed, the employers were found to have benefitted in 60% of the decisions with the arbitrators holding that the provisions were not met because there was no sufficient evidence or because the discrimination was considered as an opinion. Moreover, companies that had more male workers even experienced more gender selective results than those with average industries. Such studies imply that structural gender biases may affect the arbitration of fair decisions in organizations with a strongly defined male-identified work culture.

Discussions

The literature review in the recent studies and this paper's result reveals the following major concerns concerning the applicability of labour arbitration in dealing with gender discrimination cases: In particular, the issues of the occurrence of arbitrator bias, the influence of the mandatory arbitration clauses, comparison of arbitration with litigation, and possible changes serve as important in the identification of ways to make the arbitration fair for women.

Arbitrator Bias

Another emerging theme appearing throughout the literature is bias within the arbitrator when dealing with the issue of gender discrimination. According to McCullough and Smith (2021), there are s (implicit biases, whereby arbitrators consciously or unconsciously support male claimants or disregard claims that are based on subjective experiences like sexes offenses such as sexual harassment). Due to gender prejudices within the workplace and other devious mechanisms that may influence arbitrators, women especially those in masculine dominated fields struggle to substantiate such claims since arbitrators are not fully aware of the structural and interpersonal barriers that women face at the workplace (Zhang & Kalev, 2020). Furthermore, arbitral neutrals are anticipated while no standard course or direction is offered to facilitate such neutrals to identify bias inherent in themselves. Wright and Johnson (2022) concisely state that if nothing is done, many of these biases will remain present in arbitration procedures. This just goes to show the lack of gender sensitivity in arbitrators, and although there are recommendations for potential changes that may include increasing the number of arbitrators, Patel and Evans (2021) put forward this proposal.

Effects of Mandatory Arbitration Pleadings on Justice

One of the main concerns is the fact that employing and corporations have placed mandatory arbitration clauses that prevent employees from taking collective action against their employers based on the labour laws of different states in the United States. These clauses, which many employees agree to as a condition of receiving employment, prevent individuals from prosecuting workplace discrimination, including gender discrimination, cases in court. Although arbitration is usually quicker, cheaper and less adversarial than litigation it has similar disadvantage of restricting employees' access to justice. According to Horton (2020), mandatory arbitration damages women as it denies them a personal right litigative remedy since the clauses result in forcible arbitration leading to striking down of claims on parity violation. Most of these employees are not aware of these clauses until when they want to challenge discrimination policies. Also, mandatory arbitration benefits employers most of the time because companies will always have the experience and adequate resources to go through an arbitration. In this regard, Turner and Simmons (2021) opine that there are increased structural asymmetry issues in arbitration because of two critical factors, the first one being the private and closed nature of the arbitration proceedings that do not attract the public or outside attention and pressure on employers to effect change for discriminatory employee treatments.

The comparison of arbitration and litigation shows that arbitration gives dramatically different results to gender discrimination cases. In the same vein, Harper and Smith (2022) empirically showed that woman can perform better in litigation as compared to arbitration in terms of the rate at which the woman emerges successful in the case and the quantum of monetary award given to her. This observation gives an indication that while courts of arbitration

might contain gains in terms of parties' time and costs they could give a raw deal in terms of justice especially for the sexual harassment and gender discrimination complaint. One of the reasons for the present gap is that legal actions enable to provide a greater number of materials, including testimonies, while non-formulaic discrimination can often be identified only by testify. Also, the legal systems are categorized because the courts have to stick to certain legal precedents due to consistency and legal responsibility of the services. However, arbitration is private and results are not helpful to set precedents (Jordan & Lee, 2019). This has made it to show that despite deals being made on individual cases, structural problems in gender discrimination are not addressed.

Practice and Reforms of Management and Leadership

From the perspective of practical application and reform, the implication of the results of this paper can be fourfold.

- **Gender-Sensitivity Training for Arbitrators:** Universities offering arbitrator training should include gender sensibility and the implicit bias so that the arbitrators have a keen understanding of gender equality claims. This argument was supported by Patel and Evans (2021) showing that arbitrators who received such training were more likely to deliver decisions that were more sensitive to the grievances of female claimants.
- **Diversifying the Arbitrator Pool:** Wright and Johnson (2022) agreed with the idea that more female and people of color as arbitrators could reduce bias. Another reason that a larger and more diverse group of arbitrators might be more sensitive to those problems and the issues of discrimination targeting women of color in particular.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Concerning the problem of confidentiality in arbitration, several scholars suggest improving the level of openness in

arbitration without sacrificing confidentiality. For instance, specific details released to the public about arbitration decisions, could assist in making future decisions (Jordan & Lee, 2019). This could also deter employers and demand change within their organizations to be made.

- Review of Mandatory Arbitration Clauses: Such needs, Horton (2020) and Turner and Simmons (2021) propose that legislative or policy change is needed to curb the use of mandatory arbitration clauses in gender discrimination cases. Possible changes could be to enable an employee to refuse to participate in compulsory arbitration without a threat of dismissal or to require that mandatory arbitration provisions conform to various Justice Department metrics of fairness to employees and to unions.

Comparison with the Previous Studies

The current research supports other research done in the past that have raised an eyebrow about the fairness of the arbitration system in handling gender discrimination cases. For example, Bales and Gely (2019) identified that even though arbitration precedes litigation, it does not challenge inequitable relations between employees and employers. Subsequent researches like that of Harper and Smith (2022) has extended from these realizations by employing quantitative evidence to establish how these disparities work against women. However, newer work, such as Webb and Lupu (2020) indicate that reforms could enhance the value of arbitration in handling gender discrimination cases. For instance, they say that, how discrimination based on gender interacts with discrimination based on race and class, or how arbitration of such complaints can be improved and can work to reduce gender bias by reshaping the environment for arbitrators; by providing education to arbitrators and by altering the characteristics of the arbitration procedure. Such a strategy could make arbitration not

only fair to women but also to other dominated people.

The implications of the discussion pertain to the difficulties of hiring labour arbitration as the means of fighting gender discrimination in the sphere of labour activity. Despite the evident advantages of arbitration in terms of time and costs compared with court hearings it is still very problematic in terms of meeting the goal of equality and fighting against gender discrimination for women. Such difficulties exist because arbitrators tend to be biased, mandatory arbitration clauses make justice difficult to access, and arbitration is confidential.. But there is potential for change: gender-sensitivity training, greater transparency, and a reconsideration of the extremely popular, but perhaps problematic, mandatory arbitration clauses could all remedy these problems. In general, arbitration retains its importance to resolve labour disputes; however, further improvements are needed to assess its capacity to address gender discrimination . The future work research and policy programmes should be directed toward the cause of advancing these reforms so as to make a fair and humane arbitral treatment for all employees.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research shows how labour arbitration is an obstacle to women seeking justice against gender discrimination at the workplace. Although arbitration has been posited as a faster and cheaper remedy than litigation, there is substantial data to suggest that, in its current form, it is inadequate in providing adequate redress and equal treatment for female employees. The flawed structure of arbitration in the issues of bias of arbitrators, compelled arbitration requirements, lack of confidentiality in arbitration and disparities in legal rights in arbitration as opposed to in court all present disadvantages to women in gender discrimination cases by arbitration. The paper finds out that bias, both conscious and unconscious – of the arbitrator has a strong

bearing on the decisions taken in the gender discrimination cases. Another issue arising from the study is that most arbitrators have little or no awareness or training in gender sensitivity, and this may deter the award of a favourable decision to ladies who make up the female claimants. This bias can share the form of insufficient awareness of women's problems in the male-dominated organizations or prejudices regarding women's words credibility (McCullough & Smith, 2021; Zhang & Kalev, 2020). Extension of mandatory arbitration clauses in employment contracts is even worse; it has all but ensured that female employees have no voice. These clauses make employee's-agree to arbitrate instead of litigate, without they fully understanding any consequences thereof. These clauses tend to benefit employers by limiting legal accountability and keeping discriminatory practices out of public view (Horton, 2020). For many women, especially those in vulnerable employment positions, mandatory arbitration clauses make it difficult to obtain fair outcomes (Turner & Simmons, 2021).

Women are more likely to receive favorable outcomes and larger settlements in litigation than in arbitration. This is because litigation allows for more comprehensive evidence gathering, greater transparency, and public accountability (Harper & Smith, 2022). Arbitration, on the other hand, is often conducted in private, preventing the development of legal precedents that could contribute to systemic changes within organizations (Jordan & Lee, 2019). The study emphasizes the need for reforms in the arbitration process to improve its fairness for women. Gender-sensitivity training for arbitrators, increasing the diversity of arbitrators, making arbitration proceedings more transparent, and reducing the prevalence of mandatory arbitration clauses in cases of gender discrimination are all essential steps toward ensuring that arbitration serves as an equitable platform for resolving disputes (Wright & Johnson, 2022; Patel & Evans, 2021).

For practice, human resource departments and legal teams within organizations need to rethink their reliance on mandatory arbitration clauses, particularly for gender discrimination cases. Employers should consider creating more open and transparent grievance procedures that allow women to bring claims forward without the fear of retaliation or having their voices silenced through confidential arbitration proceedings. For policy, there is a clear need for legislative interventions that limit the enforceability of mandatory arbitration clauses, particularly in cases involving workplace discrimination. Lawmakers could also mandate gender-sensitivity training for arbitrators and establish mechanisms for greater public accountability in arbitration decisions, such as anonymized public reporting of outcomes. This could ensure that arbitration proceedings do not become a shield for discriminatory practices.

For future research, more empirical studies are needed to explore the long-term effects of arbitration outcomes on women's careers, especially in different sectors. Additionally, future research could focus on intersectionality—how gender interacts with race, class, and other social categories—to understand the compounded effects of discrimination in arbitration. This would provide a deeper understanding of how arbitration systems might disadvantage not only women but also marginalized groups who face multiple forms of discrimination (Webb & Lupu, 2020).

While this study has provided valuable insights into the role of labour arbitration in resolving gender discrimination cases, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. First, the research has focused primarily on the United States and the United Kingdom, where arbitration is commonly used. The findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions with different legal and employment frameworks. Future research should explore labour arbitration in other global contexts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Moreover, the study relied heavily on secondary data and literature reviews, which limits its ability to offer new empirical insights. Future research could involve primary data collection, such as interviews with female employees who have gone through arbitration, arbitrators themselves, or legal professionals involved in these processes. A deeper qualitative analysis of the lived experiences of women in arbitration would add richness to the discussion and reveal the nuanced challenges they face.

In conclusion, while labour arbitration offers certain advantages in terms of efficiency and reduced costs, its effectiveness in addressing gender discrimination is questionable. The combination of arbitrator bias, the widespread use of mandatory arbitration clauses, and the confidential nature of the proceedings creates an environment where women may struggle to obtain fair outcomes. However, by implementing reforms such as gender-sensitivity training, increasing the diversity of arbitrators, enhancing transparency, and rethinking the use of mandatory arbitration clauses, arbitration could become a more equitable mechanism for resolving gender discrimination claims. To ensure progress in achieving workplace gender equality, both employers and policymakers must work together to create fairer dispute resolution processes.

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CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND SOCIAL STIGMATIZATION AS PUSH FACTORS OF ABORTION DECISIONS AMONG UNMARRIED WOMEN IN ORTHODOX CHURCHES OF TARABIA NIGERIA

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Abstract

In deeply conservative Orthodox Christian communities in sub-Saharan Africa, reproductive decisions among unmarried women are shaped by an interplay of doctrinal teachings, punitive church discipline, and pervasive social stigma. This study examined how these forces influence abortion decisions among unmarried women in Orthodox churches in Taraba State, Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods approach, we analyzed quantitative data from 200 survey respondents and qualitative insights from 20 in-depth interviews. The participants had firsthand experiences with premarital pregnancy and church sanctions. Findings revealed that fear of excommunication, public shaming, and communal disgrace often drove women to consider abortion as a clandestine strategy for preserving social acceptance. Approximately 75% of respondents reported premarital pregnancies, and 80% had experienced disciplinary actions including mandatory counseling, public rebuke, or suspension from church activities. Church discipline significantly heightened perceived social stigma, $\chi^2(4) = 16.25$, $p = .003$. Logistic regression analysis indicated that shame ($OR = 0.25$, $p < .001$), isolation ($OR = 0.43$, $p = .006$), and guilt ($OR = 0.52$, $p = .034$) were strong predictors of reduced church participation. A second chi-square test showed a robust association between social stigma and abortion decisions, $\chi^2 = 32.5$, $p < .01$. Qualitative narratives accentuated the psychological burden of silent suffering and internal moral conflict. In light of these findings, we recommended more compassionate, grace-centered pastoral practices and urge theological and policy reforms that reconcile religious convictions with reproductive health justice.

Keywords: Social Stigma, Church Discipline, Premarital Pregnancies, Reproductive Health

Introduction

Reproductive decisions among single women are deeply shaped by socio-cultural, religious, and moral forces, especially in conservative religious contexts. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where abortion remains a socially and morally contested issue, unmarried women who experience unintended pregnancies often face intense stigma, isolation, and institutional condemnation (Hanschmidt et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 2009). This stigma, both enacted and internalized, operates not only at the interpersonal level but also through powerful

religious institutions that serve as moral gatekeepers and cultural arbiters of female sexuality (Cockrill et al., 2013; Baker et al., 2022).

Within Orthodox Christian communities, particularly in Nigeria, the regulation of female sexuality is deeply embedded in patriarchal religious structures that emphasize purity, obedience, and silence. Premarital pregnancy is viewed as a moral failure, often punished through formal church discipline such as public rebuke, exclusion from sacraments, or

excommunication (Schenker, 2000; Ojiambo, 2021). These disciplinary practices are not merely symbolic but function as tools of spiritual correction and communal shaming that can shape women's reproductive choices in coercive ways. For many unmarried women, the threat of public disgrace or religious sanction may result in silence, concealment, or even abortion, undertaken not necessarily as an autonomous decision, but as a response to anticipated stigma and institutional exclusion (Smith et al., 2016; Coleman-Minahan et al., 2020).

Despite the growing literature on abortion stigma (Cockrill et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2009), few studies have critically examined how church-based disciplinary structures in African Orthodox backgrounds interact with social stigma to shape abortion decisions. Much of the existing research remains Euro-American in focus, neglecting the specific cultural, theological, and institutional nuances of African Christian contexts (Aniteye et al., 2016; Ruzibiza, 2021). In Nigeria, a country where Christian religious identity deeply informs moral worldviews and institutional governance, the role of Orthodox churches in reinforcing stigma through doctrinal discipline remains understudied. This gap is particularly salient in Taraba State, where Orthodox churches such as the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Reformed Church of Christ For Nations (RCCN), and the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria wield significant social and spiritual influence over local communities.

This study therefore investigated how formal church discipline and broader social stigma intersect to shape abortion decisions among unmarried women in Orthodox Christian communities in Taraba State, Nigeria. Drawing on labeling theory, the research interrogated the silences, pressures, and choices that unmarried women navigate in contexts where reproductive autonomy is constrained by both sacred guilt and public shame. By employing a mixed-methods approach, this study provide both empirical

breadth and qualitative depth to critically engage with the layered, often hidden, mechanisms through which moral institutions influence reproductive behavior.

Abortion and Stigma: A Global and Contextual Perspective

Stigma surrounding abortion remains one of the most profound barriers to reproductive health rights and services globally. It is particularly intense in settings where religion and patriarchal norms intersect to define moral boundaries around female sexuality (Kumar, Hessini, & Mitchell, 2009). According to Hanschmidt et al. (2016), abortion stigma often manifests as societal judgment, internalized guilt, social exclusion, and institutional discrimination. These forms of stigma can have long-term psychological and social effects, especially on unmarried women in conservative or religious communities.

In Nigeria, abortion is criminalized under most circumstances and morally condemned by dominant religious institutions. This legal-religious nexus compounds the stigmatization of women who choose to terminate a pregnancy (Cook & Dickens, 2014). For many, including young women in Orthodox Christian communities, abortion is not merely a private decision—it is a contested moral terrain, shaped by faith, shame, and fear of ostracization.

Social Norms, Shame, and Reproductive Silence

Abortion stigma is often shaped by prevailing social norms about gender, sexuality, and motherhood. Research by Smith et al. (2016) underlines how unintended pregnancy and abortion are viewed as deviant, especially among adolescents and unmarried women, leading to gossip, exclusion, and emotional distress. These consequences are further exacerbated by religious teachings that frame premarital sex and abortion as sins, fostering an environment of silence and shame (Ojiambo, 2021; Schenker, 2000).

In the context of Orthodox churches in Nigeria, this stigma is not just a cultural artifact—it is actively reinforced through institutional practices. Church leaders often interpret abortion as both a moral failure and a spiritual transgression, thereby justifying formal and informal sanctions against women perceived to have violated religious codes of conduct (Aniteye, O'Brien, & Mayhew, 2016).

Institutional Discipline and Gendered Control

Church discipline operates as a mechanism of social control, particularly in conservative religious settings. Within Orthodox churches, disciplinary actions such as public confessions, suspension from church functions, or even excommunication are used to enforce sexual purity and moral compliance (Ruzibiza, 2021). These measures disproportionately target women and reinforce a gendered double standard that views female sexuality through a lens of sin and shame. Such institutional control mechanisms have deep implications for reproductive agency. As Cockrill et al. (2013) demonstrate, many women internalize this stigma, leading to psychological distress and delayed decision-making. Others, as reported by Coleman-Minahan et al. (2020), may seek clandestine abortions without adequate support or post-abortion care, further endangering their health and well-being.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the labelling theory, which provides a theoretical framework for understanding how societal reactions to deviant behavior influence individuals' self-identity and subsequent actions. According to this theory, deviance is not inherent in an act but is constructed through societal reactions to that act. In the context of premarital pregnancy, Orthodox religious institutions label unmarried women who become pregnant as deviant, thereby subjecting them to public censure and exclusion. These labels, which are reinforced through church discipline and doctrinal

teachings, significantly affect how women perceive themselves and their choices. The labeling process begins with the initial designation of a woman as immoral or sinful, based on her pregnancy outside marriage. This label transforms her identity, marking her as a deviant in the eyes of her community. Over time, the repeated social stigmatization can lead to the internalization of this negative label, causing feelings of shame, guilt, and social isolation. This internalization may drive women to make difficult decisions, such as opting for abortion, in an attempt to avoid further ostracization and to restore a sense of personal dignity. The theory also highlights the potential for secondary deviance, where the pressure to conform to societal expectations leads women to conceal or rationalize their actions, often through unsafe or clandestine abortions. Moreover, labeling theory emphasizes the role of institutions in maintaining social control, illustrating how religious authorities hold the power to define and enforce moral norms. In Orthodox churches, religious leaders' ability to impose moral discipline becomes a powerful tool in shaping reproductive decisions, reinforcing societal expectations and creating an environment where women are forced to navigate the complex intersection of religion, morality, and reproductive autonomy. Through the lens of labeling theory, this study seeks to unpack how religiously motivated labeling and stigma intersect to influence abortion decisions, ultimately reinforcing gendered social control and shaping women's reproductive lives in the face of overwhelming moral judgment.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of church discipline and social stigma in shaping abortion decisions among unmarried women in Orthodox Christian communities in Taraba State, Nigeria. The quantitative component

utilized a structured survey to quantify the prevalence of premarital pregnancies, abortion decisions, and the perceived influence of church discipline and social stigma within these religious communities. In parallel, the qualitative aspect involved conducting in-depth interviews (IDIs) to explore the lived experiences of unmarried women who have confronted these issues. This mixed-methods approach ensured a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, balancing numerical breadth with rich, contextual insights, thus enhancing the validity and robustness of the findings.

The research was conducted in Taraba State, situated in the northeastern region of Nigeria, which is characterized by a unique socio-religious environment. This region was specifically chosen due to its religiously diverse and predominantly Orthodox Christian demographic, comprising congregations such as the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, Christ Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRCN), Reformed Church of Christ for Nations (RCCN), Catholic Church, and the United Methodist Church in Nigeria (UMCN). These Orthodox churches maintain strong moral and religious codes that significantly influence social norms, particularly regarding sexuality and reproduction. The churches' leadership, through practices such as church discipline, including public reprimands, exclusion from church activities, and, in extreme cases, excommunication, enforces stringent expectations on their members, especially women. This religious context offered a fertile ground for examining the intersection of church discipline, social stigma, and reproductive choices among unmarried women.

The target population comprised unmarried women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who were members of Orthodox Christian congregations in Taraba State and have experienced premarital pregnancies. Additionally, the study included church leaders and clergy who were actively involved in the

enforcement of church discipline policies related to premarital pregnancies and abortion decisions. This dual focus allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of unmarried women as well as the perspectives of religious authorities who influence church discipline.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives. The primary focus was on unmarried women who had experienced premarital pregnancies and on church leaders responsible for implementing church discipline. For the quantitative component, a sample size of 200 women was selected to participate in the survey. These women were identified through church records and referrals from church leaders, ensuring they met the criteria of having experienced premarital pregnancies. This sample size was chosen to ensure sufficient statistical power for analyzing prevalence and identifying significant relationships. For the qualitative component, 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of women who participated in the survey. These women were selected based on their willingness to share detailed experiences about their premarital pregnancies, the church's disciplinary response, and their subsequent abortion decisions. The sample size for the qualitative aspect followed the principle of data saturation, ensuring that additional interviews would not provide new insights or themes. The purposive sampling technique for both the quantitative and qualitative components ensures that the study captures both breadth and depth of experiences, providing a rich, multi-dimensional understanding of the issue.

The quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to gather demographic information, experiences with church discipline, perceptions of social stigma, and abortion decisions. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to allow for a comprehensive collection of data. For the qualitative data, a

semi-structured interview guide was developed. The interview guide included open-ended questions aimed at exploring participants' personal experiences, perceptions, and feelings regarding church discipline, social stigma, and their decisions about abortion. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for probing deeper into emerging issues during the interviews, ensuring that important nuances were captured.

The quantitative data were collected through face-to-face administration of the structured questionnaires by trained research assistants. This method was chosen to ensure clarity of questions and to facilitate higher response rates, particularly given the sensitive nature of the topic. In-depth interviews were conducted by the principal investigator and trained assistants in private settings to ensure confidentiality and create a comfortable space for participants to share their experiences. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent, and transcripts were generated for analysis. The interview process was designed to foster trust and openness, which is particularly important when addressing sensitive topics such as abortion.

Given the sensitive nature of the study's topic, stringent ethical guidelines were followed. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of participation. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any negative consequences. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, with no identifying information included in the final report. All data were stored securely and only accessible to authorized personnel. Furthermore, participants were assured that their responses would be used solely for the purposes of this research and would remain anonymous.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies,

percentages, and cross-tabulations, were used to summarize demographic characteristics, the prevalence of premarital pregnancies, and abortion decisions. Chi-square tests and logistic regression were used to explore relationships between church discipline, social stigma, and abortion decisions, identifying significant predictors of abortion choices among unmarried women. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved coding and categorizing recurring themes and patterns related to church discipline, social stigma, and abortion decisions. Thematic analysis was selected because it allows for an in-depth examination of the subjective experiences and perceptions of participants. NVivo software was utilized to aid in the organization and coding of qualitative data, ensuring systematic analysis.

While the study design is robust, certain limitations are acknowledged. Social desirability bias may have influenced participants' responses, particularly on sensitive issues such as abortion. To mitigate this, confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Additionally, while purposive sampling enhances the relevance of the findings, it may limit the generalizability of the results to broader populations. However, the rich qualitative data collected provide deep insights into the lived experiences of unmarried women in Orthodox Christian communities in Taraba State, offering valuable perspectives that may not be captured through quantitative data alone.

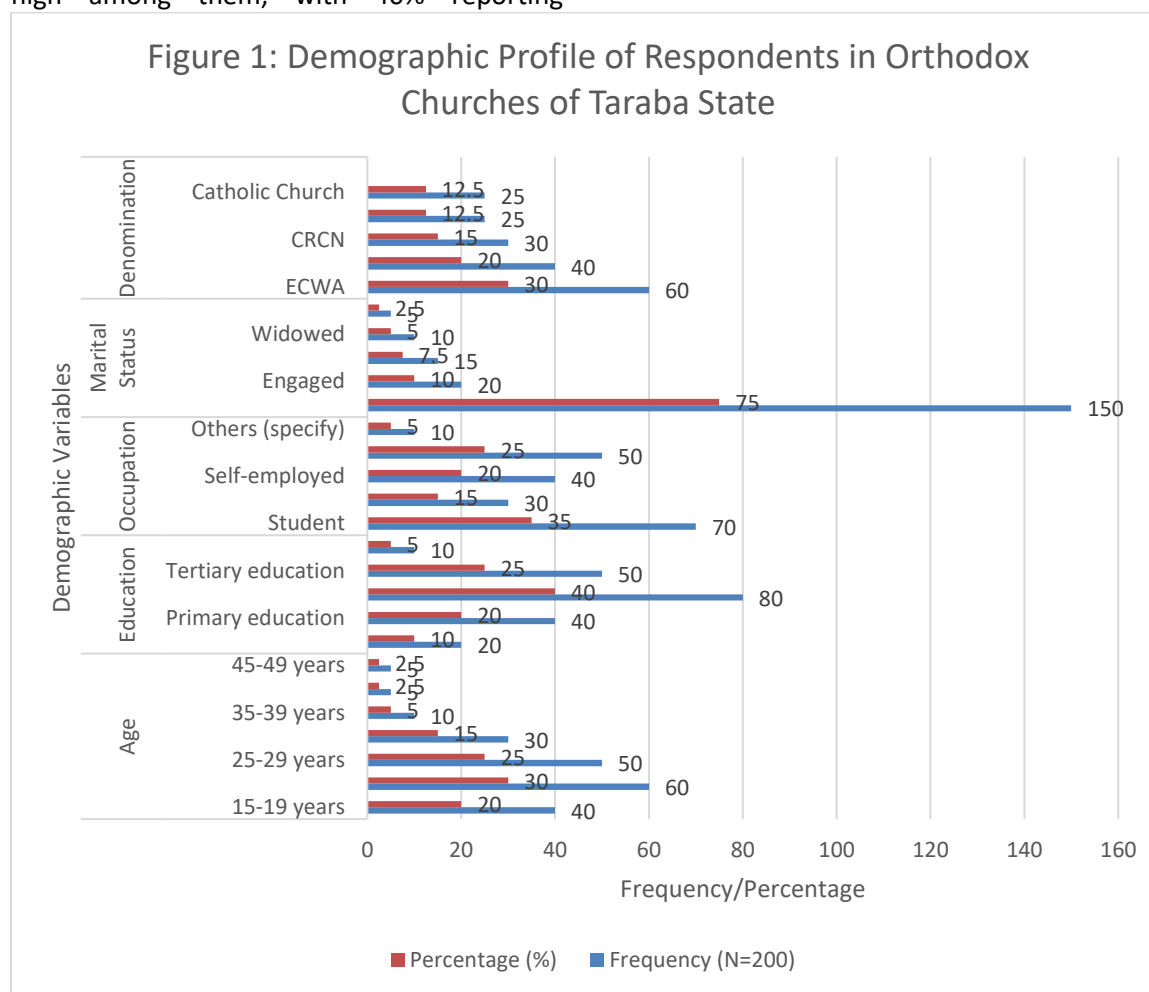
Results and discussions

This integrated analysis and discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative data is structured thematically, grounded in theoretical insights from religious moral regulation, stigma theory, and reproductive autonomy, and is compared against extant empirical literature.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants reveal important contextual foundations for interpreting their reproductive decisions. As illustrated in Figure 1, the respondents were predominantly young women aged 20–24 years (30%), followed closely by those aged 25–29 (25%) and 15–19 (20%). Educational attainment was relatively high among them, with 40% reporting

completion of secondary education and 25% holding tertiary qualifications. Their occupational status showed a dominance of students (35%), followed by employed (25%) and self-employed (20%) women. The marital status profile indicated that 75% of respondents were single, while others were either engaged, divorced, or widowed.



This demographic configuration is youthful, educated, and relatively socially mobile which suggests a population that is simultaneously navigating the challenges of modern identity and traditional religious morality. The educational and occupational spread further reflects diverse levels of exposure to secular values and access to reproductive health information. As other studies have shown (e.g., Agadjanian, 2005), these characteristics are often predictive of heightened tensions

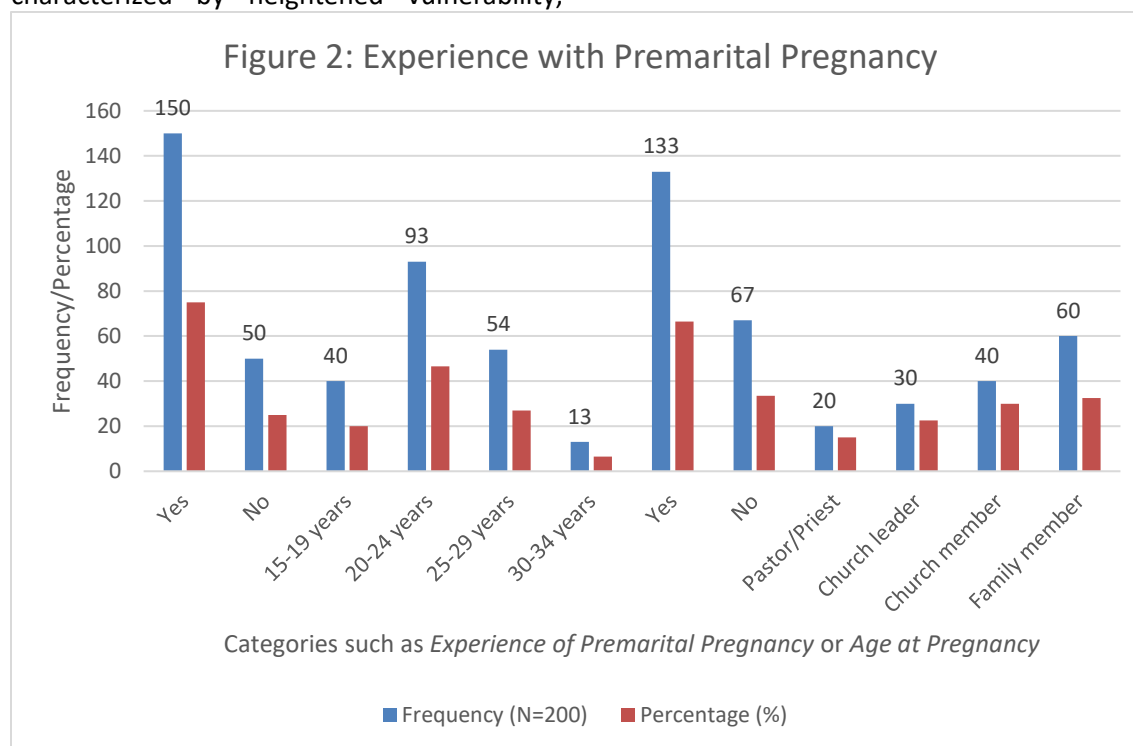
between personal agency and the collective morality imposed by religious communities, especially in the context of sexuality and reproductive decisions.

Experience with Premarital Pregnancy

The experience of premarital pregnancy among respondents was found as a defining element in shaping reproductive decisions within Orthodox Christian communities in Taraba State. The survey data show that 75%

of the surveyed women reported having experienced at least one premarital pregnancy. Notably, the majority of these occurrences (46.5%) were concentrated among the 20–24 age group, a period typically characterized by heightened vulnerability,

identity formation, and transitional moral accountability. This pattern suggests that young adulthood remains a critical phase in which sexual agency confronts institutional and familial expectations.



Further analysis of disclosure patterns showed that 66.5% of the women chose to confide in someone regarding their pregnancy. Of these, 32.5% disclosed to family members, particularly mothers or elder siblings, while 22.5% turned to church leaders. These choices of confidants indicate a dual influence: the familial domain as the primary emotional support system and the religious institution as the arbiter of moral conduct. However, the emotional responses to these disclosures frequently showed more judgment than compassion, often intensifying internalized guilt and shame. The qualitative accounts provided compelling insights into the psychosocial burdens that accompany such disclosures. A 22-year-old student from the ECWA denomination (pseudonym: Evelyn) described the emotional trauma that followed

her attempt to seek support from a church authority:

I had to tell my pastor because I thought the church would help me. But I felt ashamed... Like I was not good enough. When I told him, he just told me to come for counseling. I felt like I was being judged, and I couldn't breathe.

Evelyn's account stresses a recurring theme in the data: the perception of the church as a punitive rather than pastoral institution. Instead of offering holistic support, the counseling was framed in moralizing tones that intensified her emotional distress. Another participant (25, unemployed, CRCN), offered a similar yet more intense narrative:

When I told my mother, she cried all night. But the church was worse. They called me into a meeting with elders and asked who the father was. I just wanted to die. I thought God had abandoned me.

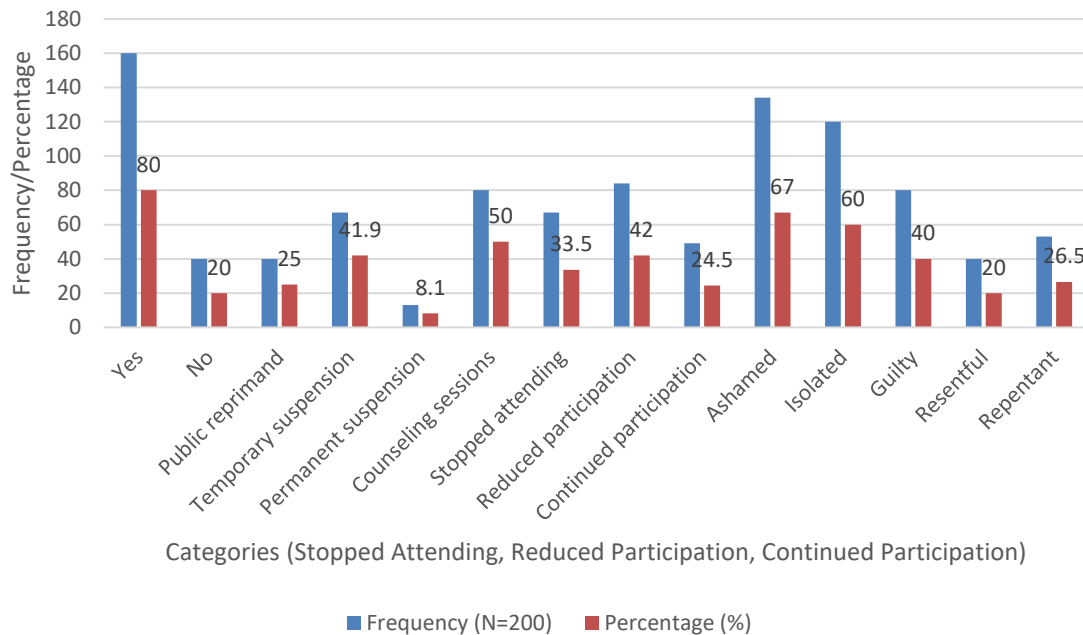
Such stories mirror broader trends observed in highly religious contexts, where premarital pregnancy is not only seen as a personal failing but also as a communal disgrace. Scholars such as Kumar et al. (2009) and Hanschmidt et al. (2016) have stressed how moralistic condemnation within faith communities often compounds the psychological burden of young women, leading many to consider abortion as a secretive and desperate means of avoiding institutional shame. In these settings, abortion becomes less of a reproductive choice and more of a socially coerced survival strategy. The weight of spiritual guilt, fear of ostracization, and the potential for public humiliation converge to create a context in which disclosure becomes a double-edged sword. On one hand, it is necessary for emotional relief and support; on the other, it invites disciplinary action, community surveillance, and social exclusion. This aligns with Cockrill et al. (2013), who argue that in religiously conservative societies, the stigma associated with unwed pregnancy significantly undermines women's reproductive autonomy, often leading to secrecy and unsafe abortion practices. Collectively, these findings indicate that premarital pregnancy among young Orthodox Christian women in Taraba State is not merely a private matter of reproductive

health but a deeply politicized and moralized event. It is shaped by a matrix of religious doctrine, gendered expectations, and sociocultural taboos, factors that not only limit open dialogue but also reinforce a culture of silence, fear, and moral surveillance around sexuality.

Church Discipline Due to Premarital Pregnancy

The study also found that institutional religious responses to premarital pregnancy among unmarried women in Orthodox churches are both pervasive and deeply punitive. As depicted in Figure 3, 80% of respondents reported having faced some form of church discipline following the disclosure or discovery of a premarital pregnancy. The most frequently reported disciplinary measures were compulsory counseling sessions (50%) and temporary suspensions from church roles and participation (41.9%). Additionally, a notable proportion of women experienced more overt forms of moral sanctioning, including public reprimands (25%) and, in more extreme cases, permanent exclusion from church activities (8.1%). These punitive measures carried substantial emotional and social repercussions.

Figure 3: Church Discipline Due to Premarital Pregnancy



A majority of respondents described enduring profound psychological distress in the aftermath of church-imposed discipline. Specifically, 67% reported feelings of shame, 60% expressed experiences of social isolation, and 40% acknowledged persistent guilt. These emotional outcomes were frequently accompanied by a rupture in religious participation, with 42% of respondents reducing their involvement in church activities and 33.5% choosing to stop attending church altogether. These findings accentuate the role of religious institutions not only in moral governance but also in shaping trajectories of social exclusion and spiritual detachment. The qualitative narratives gathered from interviewees provide intimate insight into how church discipline is experienced and internalized. One participant, referred to here as *Chizoba* (pseudonym), a 24-year-old self-employed woman affiliated with the LCCN, recounted:

After I got pregnant, I was given a public reprimand. It was in front of everyone, and I could feel their eyes on me. They told me I was a bad example. It was the worst moment

of my life. I was so ashamed; I couldn't go back to church for a long time.

Similarly, *Ruth* (pseudonym), a 27-year-old congregant from the United Methodist Church Nigeria (UMCN), shared her experience of symbolic exclusion:

I was suspended from the choir. That was my only joy. They said I had defiled the altar. I cried for weeks. I started thinking of ending the pregnancy just to regain their respect.

These testimonies illustrate the emotional violence of public religious discipline and the devastating social costs it imposes on women. For many, the disciplinary process does not function as a form of support or restoration, but rather as a performative display of exclusion that reinforces gendered moral hierarchies. As Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma articulates, such public shaming rituals contribute to the construction of a "spoiled identity," where the individual becomes defined by a single moral failure that overrides all other aspects of their social or spiritual self. These experiences are consistent with the findings of Smith et al. (2016), who argue that religious moral sanctions within African church contexts often result in women internalizing

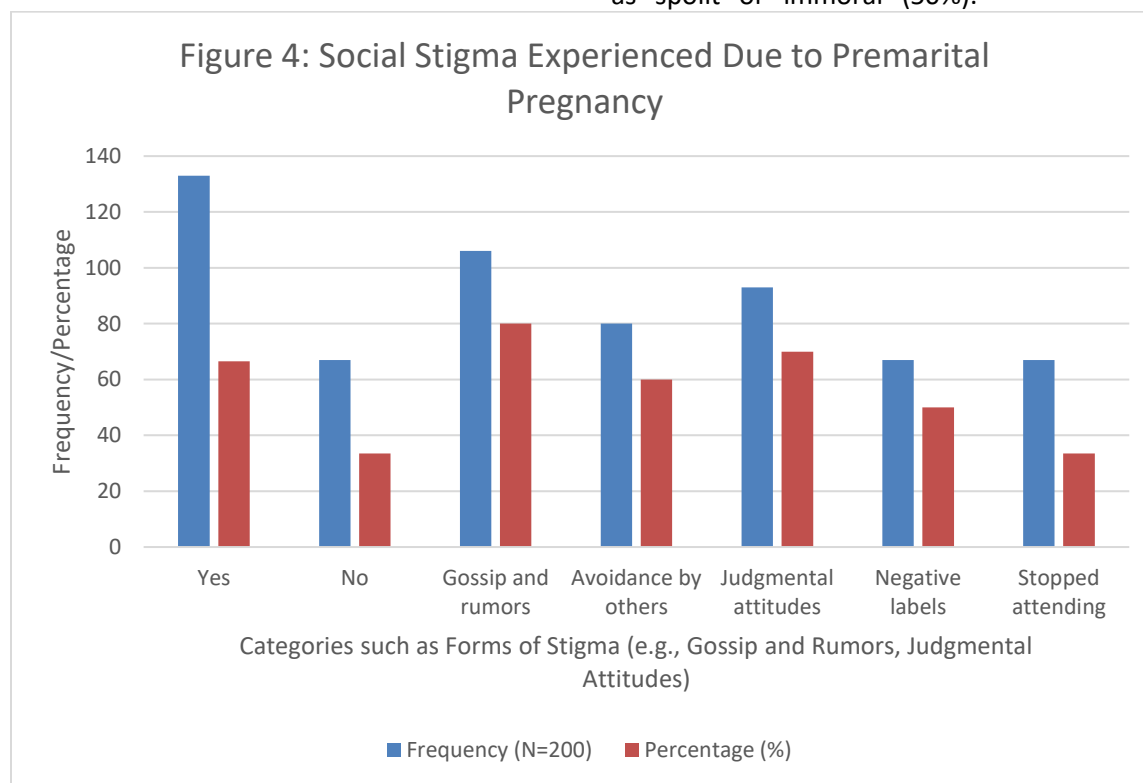
blame and pursuing abortion not as a proactive assertion of autonomy, but as an act of redemption and moral realignment. In this sense, abortion becomes a means of reconciling with community expectations and restoring social respectability—a dynamic that is particularly pronounced in patriarchal religious environments that equate female purity with spiritual legitimacy.

Furthermore, the findings reveal a broader institutional tendency toward punitive rather than restorative justice, reinforcing what Agadjanian (2005) terms the “moral surveillance function” of African churches. Rather than offering emotional or material support to unmarried pregnant women, disciplinary practices often function as

deterrents meant to uphold communal values through public shaming and exclusion.

Social Stigma Experienced Due to Premarital Pregnancy

The findings of this study also revealed that social stigma functions as a deeply entrenched and gendered mechanism of control within Orthodox church communities in Taraba State. As indicated in Figure 4, 66.5% of respondents reported experiencing some form of social stigma following a premarital pregnancy. This stigma manifested through various social interactions, including gossip (80%), avoidance by peers and church members (60%), judgmental attitudes (70%), and the application of derogatory labels such as “spoilt” or “immoral” (50%).



These expressions of stigma extended beyond interpersonal exchanges and had profound implications for the women's social integration. Approximately 33.5% of respondents reported withdrawing from public life, including religious and community gatherings, in an effort to escape shame, surveillance, and mockery. The social

environment became a site of quiet punishment, where the woman's body was rendered both visible and morally suspect. The emotional toll of such exclusion is vividly captured in the narratives of the research participants. *Miriam* (pseudonym), a 21-year-old student from the Lutheran Church, recounted:

After the news spread, some people stopped talking to me. Even during youth fellowship, I was ignored. They said I was unclean. It was like being erased.

Likewise, *Joyce* (pseudonym), a 28-year-old member of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN), described the psychological burden of social labeling: They called me names—"Jezebel", 'spoilt girl'. I couldn't walk freely in my own neighborhood. I started thinking that ending the pregnancy would make people forget.

These personal testimonies exemplify what Link and Phelan (2001) conceptualize as the multidimensionality of stigma, beginning with labeling and stereotyping, progressing to separation, and culminating in status loss and discrimination. The public response to premarital pregnancy in these religious communities is not just about disapproval; it is a ritualized form of exclusion that symbolically separates the "impure" from the spiritually and socially "acceptable."

Moreover, the stigma is not randomly assigned; it is deeply gendered. The woman bears the moral burden of reproductive behavior, while male counterparts are often invisible in the discourse of shame. This asymmetry reflects broader African epistemologies of gender and sexuality, where female purity is sacralized, surveilled, and regulated by both religious institutions and community norms (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Lugones, 2007). Stigma thus operates not only as an outcome of premarital pregnancy but also as a strategy of containment—ensuring conformity with patriarchal expectations through fear of ostracism and reputational ruin.

Importantly, this stigmatization is neither accidental nor individual—it is institutionalized through religious rhetoric, communal expectations, and cultural codes. The Orthodox churches in Taraba State serve as both spiritual sanctuaries and moral tribunals, wielding considerable influence over the boundaries of female respectability. In this context, the perceived "fall from grace" associated with premarital pregnancy often

leaves women with limited options: face perpetual shame or pursue abortion as a desperate attempt at erasing a socially sanctioned transgression. In line with Goffman's (1963) foundational work on stigma and its contemporary extensions by scholars such as Link and Phelan (2001), the study reveals that stigma in this setting is not merely a reaction; it is a tool of moral governance. It disciplines behavior, enforces silence, and shapes reproductive decisions. The findings also align with previous research by Hanschmidt et al. (2016), who demonstrate that abortion decisions are frequently made under coercive social pressure, especially in communities where religious morality and feminine virtue are tightly interwoven.

Hypothesis Testing

In this study, the hypotheses sought to examine the relationship between church discipline, social stigma, and abortion decisions among single women in Orthodox churches of Taraba State, Nigeria. Below is a presentation of the statistical analyses used to test these hypotheses, supported by tables.

Hypothesis 1: Church Discipline Is Positively Associated with Social Stigma Experienced by Women Due to Premarital Pregnancy

To test this hypothesis, a chi-square test was conducted to determine whether church discipline is associated with the experience of social stigma. The null hypothesis (H_0) posited that there is no association between church discipline and the experience of social stigma, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) posited that there is a significant association.

Table 1: Chi-Square Test for Association Between Church Discipline and Social Stigma

Variable	χ^2	df	p-value
Church Discipline and Stigma	16.25	4	0.003

The chi-square test revealed a statistically significant p-value of 0.003, suggesting a strong association between church discipline

and the experience of social stigma. This indicates that women who underwent church discipline—particularly public reprimands or suspensions—were more likely to face stigma within their communities. These findings align with previous research, such as Cockrill et al. (2013), which highlights the exacerbation of stigma by punitive religious practices. Similarly, Norris et al. (2011) found that such punitive actions led to increased social isolation, reinforcing the broader social consequences of church discipline. In an interview, a respondent (age 24, RCCN) shared her experience of how church discipline led to widespread stigma:

The public reprimand I received made everyone talk about me. It wasn't just the church people; even the neighbors and some family members started treating me differently."

This testimony features the ripple effect of church discipline, indicating that stigma extends beyond the religious community and reinforces social exclusion.

Hypothesis 2: The Emotional Impact of Church Discipline Is Negatively Associated with Women's Participation in Church Activities

This hypothesis aimed to test the emotional consequences of church discipline, particularly whether the emotional responses (e.g., shame, guilt, isolation) would affect women's participation in church activities. A logistic regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between emotional responses to church discipline (such as shame or guilt) and participation in church activities.

Table 2: Logistic Regression on Emotional Responses and Participation in Church Activities

Emotional Response	B	SE	Wald	p-value	OR
Ashamed	-1.37	0.35	15.47	0.0001	0.25
Isolated	-0.85	0.32	7.58	0.006	0.43
Guilt	-0.65	0.30	4.49	0.034	0.52

The regression analysis revealed significant negative relationships between emotional responses to church discipline (shame, isolation, and guilt) and participation in church activities. Specifically, women who reported feeling ashamed (OR = 0.25), isolated (OR = 0.43), or guilty (OR = 0.52) were less likely to participate in church activities. These findings are consistent with prior research, such as Blodgett et al. (2018), which demonstrated that negative emotional reactions to religious sanctions often lead to social withdrawal and alienation from faith communities. For the qualitative data, an interviewee (age 20, Lutheran Church) expressed the emotional toll of church discipline and its impact on her church involvement. She said:

After being disciplined by the church, I didn't want to go back. Every time I thought about attending, I felt the weight of my shame. I couldn't stand facing the looks of others. I had to stop attending.

This testimony shows the deep emotional struggle faced by women following church discipline, which often results in their withdrawal from religious activities. The regression results further validate these personal accounts, establishing how the emotional repercussions of discipline hinder women's ability to engage with their faith community.

Hypothesis 3: The Experience of Social Stigma Is Positively Associated with the Likelihood of Abortion Decisions Among Women with Premarital Pregnancy

The third hypothesis tested the relationship between the experience of social stigma and the likelihood of abortion decisions among women who had experienced premarital pregnancy. A chi-square test was employed to examine the association between social stigma and abortion decisions. The null hypothesis (H_0) posited no association, while

the alternative hypothesis (H_1) proposed a positive association between stigma and the decision to seek an abortion.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test for Association Between Social Stigma and Abortion Decisions

Variable	χ^2	df	p-value
Social Stigma and Abortion	8.41	1	0.004

The chi-square test yielded a significant p-value of 0.004, indicating that women who experienced social stigma were more likely to seek an abortion. This finding underscores the powerful role of social pressures in shaping reproductive decisions, particularly in contexts where women are heavily judged for premarital pregnancy. This aligns with studies like Finer et al. (2005), which found that stigma and judgment often lead women to consider abortion as a means of avoiding public shaming and social ostracism. A female interviewee (age 24, RCCN Church) shared how stigma influenced her decision to abort:

After the gossip and the way people looked at me, I knew I couldn't keep the pregnancy. I couldn't bear the shame of carrying it to term. I felt like everyone was judging me, and I couldn't face them.

Her decision illustrates how the combination of social stigma and religious judgment can drive women to abortion as a means of escaping public shame and maintaining social acceptability. These results provide convincing evidence that church discipline and social stigma play significant roles in shaping women's reproductive decisions, particularly the decision to seek an abortion. The emotional impact of church discipline further compounds these challenges, often leading to social withdrawal and disengagement from church activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined how stringent church discipline and entrenched social stigma shape

abortion decisions among unmarried women in Orthodox Christian communities of Taraba State, Nigeria. It successfully achieved its aim by unpacking the ways in which sacred guilt and institutional mechanisms of moral regulation influence women's reproductive choices in deeply religious contexts. By centering the lived experiences of unmarried women, this work adds a vital, underrepresented perspective to the global discourse on abortion, particularly within African theocratic settings where religious orthodoxy is both a spiritual compass and a social regulator. Rather than treating abortion solely as a personal or legal decision, this study reframes it as a socially mediated response to institutional judgment, moral exclusion, and reputational risk. In doing so, it underlines how church-imposed sanctions, spanning public reprimands to spiritual suspension, act not merely as disciplinary tools but as instruments of moral surveillance that silence dissent and suppress agency. The findings move the conversation beyond Western liberal paradigms of reproductive autonomy and spotlight the moral economies operating in communal, faith-driven societies. Theoretically, this research advances the intersection of religious moral regulation, reproductive justice, and labelling by grounding these frameworks in localized African realities. Practically, it urges religious leaders, public health practitioners, and policymakers to foster grace-centered, pastoral approaches that uphold human dignity while remaining theologically grounded. There is an urgent need for dialogue-based interventions, reproductive ethics education, and confidential counseling frameworks within religious spaces that do not weaponize guilt but extend empathy to the lived realities of women. Future research could explore how different denominations within African Christianity vary in their reproductive teachings and disciplinary practices, or how young men navigate similar moral backdrops. Comparative studies across regions or religions could further illuminate the broader

interplay of faith, gender, and reproductive politics. Ultimately, this study calls for a theological and institutional reckoning—one that does not conflate purity with punishment, nor silence with sanctity, but instead embraces justice, compassion, and accountability as coexisting pillars of the Christian witness.

Given these findings, there is an urgent need for Orthodox Christian institutions to critically re-evaluate their approaches to church discipline, particularly as it relates to unmarried women confronting reproductive dilemmas. Rather than adopting punitive frameworks that prioritize exclusion, shame, and moral surveillance, church communities must embrace a pastoral model rooted in restoration, empathy, and theological humility. This would entail shifting from moral condemnation toward grace-centered accountability, where correction is not abandonment, but compassionate accompaniment. Theologically, this study invites churches to revisit the biblical narrative in John 8:1–11, where a woman caught in adultery is brought before Jesus by religious leaders demanding her punishment. Rather than affirming their judgment, Jesus responds with disarming grace, saying, *“Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone.”* His refusal to condemn her—followed by the words, *“Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more”*—demonstrates a profound model of redemptive care that upholds moral integrity without weaponizing guilt or enforcing shame. This Christocentric ethic stands in stark contrast to contemporary disciplinary practices that silence, stigmatize, and marginalize unmarried women for perceived moral failures.

Therefore, churches must theologically reimagine how sacred guilt can become a source of healing rather than harm. Integrating reproductive justice awareness into Christian education, offering trauma-informed counseling, and fostering safe spaces for open dialogue are vital strategies for promoting spiritual and emotional wellbeing. Church leaders must be trained not only in doctrine,

but also in pastoral psychology, ethics, and gender-sensitive theology. Ultimately, for Orthodox churches in Nigeria to remain both theologically relevant and socially redemptive, they must transcend legalistic rigidity and embody Christ’s model of restorative grace. By reframing sacred guilt as a call to compassion rather than condemnation, churches can become sanctuaries of healing, affirming the inherent dignity, agency, and belovedness of all women, regardless of their reproductive histories.

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Ethics approval/declaration: This research was guided by all research ethics

Consent to participate: All participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study.

Consent for publication: All authors consent to the publication of this manuscript.

Authors contribution: Author-1 studied the literature and envisaged the study, involved in the development of the research procedure, collection of data, performed the data analysis and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author-2 and Author-3 reviewed and edited the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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TREATED MOSQUITO NET AND MALARIA CONTROL IN TAKUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs) in controlling malaria in Takum Local Government Area (LGA) of Taraba State, Nigeria. Malaria remains one of the leading public health challenges in the region, and ITNs are widely recognized as a key preventive measure. The objectives of the study were to assess the level of ITN ownership and usage among households, evaluate the knowledge and attitudes of residents toward ITNs, identify factors influencing their proper or improper use, and determine the perceived effectiveness of ITNs in reducing malaria incidence. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 384 respondents selected from the 2024 estimated population of Takum LGA, based on the Krejcie and Morgan table. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to determine significant associations. Findings revealed that while ITN ownership was relatively high, consistent usage was suboptimal, with some respondents citing heat, discomfort, or cultural misconceptions as barriers. Most participants had basic knowledge of malaria transmission and prevention, but their attitudes toward ITNs varied. The chi-square results showed statistically significant relationships between ITN usage and variables such as education level, income, and household size. While most respondents perceived ITNs as effective in malaria prevention, gaps in proper utilization persisted. The study concludes that ITNs are essential in the fight against malaria, but their effectiveness depends on adequate usage and positive community attitudes. It recommends intensified health education, regular monitoring, targeted interventions for vulnerable populations, and integration with other malaria control measures.

Keywords: Malaria, Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs)

Introduction

Malaria remains a major public health threat in sub-Saharan Africa, with Nigeria accounting for a substantial proportion of global malaria cases and deaths (WHO, 2022). Despite considerable investments in malaria control, including the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), the disease continues to inflict a heavy burden, particularly among vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and children under five (Obadiah *et al.*, 2023). ITNs have been identified as one of the most effective and cost-efficient interventions for malaria prevention, capable of reducing malaria transmission by up to 50% (Tula *et al.*, 2023). However, improper use, behavioral resistance, and the emergence of insecticide-resistant mosquito strains pose serious challenges to the effectiveness of ITNs (Suh *et al.*, 2023). In Taraba State, and specifically Takum Local Government Area (LGA), the burden of malaria remains high despite increased ITN distribution efforts (Babylon *et al.*, 2025). Previous studies have highlighted significant disparities between ITN ownership and actual usage, indicating a critical gap that threatens malaria control achievements (Eleazar *et al.*, 2022).

Given the persistent high malaria prevalence and the recognized importance of ITNs, it becomes imperative to examine the ownership, utilization, and community perceptions regarding treated nets in Takum LGA. Understanding the factors influencing ITN usage, including socio-economic status, knowledge, attitudes, and environmental barriers, is essential for developing more effective malaria control strategies (Okafor & Ogbonnaya, 2020; Alhassan *et al.*, 2022). This study aims to assess the effectiveness of ITNs in malaria prevention and control by evaluating household ownership and usage patterns, identifying factors affecting proper utilization, and examining the perceived impact of ITNs in reducing malaria incidence among residents of Takum. The findings will contribute to evidence-based interventions

and policy measures tailored to enhance malaria control efforts in the region (Onasanya *et al.*, 2025).

Malaria remains one of the most significant public health challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, where the vast majority of malaria cases and deaths occur. Despite substantial global investments since 2000, which have prevented over 2 billion cases and nearly 13 million deaths, malaria continues to cause immense morbidity and mortality, particularly among children under five and pregnant women. In 2023 alone, nearly 600,000 lives were lost to the disease, with approximately 95% of these deaths occurring in the WHO African Region. While malaria is both preventable and curable, delays in diagnosis and treatment can quickly lead to severe illness and death. As funding for malaria control efforts faces cuts, the progress made in combating the disease is increasingly at risk, threatening both public health and economic development in affected regions.

Nigeria, one of the countries with the highest malaria burden globally, has prioritized malaria control through initiatives such as the National Malaria Elimination Programme (NMEP), which includes the widespread distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs). ITNs have been proven to be one of the most effective and cost-efficient methods for preventing malaria transmission, reducing both morbidity and mortality (Tula, *et al.* 2023). Along with other preventive measures like indoor residual spraying (IRS) and antimalarial drug administration, ITNs have played a key role in malaria control efforts across the country, significantly lowering the disease's prevalence (Alhassan *et al.* 2022). However, challenges such as improper use, limited distribution, and the growing issue of insecticide resistance continue to undermine the full effectiveness of these interventions (Suh, *et al.* 2023). Despite these hurdles, ITNs remain a critical tool in Nigeria's fight against malaria (Eleazar, *et al.* 2022). Insecticide-treated mosquito nets

ITNs) are one of the most widely recommended methods for malaria prevention. They act as a barrier to prevent mosquito bites and are treated with insecticide to kill or repel mosquitoes. The widespread use of ITNs can reduce malaria transmission by up to 50%, making them a central part of global malaria control efforts (Tula, *et al.* 2023). The use of ITNs is encouraged through mass distribution campaigns, especially in malaria-endemic areas, as they are a cost-effective and sustainable solution.

Malaria continues to be a major public health concern in Nigeria, which accounted for about 26% of global malaria cases and 31% of global malaria deaths in 2021 (WHO, 2022). The disease remains endemic in all parts of the country, with pregnant women and children under five being the most vulnerable. In Taraba State, the burden is also significant; a study conducted in Takum LGA reported a malaria prevalence of 79.5% among pregnant women attending antenatal clinics (Obadiah *et al.*, 2023). Despite the proven effectiveness of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) in reducing malaria transmission, usage remains suboptimal. According to the Nigeria Malaria Indicator Survey, although 56% of households own at least one ITN, only 36% of the population used one the night before the survey, including 41% of children under five and 50% of pregnant women (National Malaria Elimination Programme, 2021). The usage of ITN in Taraba State is associated with significantly lower malaria prevalence among users compared to non-users (Babylon *et al.*, 2025). These disparities between ownership and actual usage highlight the urgent need to investigate factors influencing ITN adoption. Therefore, this study is necessary to explore the ownership, usage, and perception of ITNs in Takum LGA to inform more effective malaria control strategies and policy interventions.

Despite the widespread promotion of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs) as a frontline strategy for malaria prevention, malaria continues to pose a significant health

threat in Takum Local Government Area (LGA), Taraba State. Although ITNs have been proven effective in reducing malaria prevalence, their impact is hindered by low usage, improper practices, and growing insecticide resistance (Alhassan *et al.*, 2022; Suh *et al.*, 2023). In Takum LGA, factors such as poor awareness, misuse of ITNs for non-health purposes, and behavioral resistance among vulnerable populations, including pregnant women and children, have been identified as key challenges (Babylon *et al.*, 2025; Obadiah *et al.*, 2023; Njilmah *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, studies report that many households do not consistently sleep under ITNs, despite ownership, due to discomfort or misconceptions (Eleazar *et al.*, 2022; Tula *et al.*, 2023). This raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of malaria control efforts, especially in a region with high malaria transmission and limited health resources. As coordination among stakeholders and health systems remains suboptimal (Onasanya *et al.*, 2025), there is an urgent need to assess how treated mosquito nets are utilized and how their proper usage can be strengthened for improved malaria control in Takum LGA.

Conceptual Review

The use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) has become a cornerstone in malaria prevention strategies across sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria. ITNs are designed not only to serve as physical barriers against mosquito bites but also to kill mosquitoes upon contact, thereby reducing vector populations and interrupting transmission (Alhassan *et al.* 2022). Conceptually, their distribution and utilisation are anchored on the assumption that consistent and correct use would substantially lower malaria incidence. However, research continues to highlight gaps between ownership and actual use, a disparity often influenced by knowledge, socio-cultural perceptions, and practical limitations (Eleazar, *et al.* 2022).

In Nigeria, especially in states like Taraba, multiple socio-behavioural factors influence

the effectiveness of ITNs. Babylon *et al.* (2025) demonstrated that although a significant number of households in Taraba State possess ITNs, their misuse, such as using them for fishing or as garden fences, undermines their intended purpose. This devaluation reflects broader issues of community education and attitude towards malaria prevention tools. Additionally, Tula *et al.* (2023) observed that among students in tertiary institutions, misconceptions about the safety and comfort of ITNs limit their regular use, pointing to the need for more robust health education campaigns.

Takum LGA presents its own set of challenges. Elkanah *et al.* (2024) found high malaria prevalence among vulnerable groups such as sickle cell patients, indicating potential weaknesses in existing vector control interventions. Furthermore, Obadiah *et al.* (2023) linked the continued burden of malaria among pregnant women to inconsistent net usage and poor antenatal counselling. Compounding these challenges is the increasing resistance of mosquitoes to insecticides, which Suh *et al.* (2023) argue threatens the long-term efficacy of ITNs as a standalone preventive measure.

In light of these insights, it becomes crucial to approach ITN distribution and usage not merely as logistical endeavours but as multidimensional public health strategies involving education, monitoring, and behavioural change. The role of local partnerships and stakeholder engagement, as highlighted by Onasanya *et al.* (2025), also underscores the importance of coordinated community-level responses to maximise the benefits of ITNs. Thus, any assessment of treated mosquito nets in Takum must consider both the behavioural and environmental factors that mediate their use and effectiveness in controlling malaria.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies have extensively investigated the role of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) in malaria prevention, highlighting

diverse patterns in ownership, usage, effectiveness, and associated challenges across regions. Alhassan *et al.* (2022) examined the impact of ITNs and indoor residual spraying (IRS) on malaria prevalence among women of reproductive age in Ghana. Their findings indicated a significant reduction in self-reported malaria cases in areas with high ITN coverage, thereby affirming the critical role of ITNs in malaria control. Similarly, Okunlola, *et al.* (2023) applied a Bayesian spatial generalized linear mixed model to assess the relationship between malaria prevalence and ITN coverage across Nigeria, establishing a strong inverse relationship, particularly in regions with consistent ITN distribution campaigns.

In Nigeria, Asiya (2024) assessed the impact of ITN distribution for malaria prevention in Katsina Local Government Area, reporting increased awareness and usage of ITNs following distribution campaigns. However, the study also identified lapses in consistent usage, especially during the dry season. Complementing this, Babylon *et al.* (2025) explored knowledge, attitudes, and practices surrounding ITN misuse in Taraba State. They found that a significant proportion of residents repurposed ITNs for fishing, gardening, and other domestic uses, thereby reducing the nets' intended protective function.

The utilization of ITNs among vulnerable populations has also been critically examined. Okafor and Ogbonnaya (2020) reported that despite high knowledge levels among pregnant women in a South-Eastern Nigerian hospital, accessibility and consistent usage of ITNs remained suboptimal due to discomfort and cultural perceptions. A related study by Eleazar, Emenuga, and Udoh (2022) in Enugu, Nigeria, identified similar challenges, with key determinants of ITN usage including educational level, household size, and antenatal care attendance.

In the educational sector, Tula *et al.* (2023) investigated ITN ownership and usage among students of a tertiary institution in

northeastern Nigeria. Their findings revealed high ownership but moderate usage levels, with many students citing heat and perceived ineffectiveness as reasons for non-use. This suggests the need for behavioral change communication tailored to youth demographics. Njilmah *et al.* (2023), in a study across rural and urban areas of Taraba State, also reported disparities in malaria risk among school-aged children, influenced by ITN usage patterns, environmental sanitation, and parental knowledge.

Empirical evidence has further linked ITN usage with specific health outcomes among at-risk populations. Obadiah *et al.* (2023) assessed malaria prevalence among pregnant women in Taraba State, showing higher infection rates among non-users of ITNs, thereby emphasizing the protective efficacy of the intervention. Similarly, Elkanah *et al.* (2024) studied sickle cell patients in Takum LGA and found a strong correlation between ITN non-use and malaria incidence, indicating heightened vulnerability in this subgroup. Beyond behavioral and distributional aspects, studies have examined technical and systemic factors influencing ITN effectiveness. Suh *et al.* (2023) reviewed the implications of insecticide resistance on malaria vector competence, concluding that resistance significantly undermines ITN efficacy and calls for innovation in vector control strategies. Onasanya *et al.* (2025) evaluated stakeholder coordination in Taraba State's neglected tropical diseases (NTD) control, including malaria. The study emphasized that while ITN distribution is vital, success depends on integrated partnerships and policy coherence. Collectively, these empirical studies underscore the multifaceted dynamics surrounding ITN utilization and malaria prevention. They highlight the effectiveness of ITNs when used correctly, the sociocultural and behavioral barriers to consistent use, and the emerging threat of insecticide resistance, thereby reinforcing the need for targeted interventions, continuous monitoring, and

cross-sectoral collaboration in malaria-endemic regions.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is an essential tool in guiding research, providing a foundation upon which to base hypotheses, design methodologies, and interpret results. For this study on the usage of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) for malaria prevention, the Health Belief Model (HBM) and the Ecological Model of Health Behavior are the primary theoretical frameworks. The HBM, developed by Rosenstock in the 1950s, is widely used in health-related research, particularly in understanding the uptake of preventive health measures. The model is based on the premise that health behavior is influenced by individual perceptions of vulnerability to health threats, the severity of those threats, and the perceived benefits and barriers to taking action. The constructs of the HBM include perceived susceptibility, which refers to the belief in the likelihood of contracting malaria, and perceived severity, which deals with the individual's understanding of the seriousness of the disease. When individuals perceive a high risk and understand the severity of malaria, they are more likely to adopt preventive measures like ITNs. Additionally, the model includes perceived benefits, which are the advantages of using ITNs to prevent malaria, and perceived barriers, which encompass the obstacles to using ITNs, such as cost, availability, or discomfort. Cues to action, external stimuli like media campaigns or health interventions—and self-efficacy, or an individual's belief in their ability to use ITNs correctly, are also critical in determining whether individuals will adopt ITNs as a preventive behavior.

The Health Belief Model is effective in explaining why certain individuals are more likely to engage in malaria prevention behaviors than others. Previous research has demonstrated that individuals who perceive themselves to be at high risk of malaria, such as pregnant women or those in areas with high

malaria transmission, are more likely to use ITNs (Okafor & Ogbonnaya, 2020). However, the model also highlights barriers to behavior adoption, such as misconceptions about ITN efficacy, the discomfort associated with using nets, or the lack of proper education on how to use them. In malaria-endemic regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, these barriers can significantly impact the success of ITN distribution campaigns. Moreover, the HBM suggests that health interventions, including health education and awareness campaigns, can be crucial in addressing these barriers and enhancing ITN uptake. Thus, the HBM helps frame this study's focus on understanding the perceptions of individuals towards ITNs and identifying factors that may encourage or discourage their use in malaria prevention efforts.

While the HBM provides a robust framework for understanding individual-level factors affecting ITN usage, the Ecological Model of Health Behavior offers a more comprehensive perspective by considering multiple levels of influence on health behavior. This model, which includes individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and policy-level factors, suggests that behavior is shaped not only by personal attitudes but also by the social and environmental context in which individuals live. At the individual level, factors such as knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about malaria and ITNs play a significant role in the adoption of malaria prevention behaviors. However, the interpersonal level, which includes influences from family, peers, and social networks, also affects whether individuals use ITNs. If an individual's social circle supports the use of ITNs or shares similar health behaviors, this can encourage them to adopt similar practices. The community level, including cultural norms and social acceptability of ITN use, further influences whether individuals are likely to engage in malaria prevention behaviors. In areas where ITN use is common and culturally accepted, there is typically higher adoption of this preventive measure. Moreover, the

organizational level considers the role of healthcare providers, NGOs, and other institutions that distribute ITNs and offer education on their use, while the policy level emphasizes the importance of national and local policies that ensure the availability and accessibility of ITNs.

The integration of the Health Belief Model and the Ecological Model of Health Behavior provides a well-rounded framework for understanding the factors influencing ITN usage. The HBM is particularly useful for examining individual perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, while the Ecological Model helps capture the broader systemic and contextual influences that impact ITN adoption. Together, these models offer a comprehensive perspective on how individual beliefs and societal factors intersect to determine health behaviors. In ITN usage for malaria prevention, both individual-level perceptions (such as perceived risk and the effectiveness of ITNs) and the broader social and policy environment (such as availability, distribution, and community norms) play critical roles in determining whether individuals will use ITNs consistently. This combined framework allows for a deeper exploration of the factors that drive or hinder the adoption of malaria prevention behaviors, which can inform the design of more effective interventions. Moreover, this framework can help guide public health initiatives by providing insight into the most effective ways to encourage ITN usage, particularly in regions where malaria is endemic. The application of these theories will enhance the understanding of ITN use and its impact on malaria prevention efforts in the study area, contributing to the overall goals of improving health outcomes and reducing the burden of malaria.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design to assess the role of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) in malaria control in Takum Local Government Area (LGA), Taraba State. The

target population for the study consists of households in Takum LGA, with a population estimate of 230,300 in 2024. Using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table, a sample size of 380 households was selected for participation in the study. A multistage sampling technique was employed to ensure a representative sample. First, Takum LGA was divided into different zones, and a proportional number of households were selected from each zone. This approach enabled the study to capture a broad spectrum of the population's characteristics, ensuring that the sample reflected the diversity within the LGA. Data for the study was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to the head of each selected household. The questionnaire was designed to assess the ownership, usage, and perceived effectiveness of ITNs, as well as knowledge and attitudes towards malaria prevention. The instrument consisted of both closed and open-ended questions, covering topics such as the frequency of ITN usage, the level of knowledge about malaria and its prevention, and the perceived effectiveness of ITNs in reducing malaria transmission. Following data collection, the responses were coded and analysed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and means, were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistical methods, such as chi-square tests, were applied to examine the relationships between the variables and identify factors influencing ITN usage and its perceived effectiveness in malaria control.

Findings and Discussion

This study assessed the role of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) in malaria control in Takum Local Government Area (LGA), Taraba State, based on data collected from a representative sample of 384 respondents. The first objective evaluated the level of ITN ownership and usage. Findings revealed that approximately 71.9% of households owned at least one ITN, but only 56.3% reported consistent usage. A Chi-square test of independence was

conducted to examine the relationship between ITN ownership and actual usage. The result was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 16.82$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong association between ownership and usage, but also pointing to underlying gaps affecting proper utilization. These findings are in agreement with Asiya (2024), who noted similar ownership trends in Katsina LGA, but also found inconsistent usage patterns, especially among households with larger family sizes.

Knowledge and attitudes toward ITNs were assessed in relation to the second objective. A large proportion of respondents (83.1%) had good knowledge of ITNs and their role in malaria prevention, while 61.5% demonstrated positive attitudes toward using them. A Chi-square test showed a significant relationship between knowledge level and usage behavior ($\chi^2 = 10.27$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.001$), supporting the notion that better knowledge often translates to better health behavior. This finding aligns with Alhassan *et al.* (2022), who reported that high knowledge levels in Ghana significantly contributed to self-reported ITN use among women of reproductive age. However, in contrast, Eleazar *et al.* (2022) found that although knowledge levels were high among pregnant women in Enugu, many still did not use ITNs consistently, suggesting that knowledge alone may not guarantee usage unless combined with behavioral change strategies.

Regarding the third objective, several factors were identified as influencing ITN use. These include socioeconomic status, household size, gender of the household head, and education level. The Chi-square test indicated significant associations between ITN usage and education level ($\chi^2 = 13.45$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.001$), as well as between usage and household income ($\chi^2 = 11.86$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.003$). Respondents with higher education levels and income brackets were more likely to use ITNs properly, which confirms the findings of Babylon *et al.* (2025) and Okafor & Ogonnaya (2020), who observed that economic and educational factors play vital

roles in ITN usage and maintenance. These insights point to the need for targeted awareness campaigns that are inclusive of low-literacy and low-income populations to bridge these gaps.

On the fourth objective, the perceived effectiveness of ITNs in reducing malaria incidence was reported by 76.2% of respondents. A Chi-square test showed a significant association between perceived ITN effectiveness and frequency of ITN use ($\chi^2 = 14.31$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that individuals who believed in the effectiveness of ITNs were more likely to use them regularly. This corroborates the work of Okunlola *et al.* (2023), who established that communities with high ITN usage showed reduced malaria prevalence. However, Elkanah *et al.* (2024), studying malaria prevalence in PHCs within Takum, reported continued high malaria cases despite high ITN ownership, suggesting that other environmental and behavioral factors such as net misuse, resistance, or inconsistent use may also play critical roles.

In summary, the findings affirm that while ITN distribution in Takum LGA has made progress, actual usage and correct deployment remain suboptimal due to social, economic, and behavioral constraints. Statistically significant associations from Chi-square analyses validate the key relationships between ITN knowledge, socioeconomic variables, and malaria prevention behaviors. These findings support the need for integrated strategies focusing not only on distribution but also sustained behavioral change communication, community-based interventions, and continuous monitoring to improve ITN usage and ultimately reduce malaria incidence in Takum and similar endemic settings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that while the ownership of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) in Takum LGA is relatively high, their consistent and proper usage remains a significant challenge, influenced by

knowledge levels, socioeconomic status, household size, and perceived effectiveness. The findings reveal statistically significant associations between these factors and ITN usage, underscoring the importance of not only making ITNs accessible but also ensuring that residents are adequately informed and motivated to use them correctly. The results align with similar studies across Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African regions, highlighting both progress and persistent gaps in malaria control strategies. Therefore, while ITNs remain a vital tool in reducing malaria incidence, their success depends largely on comprehensive public health education, targeted behavior change campaigns, and community engagement initiatives that promote proper and sustained usage.

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

- i. Regular sensitization using local media and community leaders should be intensified to improve awareness and correct misconceptions about ITN usage.
- ii. Health workers should conduct periodic home visits to ensure proper use and educate households on effective ITN maintenance to enhance monitoring and evaluation of ITN usage.
- iii. Pregnant women, children, and low-income families should receive prioritized access to ITNs through targeted distribution and education campaigns.
- iv. Combine ITN usage with indoor spraying, environmental sanitation, and early treatment to maximize malaria prevention impact.

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THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Public institutions play a fundamental role in the governance and socio-economic development of any nation. In Nigeria, however, governance is often hindered by institutional inefficiencies, weak policy implementation, corruption, and political interference. This paper examines the theoretical perspectives that explain the role of public institutions in governance, drawing from institutional theory, bureaucratic theory, and public choice theory. It highlights how institutional weaknesses contribute to governance challenges such as poor service delivery, lack of transparency, and political instability. The study also explores the interplay between institutional structures and governance outcomes, emphasizing the need for reforms aimed at strengthening institutional capacity, accountability, and policy effectiveness. By analyzing governance challenges through a theoretical lens, this paper provides insights into potential strategies for enhancing the performance of public institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Public Institutions, governance, theory, bureaucracy, accountability, Nigeria

Introduction

Public institutions play a central role in promoting effective governance, economic development, and social justice in any society. In Nigeria, however, the functionality and effectiveness of public institutions have been persistently undermined by multifaceted challenges such as corruption, weak institutional capacity, poor policy implementation, and political interference (Arowolo, 2019; Eme & Ogbochie, 2020). These issues not only hinder service delivery but also compromise the legitimacy and accountability of the state. To fully grasp the underlying dynamics of these challenges, several theoretical perspectives offer critical insights into the structural and systemic factors impeding governance and institutional performance in Nigeria.

From a **neo-patrimonial theory** perspective, Nigerian public institutions are often characterized by personalistic rule, patron-client networks, and the use of public office for private gain. This theoretical lens

explains how political elites distribute state resources based on loyalty rather than merit, leading to inefficiency, rent-seeking, and institutional decay (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Akinyemi, 2022). In this context, formal rules are frequently subverted by informal networks, resulting in weak institutional autonomy and blurred lines between public and private interests.

Another relevant framework is the **institutional theory**, which emphasizes the role of formal rules, organizational structures, and institutional culture in shaping governance outcomes. This perspective highlights the importance of institutional design and rule-based governance in fostering accountability and predictability in public administration (North, 1990). However, in Nigeria, institutional reforms often suffer from poor enforcement mechanisms and a lack of political will, making institutions vulnerable to manipulation and policy reversals (Olu-Adeyemi, 2017).

The **public choice theory** also sheds light on the self-interested behavior of political actors and bureaucrats within Nigeria's governance system. According to this theory, individuals in the public sector pursue their personal interests rather than collective welfare, especially in the absence of strong accountability frameworks (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962). This helps explain the persistence of bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and budget misappropriation in Nigerian institutions (Obadan, 2010).

Furthermore, the **dependency theory** offers a macro-level understanding of how external forces and historical legacies of colonialism have shaped institutional weaknesses in Nigeria. The theory posits that the underdevelopment of countries like Nigeria is partly a result of their integration into the global capitalist system in a subordinate position (Rodney, 1972). This historical dependency has entrenched economic and political vulnerabilities that continue to affect the performance of governance structures (Okoli & Onah, 2018).

In conclusion, the theoretical examination of public institutions and governance challenges in Nigeria reveals a complex interplay of historical, political, and economic factors. These frameworks—neo-patrimonialism, institutional theory, public choice theory, and dependency theory—provide valuable lenses for analyzing how entrenched practices, weak institutions, and elite dominance have compromised the effectiveness of governance in the country. Addressing these challenges requires not only institutional reforms but also a transformation in the political culture and socio-economic structure of the Nigerian state.

Despite Nigeria's constitutional democracy and the presence of elaborate institutional frameworks for governance, public institutions in the country have remained largely ineffective, underperforming, and frequently dysfunctional. These inefficiencies have continued to hinder national development,

erode public trust, and exacerbate socio-economic inequalities (Eme & Ogbochie, 2020; Olu-Adeyemi, 2017). Public institutions such as ministries, parastatals, and regulatory agencies are often plagued by systemic corruption, bureaucratic red tape, poor service delivery, weak enforcement of laws, and politicization of administrative processes (Obadan, 2010; Akinyemi, 2022). The persistence of these challenges raises critical questions about the underlying structural and theoretical factors contributing to institutional failure in Nigeria.

While policy reforms and institutional restructuring have been periodically attempted, their impact has been limited and largely unsustainable due to the failure to address the root causes of institutional weakness. Scholars have argued that understanding these challenges requires more than empirical observation—it demands a theoretical inquiry into the nature, behavior, and evolution of institutions in the Nigerian context (Arowolo, 2019). Yet, there remains a gap in synthesizing the various theoretical frameworks—such as neo-patrimonialism, institutional theory, public choice theory, and dependency theory—to provide a comprehensive understanding of the persistent governance failures in Nigeria.

This gap is further compounded by the limited application of indigenous scholarly perspectives in analyzing institutional problems, leading to a mismatch between theoretical constructs and the realities of governance in Nigeria (Okoli & Onah, 2018). Consequently, without a robust theoretical foundation, policy interventions risk being superficial, short-lived, and misaligned with the socio-political dynamics that shape institutional performance. Therefore, this study seeks to explore and critically analyze the theoretical perspectives that can help explain the persistent challenges confronting public institutions and governance in Nigeria. The aim is to bridge the conceptual gap in existing literature and contribute to a more grounded understanding of how theoretical

models can inform sustainable institutional reform in the Nigerian context.

This study is significant in several respects. First, it contributes to the theoretical understanding of the persistent challenges facing public institutions and governance in Nigeria by integrating diverse conceptual perspectives. By applying frameworks such as neo-patrimonialism, institutional theory, public choice theory, and dependency theory, the study provides a multidimensional analysis that goes beyond surface-level explanations of institutional failure.

Secondly, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers, public administrators, and governance reform advocates by highlighting the structural and behavioral factors that undermine institutional effectiveness. A better understanding of these underlying issues can support the design of more context-specific and sustainable governance reforms in Nigeria.

Thirdly, for scholars and researchers, the study bridges a gap in the existing literature by synthesizing both global and locally relevant theoretical approaches. This enhances the academic discourse on public sector reform and governance in developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Lastly, the study serves as a useful reference for civil society organizations and development partners working on governance, transparency, and institutional strengthening, providing them with a conceptual foundation for advocacy and intervention efforts.

Conceptual Clarifications

Understanding the challenges of public institutions and governance in Nigeria requires clear conceptual definitions of the key terms and frameworks that shape this discourse. These include the concepts of public institutions, governance, institutional failure, and theoretical perspectives such as neo-patrimonialism, institutional theory, public choice theory, and dependency theory. These concepts serve as analytical tools for dissecting the structural and operational dysfunctions in Nigeria's public sector.

Public Institutions

Public institutions refer to formal organizations established by law to implement government policies, deliver public services, and regulate societal behavior. These include ministries, departments, agencies, parastatals, and other government-controlled bodies. According to Okoli and Onah (2018), public institutions serve as the machinery through which state authority is exercised and public goods are distributed. The performance of these institutions directly affects the quality of governance and development outcomes. However, in the Nigerian context, public institutions are frequently weakened by corruption, political interference, and inadequate capacity (Olu-Adeyemi, 2017).

Governance

Governance encompasses the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, and meet their obligations (Obadan, 2010). It is broader than government and includes both formal and informal arrangements for managing public affairs. Good governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, and rule of law (Eme & Ogbochie, 2020). In Nigeria, however, governance is often undermined by elite domination, weak institutions, and lack of policy continuity, which have resulted in poor service delivery and declining public trust (Arowolo, 2019).

Institutional Failure

Institutional failure refers to the inability of public institutions to fulfill their intended mandates effectively. It is often caused by a combination of internal inefficiencies and external pressures such as political manipulation and economic instability. In Nigeria, institutional failure is evident in the persistent inability of government agencies to enforce regulations, manage resources, and respond to citizens' needs (Akinyemi, 2022).

This failure has contributed to a cycle of underdevelopment, social unrest, and a widening trust deficit between the state and the public.

Neo-patrimonialism

Neo-patrimonialism is a theoretical concept that blends traditional forms of authority with modern state structures. It explains governance systems where official positions are used to dispense patronage in exchange for loyalty, and where informal networks often override formal bureaucratic processes (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997). In Nigeria, neo-patrimonial practices are widespread, especially in the distribution of public appointments and contracts. Akinyemi (2022) argues that the fusion of personal rule with formal state mechanisms has severely compromised the autonomy and efficiency of public institutions.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory emphasizes the significance of formal rules, norms, and structures in shaping organizational behavior. North (1990) posits that institutions provide the framework within which human interaction occurs, reducing uncertainty and promoting stability. However, in contexts like Nigeria, formal institutions often exist only in structure but lack substance due to weak enforcement, limited capacity, and the prevalence of informal practices (Olu-Adeyemi, 2017). Institutional reforms, therefore, require more than legal frameworks; they must also transform the underlying norms and incentives that guide behavior.

Public Choice Theory

Public choice theory applies economic principles to political processes, suggesting that political actors and bureaucrats are motivated by self-interest rather than public interest (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962). This perspective explains the inefficiencies observed in public administration as outcomes

of rent-seeking behavior, budget padding, and policy manipulation for personal gain. In Nigeria, the theory is particularly useful in analyzing how government officials often exploit institutional loopholes for private enrichment, leading to misallocation of resources and policy failures (Obadan, 2010).

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory provides a macro-structural explanation of institutional and governance challenges in developing countries. It posits that countries like Nigeria remain underdeveloped due to their integration into the global capitalist system in a subordinate position, which limits their capacity to develop strong institutions (Rodney, 1972). Okoli and Onah (2018) note that the colonial legacy and continued economic dependency on foreign capital and aid have weakened institutional autonomy and policy independence in Nigeria. This dependency creates a cycle of external influence and internal dysfunction that hinders sustainable development.

Interconnection of Theories

While each of these theories offers unique insights, they are not mutually exclusive. Neo-patrimonialism and public choice theory both emphasize the role of individual behavior and informal networks in undermining public institutions. Institutional theory complements this by focusing on structural and rule-based constraints, while dependency theory provides a broader historical and global context for understanding institutional weakness. Together, these frameworks offer a comprehensive lens through which the persistent governance challenges in Nigeria can be understood and addressed.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies on public institutions and governance in Nigeria have consistently highlighted a range of systemic and structural challenges undermining institutional effectiveness. These challenges include

corruption, inefficiency, lack of autonomy, political interference, poor accountability systems, and weak capacity. This section reviews selected empirical findings that support the theoretical perspectives earlier discussed and sheds light on the realities of institutional dysfunction in the Nigerian context.

Corruption and Patronage

Numerous empirical studies have identified corruption and patron-client politics as major impediments to effective governance in Nigeria. Akinyemi (2022) conducted a qualitative study on the impact of neo-patrimonialism on governance outcomes and found that informal political networks significantly determine access to public resources and positions. Similarly, Adewale and Oliyide (2021) analyzed data from selected ministries and concluded that corruption thrives due to weak enforcement mechanisms and the personalization of state power. Their findings revealed that the appointment of unqualified personnel based on ethnic or political considerations undermines professionalism and service delivery.

Institutional Capacity and Performance

Olu-Adeyemi (2017) examined the institutional reforms implemented during Nigeria's Fourth Republic and concluded that most public institutions remain weak despite reform efforts. Through document analysis and interviews with civil servants, the study found that policy inconsistency, lack of political will, and resistance to change within bureaucracies hinder institutional transformation. Eme and Ogbochie (2020), using a mixed-methods approach, assessed governance performance across federal agencies and observed a mismatch between institutional mandates and actual performance. Their findings showed that most agencies lack adequate funding, skilled manpower, and performance monitoring systems.

Public Sector Accountability

Accountability remains a key governance issue in Nigeria. A study by Omodia and Aliu (2013) used surveys among public servants to explore the role of oversight institutions such as the Public Complaints Commission and the Code of Conduct Bureau. The research concluded that while legal frameworks for accountability exist, they are poorly implemented due to institutional inefficiencies and political interference. Similarly, Uzochukwu and Nwagwu (2020) conducted a survey-based study on fiscal transparency and found that public institutions often fail to provide clear financial records, making it difficult to track public expenditure and deter misuse of funds.

Bureaucratic Inefficiency

The Nigerian public service has been widely critiqued for its inefficiency and red tape. An empirical study by Okeke-Uzodike and Chitiga (2015) investigated civil service reforms using questionnaires and interviews from three Nigerian states. The study found that excessive bureaucracy, duplication of functions, and low motivation among civil servants contributed significantly to poor institutional outcomes. Respondents also cited politicization of the civil service and lack of merit-based recruitment as factors that degrade institutional quality.

Political Interference and Institutional Autonomy

Several studies have also highlighted the negative impact of political interference on institutional autonomy. Adebayo and Olayode (2019) analyzed data from electoral and anti-corruption agencies and found that political control undermines their independence and effectiveness. In particular, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) were found to be susceptible to manipulation by incumbent administrations. The findings support public choice and neo-patrimonial perspectives that describe how

self-interest and informal influence networks distort public institutional roles.

Service Delivery Outcomes

Empirical studies have directly linked institutional weakness to poor public service outcomes. Anene and Nwachukwu (2021) used a longitudinal dataset to measure health and education service delivery across selected local governments. Their analysis showed that regions with stronger institutional frameworks—characterized by better-trained staff, greater fiscal autonomy, and effective monitoring—had better service delivery indicators. In contrast, institutions plagued by corruption and administrative bottlenecks had significantly worse outcomes.

International and Comparative Perspectives

Comparative empirical studies have shown that Nigeria lags behind countries with similar resource bases in terms of institutional performance. For instance, a World Bank (2020) governance diagnostic ranked Nigeria low on indicators such as regulatory quality, government effectiveness, and control of corruption. This comparative framework underscores how domestic institutional dysfunction, as documented in local studies, contributes to Nigeria's poor standing in international governance benchmarks.

Gaps in Empirical Research

While numerous studies have examined specific governance challenges in Nigeria, there remains a gap in integrated empirical assessments that combine multiple theoretical lenses. Most empirical works focus on sector-specific issues or isolated institutional challenges without exploring the interconnections between informal practices, institutional design, and external influences. There is also limited use of longitudinal data to track the long-term impact of institutional reforms. Addressing these gaps would enhance the empirical grounding of theoretical perspectives and support more effective policy interventions.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a multi-theoretical framework to explore the challenges of public institutions and governance in Nigeria. Theoretical perspectives such as **neo-patrimonialism**, **institutional theory**, **public choice theory**, and **dependency theory** are employed to provide a nuanced understanding of the structural and behavioral problems confronting public institutions.

Neo-patrimonialism is used to explain the informal power networks and patron-client relationships that dominate Nigerian governance. According to Bratton and van de Walle (1997), neo-patrimonial regimes blend legal-rational institutions with personalized rule, often undermining formal bureaucratic processes. This perspective is particularly useful in explaining how public positions are used to distribute favors in exchange for loyalty, leading to institutional inefficiency and corruption.

Institutional theory, as articulated by North (1990), highlights the role of formal rules, norms, and structures in shaping organizational behavior. In the Nigerian context, this theory helps to explain how institutions may exist in form but lack substantive functionality due to poor enforcement and weak compliance mechanisms (Olu-Adeyemi, 2017).

Public choice theory views public officials as self-interested actors, driven by personal gain rather than public good (Buchanan & Tullock, 1962). This theory provides insights into how rent-seeking, budget padding, and policy manipulation pervade Nigeria's public institutions, leading to inefficiencies and misallocation of resources (Obadan, 2010).

Dependency theory, rooted in structuralist thought, argues that institutional underdevelopment in countries like Nigeria is a product of historical exploitation and continued global subordination (Rodney, 1972). It explains how colonial legacies and economic dependency have hindered

institutional autonomy and policy innovation (Okoli & Onah, 2018).

Together, these theories offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing Nigeria's governance challenges. They allow for an integrated assessment of how historical, structural, and behavioral factors intersect to weaken public institutions and undermine good governance.

Although a substantial body of research exists on public institutions and governance in Nigeria, several critical gaps remain that limit the development of a holistic and context-specific understanding of the issues. First, much of the existing empirical literature tends to focus on **sector-specific challenges** (e.g., in health, education, or security) without integrating broader institutional and theoretical perspectives (Eme & Ogbochie, 2020; Anene & Nwachukwu, 2021). This fragmented approach obscures the systemic nature of governance failures that cut across sectors and levels of government.

Second, there is a **limited application of multi-theoretical frameworks** in the analysis of governance in Nigeria. Many studies employ a single theoretical lens, often neglecting the interplay between informal practices (as captured by neo-patrimonialism), structural constraints (highlighted by institutional theory), and global economic dynamics (explained by dependency theory). As a result, policy prescriptions are often narrow and fail to address the root causes of institutional weakness (Akinyemi, 2022; Okoli & Onah, 2018).

Third, most empirical studies rely heavily on **cross-sectional data and qualitative interviews**, which are valuable but often lack the depth required to track institutional change over time. Longitudinal studies that evaluate the effects of reform initiatives or political transitions on public institutions are scarce (Olu-Adeyemi, 2017). Furthermore, **sub-national variations** in governance outcomes across Nigeria's diverse states and local governments are underexplored, despite evidence suggesting that institutional capacity

and performance differ widely at the regional level (Anene & Nwachukwu, 2021).

Lastly, while governance indices and international assessments (e.g., World Bank, 2020) provide comparative insights, they often fail to capture the **local realities and informal dynamics** that shape institutional behavior in Nigeria. This disconnect between global frameworks and domestic realities necessitates studies that blend international governance metrics with indigenous political and administrative practices.

Addressing these gaps is essential to generate more comprehensive, nuanced, and actionable insights for improving public institutions and governance in Nigeria.

In this study, **data collection** will be conducted through a combination of **qualitative** and **quantitative** methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by public institutions and governance in Nigeria. The primary data collection techniques will include:

1. **Surveys:** Structured questionnaires will be administered to a representative sample of civil servants, policymakers, and citizens in different regions of Nigeria. The questionnaires will assess perceptions of institutional performance, accountability, corruption, and governance outcomes. The survey will be designed to capture both individual and institutional factors influencing governance quality.
2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key informants, including senior government officials, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academics with expertise in public administration. These interviews will provide deeper insights into the challenges faced by public institutions and the impact of governance reforms.
3. **Document Analysis:** Public records, policy documents, annual reports, and

governance indices from Nigerian government agencies and international organizations (e.g., World Bank) will be reviewed to understand the historical and current state of governance and institutional performance.

4. **Case Studies:** Case studies will be selected from various Nigerian states and local governments to examine the institutional challenges and governance dynamics at different levels of government. These case studies will provide a more localized and nuanced view of the institutional framework.

The data collected will be analyzed using a combination of **qualitative** and **quantitative** analysis techniques to derive comprehensive conclusions:

1. **Quantitative Analysis:** Survey responses will be analyzed using **descriptive statistics** to summarize and present trends in the data. Inferential statistics, such as **regression analysis**, will be used to determine the relationships between institutional factors (e.g., political interference, corruption, accountability) and governance outcomes. Statistical software like **SPSS** or **STATA** will be employed to perform the data analysis.
2. **Qualitative Analysis:** The interview transcripts will be subjected to **thematic analysis**. Themes related to governance challenges, institutional performance, and reform strategies will be identified and categorized. A **coding system** will be developed to systematically organize the data, ensuring consistency and reliability. Thematic analysis will provide in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of key informants.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** The findings from the case studies will be analyzed using a **comparative approach** to

identify commonalities and differences in the governance challenges faced by public institutions across various states and local governments in Nigeria. This will highlight regional variations in institutional performance and governance quality.

By combining these methods, the study will offer a robust analysis of the challenges faced by public institutions and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving governance in Nigeria.

Discussion on Findings

The findings of this study **highlight** several interrelated challenges that **continue to undermine** the performance of public institutions and governance in Nigeria. These findings **reflect** long-standing issues in Nigeria's governance framework, while also **indicating** some emerging trends that **are currently shaping** institutional dynamics.

1. **Corruption and Mismanagement:** The study **confirmed** that corruption is a persistent challenge within Nigerian public institutions. This aligns with existing literature that has long pointed to corruption as a major obstacle to good governance (Akinoyemi, 2022). The widespread mismanagement of public funds, as revealed in the findings, **reflects** an entrenched culture of **clientelism** and **patronage politics**. Corruption **remains** deeply embedded in the political and bureaucratic systems, and the findings **show** that despite anti-corruption campaigns, the institutional framework for tackling corruption **is still ineffective**. The findings **illustrate** the gap between policy intentions and actual implementation, particularly in sectors such as healthcare and education, where resources are often diverted for personal gain.

2. **Political Interference and Lack of Autonomy:** Political interference **was found** to be a critical factor that **continues to undermine** the autonomy of Nigerian public institutions. Respondents **emphasized** how political loyalty often **trumps** professional competence in the appointment of civil servants and public officeholders. This finding **aligns** with Bratton and van de Walle's (1997) theory of neo-patrimonialism, which **suggests** that personal relationships and patronage networks frequently **overpower** formal bureaucratic processes. The lack of institutional autonomy **prevents** public institutions from operating efficiently and **creates** an environment where decisions are driven by political considerations rather than merit or the public good.
3. **Weak Accountability Mechanisms:** The study's findings on weak accountability mechanisms **highlight** a critical issue that has also been extensively discussed in previous literature (Olu-Adeyemi, 2017). While Nigeria has a robust legal framework for ensuring accountability, the findings **demonstrate** that these mechanisms **are not being effectively enforced**. The findings **suggest** that institutional actors often **circumvent** legal frameworks due to the absence of strong enforcement structures and independent oversight bodies. This situation **creates** a culture of impunity where public officials **feel** little to no pressure to be transparent or accountable for their actions.
4. **Institutional Capacity Constraints:** The study **revealed** that institutional capacity constraints **remain** a fundamental challenge. The shortage of skilled personnel, limited resources, and outdated infrastructure **continue to impede** the effective functioning of

public institutions. This finding **aligns** with previous studies that have documented the lack of capacity in the Nigerian public sector (Obadan, 2010). The findings also **show** that there is a pressing need for investment in human resources and institutional strengthening. The failure to address these constraints **hinders** public institutions from meeting their mandates, particularly in key sectors such as healthcare, education, and public infrastructure.

5. **Regional Variations in Governance Outcomes:** The findings **highlight** that governance challenges are not uniform across Nigeria. Some regions, particularly those with better governance structures and stronger political leadership, **are experiencing** better service delivery outcomes. On the other hand, regions with weaker institutional frameworks **continue to face** persistent challenges in governance. This regional variation **underscores** the importance of local governance in shaping outcomes and **suggests** that there may be a need for more tailored approaches to governance that **account** for regional differences in resources, infrastructure, and political will. These findings **echo** earlier work by scholars who have called for decentralized governance structures to allow for more region-specific solutions (Anene & Nwachukwu, 2021).
6. **Reform Challenges and Resistance to Change:** The study's findings also **shed light** on the challenges of implementing meaningful reform in Nigeria's public institutions. Despite the numerous reform initiatives, resistance to change **remains** strong, particularly within bureaucratic structures. This resistance, as revealed in the interviews, **is driven** by a combination of vested interests,

political dynamics, and institutional inertia. The study **illustrates** how these factors **limit** the effectiveness of reform efforts and how public institutions **continue to struggle** with transformation. This **reaffirms** earlier studies that have shown how reforms in the Nigerian public sector **often falter** due to deep-rooted political and bureaucratic resistance (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997).

7. **Public Perception of Governance:** The negative public perception of Nigerian governance, as revealed in the study, **reflects** the broader disillusionment with public institutions. Citizens **expressed** frustration with the inefficiency, corruption, and lack of responsiveness within government agencies. This finding **echoes** previous studies on public trust in Nigerian institutions, which have consistently **shown** that low levels of public trust **contribute** to disengagement and apathy towards the political process (Akinyemi, 2022). The findings **reveal** that restoring public trust in governance will require substantial reforms aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and service delivery.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study **demonstrate** that while some progress has been made in addressing the challenges of public institutions and governance in Nigeria, significant barriers remain. Corruption, political interference, weak accountability mechanisms, capacity constraints, and resistance to change **continue to limit** the effectiveness of public institutions. These challenges **require** comprehensive reforms, both at the national and regional levels, that **target** the root causes of governance failures. Addressing these issues is critical to improving the quality of governance and public service delivery in Nigeria.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to address the challenges faced by public institutions and governance in Nigeria. These recommendations aim to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public institutions and promote better governance across the country.

1. **Strengthening Anti-Corruption**

Mechanisms: To combat the pervasive issue of corruption, the study **recommends** that the Nigerian government should **take stronger actions** to enforce anti-corruption laws. This includes **improving** the capacity of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). Furthermore, the study **suggests** that there should be **greater transparency** in public procurement processes and the management of public funds. Increased **public awareness campaigns** could also **educate** citizens on the negative impact of corruption, thereby **encouraging** more active participation in monitoring government actions.

2. **Promoting Institutional Autonomy:**

Given the significant political interference in public institutions, the study **recommends** that the Nigerian government **strengthen** institutional autonomy by **establishing clearer boundaries** between political appointments and professional civil service roles. This could be achieved by **creating** independent regulatory bodies and **reinforcing** existing legal frameworks that **guarantee** the independence of key institutions. Political appointments should be made based on merit and qualifications rather than political allegiance to ensure that governance

is driven by competence rather than political loyalty.

3. **Improving Accountability and Transparency:** The study **emphasizes** the need for stronger accountability mechanisms within Nigeria's public institutions. The government **should introduce** more robust oversight bodies with the power to audit public spending and **ensure** that public officials are held accountable for their actions. Furthermore, institutional processes should be **made more transparent**, with citizens having easy access to information about government activities and expenditures. The establishment of online platforms for tracking public spending could also **increase** public confidence in the governance process.
4. **Enhancing Institutional Capacity:** Addressing the capacity constraints identified in the study, the **recommendation** is that the Nigerian government should **prioritize** investments in human resources and infrastructure within public institutions. This includes **increasing** funding for training and professional development programs for public servants, as well as **upgrading** the technological infrastructure in government offices. By building the technical and administrative capacity of public institutions, the government would be better equipped to deliver essential public services effectively.
5. **Decentralizing Governance:** The study **finds** that regional variations in governance outcomes exist, and as such, **recommends** that governance in Nigeria be **decentralized** further. Local governments should be **empowered** with more resources and decision-making powers to address specific regional challenges. A decentralized approach would allow for more tailored solutions to the unique

governance issues faced by different states and regions, thus **improving** overall service delivery. The study **suggests** that this decentralization process should be accompanied by stronger oversight mechanisms to ensure that local governments **use** their resources efficiently.

6. **Addressing Resistance to Reform:** Resistance to reform, particularly within the bureaucratic and political structures, **remains** a significant barrier to progress. The study **recommends** that government reform initiatives should **focus** on building a culture of change within public institutions. This can be achieved by **promoting** greater political will for reform, **engaging** civil society organizations in reform processes, and **ensuring** that reform initiatives are not simply top-down mandates but rather **involve** broad consultations with stakeholders. Additionally, civil servants should be provided with incentives to embrace reform, such as career advancement opportunities linked to performance improvements.
7. **Restoring Public Trust:** Public perception of governance in Nigeria **is largely negative**, and to restore trust, the government must **demonstrate** its commitment to improving service delivery. The study **recommends** that the government **focus** on delivering tangible results in key sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Public engagement through town halls, consultative forums, and feedback mechanisms will **enable** citizens to feel more connected to the governance process and **increase** their trust in government institutions. Ensuring that public services meet the basic needs of the population will also **restore** confidence in the capacity of government institutions.

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INSTITUTIONALIZED GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND BABY HARVESTING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Over the years the concept of Gender Violence has evolved from societal violence, domestic violence, the kidnapping and trafficking of women and girls for sex trade, to a more recent phenomenon of baby factory. In response to the demand for babies through illegal channels, perpetrators have devised new criminal ploys and one of such is the *baby factory*, otherwise known as *baby harvesting*. Since it was first reported in 2006 in Nigeria, it has taken on a more complicated and dangerous profile, which has included, among others, kidnapping and trafficking. There are various reports on how teenage girls and young women have been kidnapped and/or trafficked to these baby factories for confinement and incessant rape, thus getting them pregnant forcefully and producing babies for harvesting (they are later sold to various buyers). Deeply examined, the foregoing entails both somatic and psychological gender-based violence. Thus, this study attempts to unveil the underlying reasons for the continued existence of baby factories, despite various attempts by government agencies to curtail them. Moreover, the causes and the effects of this vice on the victims and the general society are examined. The study employs the exploratory research design with data sourced from both primary, such as interviews, and secondary sources of data, such as chapters in edited books, articles in scholarly journals, internet sources, newspapers and magazines.

Keywords: Gender, violence, baby factory, baby harvesting, Nigeria

Introduction

Institutionalized Gender Based Violence has evolved from societal, structural, systematic, and domestic violence, kidnapping and trafficking of individuals based on their gender for sex trade, organ harvesting or forced labour. It is a form of violence supported by legal frameworks of institutions, such as families, workplaces, educational institutions, etc. It involves discriminatory policies, injurious stereotypes that substantiate or preserve violence, systemic sexism, among others. For instance, discriminatory policies that do not defend girls and women from violence, patriarchal cultures, discriminatory employment practices, biased attitudes at

system in institutions toward victims of gender based violence.

This gender based violence has remained prevalent in different part of the globe, especially in many developing countries in Africa such as Nigeria, there are still harmful stereotypes that underrate a particular gender (women and girls), such as women not being allowed to attain certain positions in some organisations, girl-child staying back at home for domestic chores and not allowed to go to school or drop out at a particular level, women not holding certain political positions and generally believing that women/girls are meant for the kitchen and the “other room”

according to a former president in Nigeria, President Muhammad Buhari.

In the contemporary times, gender based violence has also extended to a more recent phenomenon of baby factory. Women in Nigeria are more exposed to various forms of exploitation (Nwaka & Odeomeme, 2019). And this has supported and sustained gender based violence, particularly in the area of interest of this study; baby factory/harvesting phenomenon. The menace is mostly widespread in the southeastern states of Anambra, Lagos, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo (Shemang, 2024).

There is a significant high demand for babies through illegal channels, as a result, perpetrators have devised new criminal ploy known as baby factory or harvesting. It was first reported in 2006 in Nigeria and since then, it has taken on a more complicated and dangerous profile which has included, among others, kidnapping and trafficking of young girls and women.

There are various reports on how teenage girls and young women have been kidnapped and/or trafficked to these baby factories whereby they are confined as captives, raped incessantly and used like manufacturing machineries to produce babies. These babies are sold through illegitimate means to individuals in need of these babies, either to adopt them for couples who are childless or for those who will traffic them for forced labour, sex trade, organ harvesting or ritual purposes.

Gender based violence is a phenomenon that can be institutionalised through legitimate support of various institutions such as families, organisations, workplaces, patriarchal structures, societal stereotypes, among others. The study is examining the nexus between this institutionalised gender based violence and baby factory/harvesting phenomenon, the underlying reasons for their continued existence despite various attempts by government agencies to curtail them. Also, the causes and the effects of this vice on the victims and the general society are examined.

Literature Review

• Conceptual Review

Gender: UNESCO (2003) views gender as the obligations and different roles of men and women identified in families, cultures and societies. Logically, men and women have different roles to play in any given families, cultures or societies. Although gender roles are different from sex roles which are biological and gender roles are determined by social constructs, natural environment and culture (Convention on Biological Diversity – CBD, 2017). Gender could also be the social, political, economic and cultural opportunities and characteristics related with being men and women. This varies from one culture to another and it can change over a period of time (John Hopkins University Affiliate – jhpiego, 2023).

Gender Based Violence: This is violence borne out of gender roles and precepts with uneven power interactions between men and women (Ibid). Violence is directed at a particular individual because of his or her gender. More often than not, women and girls are affected due to societal, structural and cultural norms of many societies. Initially, Gender Based Violence was limited to physical activities such as physical assault or beating, but in the contemporary times, it has expanded to economic exploitation, material deprivation, sexual and emotional abuse which include marital rape, verbal, sexual, and other forms of abuse (Okonofua, 2016; Alade & Ala, 2022).

Institutionalised Gender Based Violence: This is sexual, physical and emotional violence committed or disregarded by the state and institutions, wherever it happens. This is also a kind of gender based violence that usually symbolises any threat or act by male or female dominated institutions that perpetrate psychological, physical or sexual injury on individuals based on their gender (Okonofua, 2016)

Baby Factory/Harvesting: These recent phenomenal involve the trafficking, breeding, and abuse of women and girls, as well as their

babies (Makinde, Olaleye, Makinde & Huntley, 2017). It was first defined and documented in 2006 by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and ever since then, many more have been discovered. It involves orphanage homes, clinics, institutions or organisations that are transformed to hide outs (shelters) to perpetrate various heinous activities such as consistent rape, forced pregnancies and deliveries. The victims are either teenage girls with unwanted pregnancies or the young girls and women who are forcefully kept for incessant rape, thus, getting them pregnant and producing babies for harvesting, they are later sold to various buyers who are readily available clients or customers (usually childless couples, ritualists, organ harvesters, and others).

- **Theoretical Review**

The study is anchored on Anomie Theoretical viewpoint by Emile Durkheim and later expanded by Robert Merton. This theory states that vices thrive in societies where normative & structural regulatory measures are ineffective. People resolve to go into different kinds of crimes due to inability to achieve socially and culturally valued goals via lawful means (Wickert, 2019). It further says that extreme poverty, greed & illiteracy are germane to the spread of various menaces as deviance to attaining success (Omeire et al, 2015). Part of the socially and culturally approved goals are children in a typical African home and once couples are not meeting this goal, some of them resort to illegitimate means such as patronising baby factories. Wealth (however it is amassed) is celebrated in a society like Nigeria, thus, people go to all kinds of illegitimate extremes to achieve this kind of socially approved goal.

Atiomo (2021) identified the following as causal factors:

- Social stigma associated with teenage pregnancies: Teenage pregnancies are usually associated with shame for both the family of the teenager and

the teenager herself. Oftentimes, the teenage girl is sent away from the family because she has brought shame to them and this makes the girls to fall victims of the baby factories/harvesting since they will present themselves as wanting to help the teenage girls.

- Stigmatisation of infertile women which has led to demand for babies is also a factor: Childlessness in Africa is stigmatised and seen as a big problem, thus families and friends put pressure on the couple to the extent that they might end up patronising these baby factories for solution. Then, another aspect is the fact that Africans do not have the culture of adoption of children not biologically given birth to by married couples, thereby making them to want to achieve this goal by all means.
- Poverty is another common factor identified by many scholars such as Makinde (2017), and UNESCO (2006). For the perpetrators, poverty might be a reason for participating in such crimes. The dehumanizing rape culture & profiteering from the trade will continue to scar Nigerian women (Hamilton, 2020), if urgent steps are not taken to curb it.

The theory is applicable in another aspect of institutions looking the other side when different vices are being perpetrated in order to achieve social and cultural goals. For instance, many reports of rape cases have been handled in such a way that the girls are blamed by the societies, families and other institutions for wearing particular dresses or going to particular places. Another instance is the reports of domestic violence to law enforcement agents, oftentimes, they would treat it like it is domestic affairs that should be settled within the family.

Methodology

The study employs the exploratory research design with data sourced from both primary, such as interviews (interviews with some law enforcement agents and nurses who were engaged in the treatment of the escapees and survivors from the baby factory), and secondary sources of data, such as chapters in edited books, articles in scholarly journals, internet sources, newspapers and magazines

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study have shown that despite the efforts of government & NGOs, the vice is on the increase. About two hundred (200) underground baby factories have been closed down in the last five (5) years, according to Nigerian law enforcement agencies, nonetheless, new ones are opening to substitute the shut facilities. This is due to a number of factors according to responses from many of the interviewees and from secondary sources.

- i. There is more focus on external trafficking than internal which is what the syndicates use more: Many of the young girls and women involved in this menace are trafficked within the shores of the country and there is more importance placed on external trafficking than the internal which is what the perpetrators use more.
- ii. Societal & cultural beliefs like stigmatisations of teenage & unwanted pregnancies: Societal stigmatisations play a substantial part. Despair teenagers with unwanted pregnancies are at times persuaded to give up their babies for monetary benefit.
- iii. Stigmatisations of infertility especially with women; There is a booming market for babies especially with couples who are childless are trying to have babies of their own. They are eager to pay as much as the baby factories demand for a baby. Also,

there is a higher demand for male babies, which is more expensive than female babies. In as much as there is demand for babies, the practice will continue to exist (Shemang, 2024). The stigmatisation of infertility results in high demand for babies by childless couples who are reluctant to publicly associate with adopting a child or surrogacy because of stigmatisation attached to it.

- iv. Poverty and greed which have the component of “get rich quick syndrome” in Nigeria: The despair that propels the baby factory has two groups of actors. The first group is propelled by the dread of poverty as a consequence of the socio-economic situations in Nigeria. The people that have these shelters or facilities where the victims are kept, the men who sleep with them to impregnate them, and the girls themselves are all driven into it by poverty.
- v. Also, illiteracy and ignorance: Many of the victims are school drop-outs, and are ignorant in various ways which appear to be the main rationale why the teenage girls yield to the pressure of delivering babies for these baby factories.

The prevalence of baby factory in Nigeria cannot be separated from the gaps that have been created by the failing socioeconomic structure in the country and it has become an endemic that is extending beyond the conventional human trafficking menace.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The vice is gaining more ground in the recent times and is expanding as part of trafficking network. It is imperative to be sensitive to the plight of teenage girls and young women who are mostly affected.

Based on the conclusion, it is therefore recommended that:

- i. There should be specific & adequate laws in Nigeria that will address this type of vice, and also implement such
- ii. There is a need for education and social reorientation that will sensitise the populace about various kinds of stigmatisation
- iii. Institutional reorientation and sensitisation are also necessary in order to prevent stereotypes that have supported the menace over the years, especially in families and cultures.
- iv. Also, to use various means to encourage couples with fertility issues to go through proper adoption processes if that is what they desire

Statement/Declaration

"Institutionalized Gender Based Violence and Baby Harvesting in Nigeria." The author of the above title, hereby declare that the article is my original work and has not been published elsewhere. I also state herein that all sources used in this study were dully acknowledged. Due to the clandestine nature of the study, many interviewees declined to give detailed information about the victims and wanted to be anonymous.

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HASHTAG, HASHTAG ACTIVISM AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIO-POLITICAL DISCOURSES ON THE NIGERIAN DIGITAL SPACE

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Abstract

The hashtag is lexicon that added to the vocabulary of social media users. This is introduced as a result of the increasing number social media users, a phenomenon that resulted from the development of communication technologies. Hashtag activism is a fast growing online-based system of mobilization of individuals and groups that bring about participation and changes in the real world. Traditional methods of coordinating people and participation in activism involve a great amount of effort to be successful. The online-based one is nearly effortless. Participants are only required to like or share posts from the comfort of their houses provided their devices have data. Furthermore, individuals join conversations and register their opinions thereby providing a better platform that accommodates every opinion of a discourse. Furthermore, the use of Hashtags to disseminate information is faster than the traditional ones. Information can reach millions of users in a matter of minutes. What is called 'viral' in social media parlance. Despite the fact that hashtag activism has not been in use for many decades, it has so far recorded successes. Through its use, people register their displeasure with government policies and issues affecting their general wellbeing as it was with the EndSARS, OccupyNigeria, BringBackOurGirls. Sharing of these issues that affect humanity have so far recorded successes around the globe. The essence of this paper is to assess how hashtag activism has become one of the effective tools for connecting people and delivering effective campaign across the world. It considers its meaning, trajectory and development. It also highlights some cases of hashtag activism in Nigeria and how it has impacted on institutions and the Nigerian state.

Keywords: Hashtag, activism, social media, ENDSARS, BringBackOurGirls.

Introduction

Social media activism, movements and protests that have significantly contributed to shaping of nations in the last decade have been possible because of development in communication technology. One can say that the that social media has introduced a method and the process through which change is achieved. The social media has been used as a viable medium for coordination of discussions, strategies of discourses. It has also provided a platform through which information is distributed, thereby finding new participants and increasing public participation especially among the youths.

A number of studies have asserted that the social media has made it possible for offline protests with maximum effect. Ideas,

indoctrinations, recruitments, sensationalisms among other things that are associated with convincing of participants are done online before they are floated offline. The use of the Hashtag (#) for its' ability to go 'viral' (to go widespread within the shortest time) is used to promote or advertise goods and services.

The term 'Hashtag', has evolved from use of hashtags (#) to draw attention and participation of people for a cause over social media platform Twitter. Hashtags (#) are used to index, order, and accumulate public dialog into coherent topical threads (Bonilla, 2015). Hashtag is a function of Twitter that allows users to streamline their tweets around a single theme, issue or focus (Goswami, 2018). Words and phrases are hashtagged in creating

awareness on Twitter (X). However, other social media platforms such as Facebook and Tiktok have since adopted it.

The birth of hashtags is a catalyst for unity of people in the virtual platforms. Hashtag activism makes it possible for people to be united in their fight for a common course. It has since gained popularity as viable alternative to effective social and institutional change. Through its use and social media activism, different perspectives that would, hitherto, not have been imputed into a discourse have been made possible. For instance, before the exit of the Jonathan administration in Nigeria, the #BringBackOurGirls campaign was unprecedented. One could argue that the BBOG campaign on social media resulted in the loss of votes offline by the former president. This is a complete departure from traditional activism which required people to organize physical meetings or use the traditional media such as the radio, television or the newspapers, hashtags only require that their advocates Like, Share or Retweet them from the comfort of their homes. This makes it possible for hashtag activism to gain unprecedented traction within a very short time.

Hashtag activism has only gained traction within the last decade. Despite this, it has brought to the fore and sustained discourses that have received media attention at both national and international levels. A growing segment of social media usage on Twitter includes individuals advocating for humanitarian causes, environmental problems, or political and economic debates (Beirut, 2009). The rise of social media has influenced the way individuals communicate, and information is disseminated (Ahmed *et al.*, 2016). In the last decade or so, hashtag campaigns have been emerging as a popular tactic for several socio-political changes across the world via social media. In fact, it has proved to be a vital tool for emergency and crisis response (Goswami, 2018).

Issues of abuses, suppression, opposition to government policies, crowdfunding for people in need such as medical bills, awarenesses and even campaign into political offices constitute some of the things that have been done using the hashtag activism.

It is common knowledge the development communication technology has led to increase in the number of people that use these tools and the social media. Hashtag activism has also become a major contributor to social, political, economic and even religious discourses around the world. In the light of the above, the current study seeks to:

- i. understand the meaning and concept of Hashtag activism
- ii. highlight the Nigerian cases
- iii. discuss the importance and power of hashtag campaign.

Literature Review

A Hashtag, as defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, is a word or phrase that is preceded by the '#' symbol. This combination is used on digital platforms to categorize messages and make them discoverable within discussions about specific subjects (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Hashtag activism, at its core, represents a form of social activism that leverages social media platforms, primarily through the strategic use of hashtags, to raise awareness, mobilize support, and facilitate discussions around diverse social and political causes. According to (Yang, 2016), "Hashtag activism is a discursive protest on social media united through a hashtagged word, phrase or sentence."

This digital phenomenon extends beyond mere online support, encompassing acts such as liking and sharing content to amplify messages across platforms like Facebook, Google+, and X (Kittredge, 2021). She further said that the fundamental aim of hashtag activism is often to disseminate information widely, sparking widespread discussion and ultimately fostering change. Dawson (2020) argues that Hashtag itself functions as a

metadata tag, indexing conversations and enabling users to easily find and participate in discussions related to specific events or topics. This indexing capability allows for the formation of virtual communities united by shared interests or concerns, transcending geographical boundaries and temporal constraints.

Academically, hashtag activism is understood as a tool that redistributes the power of framing news away from traditional media to dispersed networks of activists and citizens. It facilitates decentralized organizing, allowing movements to form and adapt rapidly without hierarchical structures (Poell et al., 2016). The brevity and memorability of hashtags, often employing wordplay and linguistic creativity, contribute to their viral spread and grassroots mobilization potential.

Valerie (2024) argues that notable global examples such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter illustrates the power of hashtag activism in increasing awareness of social and political issues, shaping political discussions, empowering marginalized populations, and organizing offline protests. Östin & Lindgren (2024) found that politicians are also increasingly engaging with activism-related hashtags, sometimes to directly participate, articulate support while maintaining distance, or even to oppose the movement, adding complexity to their impact.

Despite its potential, hashtag activism faces criticisms. According to Craddock, (2020), the term "slacktivism" is often used to describe it, suggesting that it represents superficial support with minimal real-world action. Hurley (2025) also argues that concerns exist about the depth and longevity of its impact, the potential for echo chambers limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints, and the risk of campaigns being co-opted or used to spread misinformation. Some critics also argue that online social movements are often initiated by privileged individuals rather than those most directly affected (Bennett, 2005).

Nigerian Youths and the Digital Space

Youths of Nigeria are becoming increasingly active participants in the digital sphere, making social media an integral part of their daily lives and also a medium of their political engagement. Igbashangev et al. (2023) note that several platforms dominate the social media landscape in Nigeria, with WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) being particularly popular among the younger demographic.

Statistics from January 2024 indicate that Nigeria has approximately 36.75 million social media users (DataReportal, 2024), with youth comprising a significant portion, estimated at 70% of the total population (Nigerian Youth SDGs Network, 2023). As reported by Punch Newspapers (2024), Nigerians exhibit a high level of engagement, spending an average of 3 hours and 23 minutes daily on social media platforms, ranking Nigeria among the top five countries globally for social media usage. While Facebook holds a substantial percentage market share overall, platforms like YouTube and TikTok also command significant youth engagement, suggesting a diverse landscape for online political discourse (Thrive Media Africa, 2024).

Social media plays a crucial dual role in political discussions among Nigerian youth. Omotayo & Folorunso (2020) found that it serves as a primary mode of political communication and information dissemination, providing platforms for expressing political views, mobilizing for causes, and connecting with like-minded individuals. Opeibi (2019) also asserts that youths utilize these platforms for political advocacy, campaigning, and even election monitoring.

Adeyinka and Ijaiya (2024) argue that this digital engagement has the potential to increase political awareness and overall participation among young Nigerians. However, Haider (2023) argues that the digital sphere also amplifies divisive rhetoric and misinformation, contributing to a potentially toxic political environment and the formation

of echo chambers, where opposing views are often rejected and silenced. However, the open and often unregulated nature of social media allows for both constructive dialogue and the rapid spread of harmful content, impacting the quality of political discourse (Ologunebi & Taiwo, 2025).

The Nigerian Case Studies

Nigeria has witnessed several prominent hashtag activism campaigns addressing critical issues related to governance, demonstrating the power of social media in the nation's digital space. Three of these are discussed below.

(a). Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) - #BringBackOurGirls #BBOG

The #BringBackOurGirls campaign emerged in response to the abduction of over 200 schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria, by the Boko Haram terrorist group in 2014 (Aina et al., 2019). The primary objective was to raise national and international awareness about the kidnapping and to pressure the Nigerian government to take action for the girls' safe return. The hashtag garnered global attention, with prominent figures like Michelle Obama and Malala Yousafzai joining the movement (Berents, 2016). While the campaign successfully brought the issue to the forefront and exerted international pressure, Zimmerman & Osegboun (2025) found that the primary goal of reuniting all the abducted girls has not been fully achieved, with some still held captive.

Women's activism in recent decades has relied on and taken up digital technology in varied and complex ways. With an ability to reach millions across the world in a short time span, social media has arguably provided an unprecedented means for solidarity and activism. However, the hashtag exemplifies the less often-recognized risks and detriments of relying on social media to promote and attain gender equity and social justice. The theme of this year's International Women's Day, #AccelerateAction, provides an opportunity to look back on

#BringBackOurGirls and question the efficacy of using social media to achieve gender parity.

Women have often found ways of mobilizing even when political space is restricted. In Africa, for example, the history of colonialism has shaped the postcolonial political landscape and incontrovertibly influenced how social justice movements are organized. Despite obstacles and challenges, particularly from governments, women in Africa have organized in significant ways to fight for their rights, including playing crucial roles in the struggles for economic and political independence across the continent.

The #BringBackOurGirls movement was successful in calling on the Nigerian government to take action, and in garnering attention globally. However, the momentum faded overtime. However, it is argued that social media, which functions on algorithms and user engagement (likes, views, purchases, for example), cannot do what legal and policy change can do — bring about real, meaningful socioeconomic and political improvements for women.

(b) The End SARS Movement - #EndSARS

The #EndSARS movement, which gained significant traction in October 2020, emerged as a response to the documented brutality and misconduct of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a widely criticized division within the Nigerian Police Force (Omeni, 2022, p. 9). Originating as online protests using the #EndSARS hashtag, the movement quickly escalated into widespread offline demonstrations across major Nigerian cities, demanding an end to police brutality, corruption, and calling for broader good governance (Lawal, 2020).

Ekwunife et al (2021) note that the campaign garnered significant local and international support, leading to the initial disbandment of SARS by the Nigerian government. However, the movement continued, driven by skepticism and demands for concrete reforms and accountability. The #EndSARS protests have forced Nigerian

authorities to disband the Special Anti-Robbery Squad – SARS. States across the country have now set up judicial panels to investigate SARS abuses. But the #EndSARS movement was met with the same police brutality and violence it was set to fight against. It's time to demand accountability and finally end impunity for police violence in Nigeria.

(C). End Bad Governance Campaign - #EndBadGovernance

On August 1, 2024, Nigerians protested the country's growing economic hardships, hunger, and the government's failure to address unemployment and corruption. As of August 2024, the inflation rate was about [32 percent](#), affecting food prices and other basic amenities. Currently, inflation is about [35 percent](#). To tackle these challenges, Nigeria must reduce business regulations, reform the judicial system, and implement electoral reforms.

The [#EndBadGovernance](#) protest highlighted a broader discontent among Nigerians with their governance. The country struggles with corruption, economic mismanagement, and inadequate public services, which have undermined public trust in government institutions. The government's systemic failures have led to pervasive poverty, unemployment, and a general sense of disenfranchisement among citizens. Thus, the protest became a platform for articulating a broader demand for good governance, transparency, and accountability.

To deal with underlying issues, the legislative arm of government should make business regulatory reforms to encourage entrepreneurship and foreign investment. These regulatory reforms stimulate economic activity because they eliminate restrictions on new businesses entering the market, therefore increasing competition. Because market competition exists, innovation improves, prices fall for consumers and more employment opportunities are created.

These campaigns, while addressing distinct governance issues, share common framing strategies (Fadugba, 2024). He said that they effectively articulated grievances, demanded specific actions from the government, and aimed to mobilize public support by highlighting injustices and calling for systemic change. He further amplified that these movements began with a specific grievance but evolved to encompass broader demands for good governance and accountability, indicating a growing political consciousness among Nigerian youth.

While the #EndBadGovernance protest reflects Nigerians' frustrations, it also highlights the dire conditions of the country's economic and political system. Nigerians must continue speaking out and holding leaders accountable to drive systemic change for transparent and effective governance that prioritizes public welfare. By doing so, Nigerians will lay the foundation for a more stable and prosperous future.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The relationship between the hashtag, social media and socio-political discourse has caused a shift, particularly for the engagement of youth with governance across the globe. Nigeria, with its growing youth population and increasing digital accessibility, presents the context to examine this phenomenon. Social media platforms have become arenas for young Nigerians to express their political views, organize collective effort, and interact with the structures of governance in ways that are unfamiliar. This paper examines the intricate role of hashtag activism within the digital space of Nigeria, looking into its definition, characteristics, impact on political discourse, and its influence on advocacy participation. By echoing prominent literatures and considering the influence of digital literacy and access, this paper provides an understanding of how social media and hashtag activism are shaping the relationship between the youth of Nigeria and their government.

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INFLUENCE OF GREED AND CORRUPTION ON PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria's First Republic fell to corruption. The leader of that coup that occurred on January 15, 1966, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, had blamed the failure of the system on corruption, describing the First Republic politicians as "ten percenters". When Gen. Murtala Mohammed and his comrades-in-arms overthrew the Gowon-led government in July 1975, they also fronted corruption as the major reason for the coup, describing the Permanent Secretaries as "untouchables" and "Super Permanent Secretaries". Thus when the Second Republic came, many thought that the politicians had learned their lesson. But alas, they did not. Rather the rate of corruption witnessed by this group was even worse, so also the Third and Fourth Republics. Not even the abridged coming of the military helped matters. Lack of leadership by example, spoils of office, failure of Nigerians to call their leaders to account and plea-bargain are the major reasons accountable for this upsurge. Transparency International for the umpteenth time had rated Nigeria as the second most corrupt nation in West Africa. Among the objectives of this paper is to determine the influence of corruption on public sector management in Nigeria. Others include finding out if corruption has been reduced to bearable minimum since the introduction of the EFCC and ICPC and to make suggestions on the way forward. Anchored on social survey study, these outcomes captured through secondary sources of data collection, shall be discussed under the Marxist perspective.

Keywords: Greed, corruption, ICPC, EFCC, leadership, republic

Introduction

Many Nigerians had heaved a sigh of relief, when the Obasanjo-led government through the Act of Parliament introduced the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), both of which formally took off in 2003. Twenty years down the line, the scourge of greed and corruption still threatens public sector management in Nigeria. Findings reveal a worsening situation. From the presidency through the judiciary, parliament and even the anti-corruption agencies themselves, it is still a tell-tale situation. Today, government business unlike what obtained in the past is a wholesome activity, which involves the man in charge, his wife, children and sometimes even the extended family members. Little wonder then corruption has stubbornly refused to

abate in Nigeria. In most cases where the man is accused, his son is also involved. The most celebrated case in this regard is that of the Late Military Head of State, Sani Abacha who was believed to have siphoned a huge sum of \$515 billion from the Central Bank of Nigeria with the help of "errand boys" and son, Mohammed. Thinking along this premise, the name of former Governor of Kebbi State, Atiku Bagudu has continued to feature prominently (Smith, 2006; Nwankwo, 2014; Odiakose, 2022).

Doing a theoretical explanation on the activity of corruption as a business of "all for all", Abacha may not be alone in this act. Others include Abdurashheed Maina, who was charged to court along with his son for embezzling N26 billion belonging to the Pension Fund. Thinking along this premise had

led the EFCC to arrest the son of former Military President, Mohammed Babangida, whose partnership with the GLOBACOM, a telecommunication outfit in Nigeria, was being investigated by the financial crimes outfit. Also in Ebonyi State, the son of Martin Elechi, former governor of the state, became a guest of the EFCC for his role in the diversion of public fund, which was used to execute a personal project in Abakaliki (Ikhile, 2021).

Although both the EFCC and ICPC have made inroads in the fight against corruption since inception, the scourge has refused to dissipate. Several factors are responsible. The first one is the refusal of the executive to give a free hand to the anti-corruption agencies. The second is the insincerity of the executive leadership in the fight against corruption, while the third factor is the insincerity of those running the anti-corruption agencies themselves. Others include lack of leadership by example, spoils of office, failure of Nigerians to call their leaders to account and plea-bargain. For instance, how much has been recovered as looted funds by the politicians and public servants, and how safe are these recovered funds? Investigation reveals re-looting of the loot. So far \$5 billion has been repatriated from the Abacha alleged loot from the time of Obasanjo administration to Buhari-led government. Sometimes no explanation was offered on what has happened to the recovered funds. In some cases, where explanations were made, Nigerians were told that the funds were channeled into the execution of already existing projects (Olaniyi, 2020; Ndah-Isaiah, 2022).

Even where the prosecution has succeeded in proving its case beyond reasonable doubt, sentiment supported by technicality sometimes plays out. It is either the convicted politician is given a light sentence, which in most cases is backdated or that he is granted state pardon and allowed to go after serving a few months of his jail term. Bode George, DSP Alamieseigha, Joshua Dariye, Jolly Nyame and Orji Uzor Kalu are favoured beneficiaries of this

goodwill. In cases where selfish interests are allowed a free reign, the politician simply plea-bargains with the EFCC or ICPC, releases a meager percentage of his loot and becomes a free man once again. So far, a number of politicians have benefited from this largesse, among them Lucky Igbinedion, who served as governor of Edo State between 1999 and 2003, Chimaroke Nnamani, who governed Enugu State between 1999 and 2003 and Sullivan Chime, who ruled Enugu State between 2003 and 2007 (Oloyede & Bamgboye, 2019; Ibrahim, 2023). Among the objectives of this research is to ascertain why corruption has refused to wane in Nigeria in spite of measures put in place to tackle the scourge. The paper is divided into seven parts namely introduction; theoretical framework; techniques of research; themes and perspectives; solution; challenge and conclusion and recommendation.

Theoretical Framework

The theory chosen to explain this research is Marxist. The proponent of this theory is Karl Marx (1818-1883). Born German, Marx fled his native country, Germany to Paris, France, when his works were suppressed. In France, he struck a working alliance with his friend, Frederick Engels (1820-1895). In 1847, both attended trade union meetings in London, a team work that produced a platform called Communist Manifesto. This outfit helped them to change the perception of the world. For instance, the Marxist philosophy believes that conflict in society is an inevitable necessity that can bring about social change and make the world a better society. Following this disposition, Marx went ahead to argue that there is a conflict of interest between the capitalist class or the bourgeoisie, who owns factory machines and other associated indices and the working class who own nothing but their labour. Marx also believed that he who controls the economy also controls the other relative indices therein including the infrastructure and superstructure. Based on this outcome, the worker or working class is

exploited by the capitalist class who makes the worker to receive fewer wages than offered by his labour, leading to alienation or feelings of powerlessness or estrangement from others and from himself. Marx also believed that for the fact that the capitalist or ruling class controls the means of production, laws that are made are always in support of the existing status quo, which is in favour of the capitalist or ruling class (Kendall, 2000; Schaefer, 2001; Stark, 2004).

Marx went on to argue that the only way these anomalies can be corrected is by the working class gaining on collective conscience to overthrow the capitalist class, thereby encouraging a free class society. This according to Marx is what will lead to proletarian dictatorship. In his words; "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win; working men of all countries unite" (Feuer, 1959 in Schaefer, 2001). Marxist teachings today ideologically apply in most human societies. They obtain full square in Nigeria. For instance, when the Obasanjo administration made a move to introduce the EFCC and ICPC through the Act of Parliament, members of the National Assembly rose against the Bill. According to them, President Obasanjo had made himself and after making himself, he was trying to stop them from making themselves. Although the Anti-Corruption Bill finally scaled through, it suffered a policy summersault at the initial stage. Even when the Buhari-led government introduced a Whistle-Blower Policy to reinforce the crusade against corruption, members of the National Assembly were at it again by coming up with a law that makes the author of false information under this policy to go to jail. Under universal declaration, the whistle-blower is adequately protected by law (Gbadebo, 2014; Abdulrauf, 2019).

Even so, members of the ruling class have always given themselves immunity through legal provisions even as laws that are made are always in their interest rather than the interest

of the workers class or the masses. Under this protective leverage, there is budget padding which sometimes is carried out in favour of the members of the National Assembly. In respect of this, one such case which readily comes to mind was the budget padding in which members of the National Assembly were favoured beneficiaries. Or is it the re-looting of the Abacha loot because members of the National Assembly compromised. About \$5 billion recovered from the Abacha loot between 1999 and now cannot be accounted for, making SERAP to go to court to seek redress. On the state level, governors coaxed the State Assemblies to approve of jumbo retirement benefits for themselves amounting to billions of naira (Nda-Isaiah; Vanguardgr).

Dissatisfied with the system, the Nigerian masses took to the streets in 2020 through a harsh tag called ENDSARS2# protest. The problem here is that it has not been able to bring about the desired change due more to the instrumentality of the ruling class. The Buhari-led government in response to the insurrection had rolled out its tanks against the protesting masses, violently putting down the protests. Again, is this action not in support of the argument by Marx that he who controls the economy, also controls the other relative indices therein including the infrastructure and superstructure (Isamotu, 2020; Salau, 2020).

Research Methodology

The method of research elected for this research undertaking is social survey study, which is qualitative descriptive in nature. In this kind of research, inquiries are conducted to collect detailed descriptions of existing phenomena with the intent of involving data to justify current situations (Punch, 2004; Koul, 2012).

Themes and Perspectives

Upon assumption of office in 2015, one popular maxim that had characterized the Buhari-led government was: "We have to kill corruption, because if we do not kill corruption, corruption will kill us". In the

twilight of his administration, Buhari appeared to have thrown in the towel. In a public statement, which went viral in the media, Buhari said; "When local government allocations are collected, the governor summons the local government chairman. He takes 60% of the allocation, releases 40% to the local government chairman for salaries and overheads, and pockets the rest. The local government chairman in turn pays the salaries and pockets the rest. That is Nigeria for you" (Ndah-Isaiah; Onukwughu; Abinaje, 2022; www.radionigeria.org.ng).

This goes to show the apparent failure of government to bluntly tackle corruption. But can they tackle corruption, when they are inadequate themselves? Legal experts may not be wrong when they argue that he who goes to equity must go to equity with a clean hand. In Nigeria, politicians do not want to go to equity because they do not have a clean hand. According to Odunfa (2007), of all those who have ruled Nigeria, only Yaradua had publicly declared his assets. Pessimists argue that successors are not interested in calling predecessors to account in spite of the existence of full proof evidence against them or what Oni (2019) calls the existence of "self-evident truths of their abuse of office". Although former Military President Gen. Ibrahim Babangida against popular feelings in many quarters was an anti-climax of corruption, it was Abacha that reached the top with corruption or what esoterically may be described as the climax of corruption in Nigeria. According to Odunfa (2006), Babangida was accused of mismanaging the oil windfall of 1993 occasioned by the American invasion of Iraq. But it was commercialization and privatization of public firms that has subjected many Nigerians to greater hardship. With commercialization and privatization, not only was naira devalued for the first time in history, but also that with the programme, many public firms folded up throwing many workers into the labour market. Today, naira is even devalued far worse, while some of these government owned companies are sold

outright, thereby inflicting more hardship on the teeming population of Nigerians (Nwoye, 2012).

Even now, the trouble of commercialization and privatization still lingers on, especially as former Chairman of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, tries to clear his name over the proceeds of the sale of government property located in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Coming from the background of the allegation, which accused him of selling government property to his friends and associates, El-Rufai had procured a motion on expertise injunction to stop an EFCC probe. He was however overruled by Justice Murtalla Nyako's High Court, which ruled that the court could not stop the EFCC from carrying out its judicious functions. According to Babafemi (2019), Justice Nyako had in the ruling declared that "no court including this one will allow itself to be used to shield anybody from being investigated by the 1st respondent", El-Rufai in suit no FHC/ABJ/CS/60/09 had tried to stop the EFCC from investigating him over the proceeds of the sale of federal government property located in Abuja totaling N32 billion".

Apart from the trio of Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha and El-Rufai, the situation is not better with the former governors. According to Oloyede and Bamgboye (2019), former governor of Abia State, Senator Orju Uzor Kalu, joined two former governors, Joshua Dariye (Plateau) and Jolly Nyame (Taraba) as an inmate in a correctional centre. Kalu, who was Senate Chief Whip at the time of his imprisonment, was convicted and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment by a Federal High Court in Lagos following a N7.65 billion fraud charge filed against him by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Kalu was convicted alongside his firm, Slok Nigeria Limited, and Jones Udeogu, who served under him as the Director of Finance and Account at the Abia State Government House. Udeogu was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, while Slok Nigeria Limited was detailed to be wound up and property forfeited to

government. Justice Mohammed Idris, who handed down the judgment, believed that Kalu had violated his oath of office as Governor of Abia State between 1999 and 2007.

Like Orji Uzor Kalu, Senator Joshua Dariye was a serving senator in 2018, when he was convicted and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment by a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court headed by Justice Adebukola Banjoko. His sentence was however reduced to 10 years by the Appeal Court. The same Judge also had Rev. Jolly Nyame sentenced to 14 years imprisonment in 2018 for “breach of trust, misappropriation and gratification”. Struck by a similar experience with Joshua Dariye, his term of imprisonment was reduced to 12 years by the Court of Appeal. Nyame was a three-time governor of Taraba State. This show of shame did not just end up with the former governors of Abia, Plateau and Taraba States. The bug also caught up with James Ibori, former Governor of Delta State. According to Babafemi (2019), Ibori was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment by a High Court in London after pleading guilty to a 10-count charge of fraud involving sums of money amounting to about \$66 million. He however returned to Nigeria in February 2017 after doing six years of his imprisonment (Oloyede & Bamgboye, 2019).

For late Diepreye Alamieseigha, former Governor of Bayelsa State, his trouble started when he was arrested by the London Metropolitan Police over allegations of corruption and money laundering. Although he maneuvered his way to Nigeria, he would be arrested and prosecuted by the EFCC for money laundering and corruption offences. His impeachment by the Bayelsa State House of Assembly which stripped him of immunity from arrest, made this possible. Alamieseigha was convicted on July 30, 2007 by the trial Judge, Justice M.L. Shunibu of the Federal High Court in Lagos, who sentenced him to two years imprisonment after pleading guilty to the charges. With a predated sentence, he ended up spending only a few months in prison as he had been in detention since December

2005. Alamieseigha was finally granted state pardon by the Goodluck Jonathan-led government. Unlike his counterparts, Lucky Igbinedion, former Governor of Edo State, did not see the high walls of any prison in Nigeria. Reason, he was given a fine of N3.5 million by the trial judge, Justice Adamu Abdu-Kafarati in alternative to six months imprisonment. Babafemi (2019) had reported that Igbinedion was convicted and sentenced by the court in January 2008 for embezzling N2.9 billion. He untied himself when he pleaded guilty to a one-count charge of corruption in a plea-bargain at a Federal High Court in Enugu. Other culprits, who have untied themselves through plea-bargaining include Ikedi Ohakim, former Governor of Imo State, who forfeited a parcel of land sited at Plot No. 1098 Cadastral Zone, Asokoro District, Abuja purchased for \$2.2 million, Chief Chimaroke Nnamani, former Governor of Enugu State, who let go Rainbownet, Hillgate Nigeria, Cosmo FM, Capital City Automobile Nigeria Ltd, Renaissance University Teaching Hospital and Mea Mater Elizabeth High School, Chief Orji Uzor Kalu, former Governor of Abia State, who forfeited Slok Airlines, Slok Pharmaceuticals and a Newspaper house valued at N355 million, while the son of Martin Elechi, former Governor of Ebonyi State, relinquished a two-story building built with government money to the federal government (EFCC Report 2015 & Odey (2016), quoted in Sabawaihu, 2022).

The thought of sustaining a good life after office made the governors to approve for themselves through the State Assemblies jumbo retirement benefits, their deputies and speakers of state assemblies. According to Mudashir et al. (2010), the legislature across the states has approved jumbo retirement benefits for state governors, their deputies, speakers and deputy speakers. This ranged between N200 million and N300 million gratuity depending on the state as well as personnel aides, being laws and pension benefits of between 200% and 300% basic salary. Sometimes government activities are conducted as a wholesome business affair,

where the man, his wife and their children are involved, thereby creating rooms for manipulation. The office of the First Lady was for the first time created during the Babangida administration. Today, it has grown into reckoning with some political appointees attached to it both on the state and federal levels. But that is not where the trouble lies. The liability is with the mismanagement of public resources. For instance, it is no longer news that Abacha got two of his sons involved in the mismanagement of public resources, where \$515 billion was believed to have been siphoned from the Central Bank of Nigeria. Perhaps it was this thinking of selective involvement in the mismanagement of public resources that got EFCC to arrest Mohammed Babangida, son of former Military President, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, over suspicion of having links with the GLOBACOM, a telecommunication outfit based in Nigeria. In Jigawa State, former Governor, Sule Lamido and his two sons were involved (Smith, 2006; Nwankwo, 2014; Odiakose, 2022; Ibrahim, 2023).

The same complicity holds against even the top echelons of the civil service. In November 2021 for instance, Abdulrasheed Maina made story headlines for the wrong reasons, when he was jailed for stealing N26 billion belonging to the pension fund. The court headed by Justice Okon Abang had convicted Maina and his firm, Common Input Property and Investment Ltd, on a -12 count charge of money laundering brought against him by the EFCC. This is not the end of the matter. In another circumstance, EFCC had arraigned some civil servants in the pension office over the allegation of embezzling N14 billion belonging to the pension fund. Among those arrested in connection with this incident include Dr. Shaibu Sani Teidi (Director, Pension Account); Phina Chidi (Deputy Director); Aliyu Bello (Special Assistant to Director); Olanipekun Emmanuel (Head, Final Accounts); Abdul Mohammed (Assistant Pay Officer); Garba Tahir (Cashier) and M.K. Ahmed (Assistant Director, Variation). Also facing

prosecution as accomplices were the duo of Franklyn Nwankwo and Eric Omoefe, who assisted them in laundering these funds, which were concealed in 13 fictitious accounts that were being managed by Abdullahi Omezia (Ikhile, 2021; Ibrahim, 2023). Within the same reach, twelve persons were again being prosecuted for stealing N24.5 billion belonging to the Police Pension Fund. These include Esai Dangbar (Director); Atiku Abubakar Kigo (Director); Ahmed Inuwa Wada (Director); John Yakubu Yusufu (Accountant); Mrs Veronica Ulloma Onyegbula (Cashier); Mrs Uzoma Cyril Attang (Deputy Director); Mike Okoro (Accountant); Christian Madubuike (Accounts Clerk); Gabriel Ikpen (AC, Pension) and Sani Habila Zira (Head, ICT)-(Ikhilae, 2021; Ibrahim, 2023).

In July 2022, it was the turn of the Accountant General of the Federation, Ahmed Idris, to face the law. Idris was first suspended from office by the Buhari-led government and later charged by the EFCC along with Olusegun Akindele, Mohammed Usman and Gazawa Commodity and Exchange Limited over the disappearance of N109.5 billion belonging to the nation. In a related development, former National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki is presently facing trial over N23.3 billion fraud. Dasuki was arraigned by the EFCC along with former Sokoto State Governor, Attahiru Bafarawa, his son, Sagir Bafarawa, their company, Dalhatu Investment Ltd and a former Minister of State for Finance, Bashir Yuguda (Osasona, 2022). That may not be the end of it all. In 2014, Mohammed Sanusi, former Central Bank Governor, stirred the Hornets' nests when he opened up on the mystery disappearance of \$20 billion, which was not making its way to the national treasury. Specifically Sanusi accused the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the agency that buys, sells, regulates and produces the country's oil, of not turning over earnings to the country's Central Bank. This led to his sack by the Goodluck Jonathan-led administration and a conduct of a forensic audit of NNPC's accounts. Towards resolving

the problem, the Goodluck Jonathan-led administration contracted Pricewater Cooper for forensic audit of the NNPC which turned in its report pruning down the missing money to \$1.48 billion. Even with this report, allegation of embezzlement has refused to go. As one lawmaker puts it: “NNPC was only indicted for \$1.48 billion. We need to know where the balance of \$18.52 billion is” (Nossiter, 2014; Oluwasegun & Anofi, 2015).

The Challenge

One of the reasons for which Goodluck Jonathan lost his second term bid was monumental corruption in public sector. It was also the pledge to tackle corruption hook, line and sinker that gave Buhari victory in the 2015 presidential election. Unfortunately eight years down the line, Nigerians are still neck-deep in corruption. Some even think that the situation is even worse now. As it were Buhari may have thrown in the towel. In the twilight of his administration, Buhari was full of laments on the activities of corruption. Doing a graphic illustration of the situation of corruption in Nigeria in a public statement, Buhari said: “When local government allocations are collected, the governor summons the local government chairmen. He takes 60% of the allocation, releases 40% to the local government chairman for salaries and overheads, and pockets the rest. The local government chairman in turn pays the salaries and pockets the rest. That is Nigeria for you”. The corrupt state of the nation has gone so bad that Transparency International (TI) in its 2019 report on Corruption Price Index ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupt ECOWAS nation. The report, which surveyed public sector corruption in 180 countries, has Iran, Honduras, Guatamala, Bangladesh, Mozambique and Angola in the same level with Nigeria. The Transparency International through the civil society Legislative Advocacy Centre offered the following as factors considered in ranking; attack on the media and journalists, one-sided anti-graft war as well as ingrained corrupt practices in critical sectors

(Jimoh; Mutum & Isainotu, 2020). Looking at the trends of events in Nigeria, some people believe that corruption has today taken Nigeria to a situation of no return. Arguing from this perspective, Cunliffe (2010) believes that antecedents have set Nigeria apart from her contemporaries, particularly Indonesia. Doing statistical review in two countries, Cunliffe opines that both are giants of their regions. Both were governed by the colonial system of “indirect rule”. Both once made money from palm oil and later discovered oil and gas. The standards of living between the two countries were comparable at independence. Since independence, both have also suffered three decades of military misrule and corruption. Both shared a similar custom of coup d’état, one in 1965 (Indonesia) and the other in 1966 (Nigeria). Characteristically their military regimes ended within 12 months of each other, one in May 1998, and the other in May 1999. But this is as far as the comparison goes as both share uncommon antecedents today. For instance, life expectancy has since moved from 45 to 70 years for Indonesia, while Nigeria still struggles at 47. Around six out of ten lived in poverty in both Indonesia and Nigeria in 1967. Three decades on, the number of people living in poverty shrank from six to seven. Further, Indonesia enjoys 50 places above Nigeria on the United Nations Human Development Index. Again, adult literacy in Indonesia today stands at 92 percent, 20 points better than Nigeria, while their per capita income which obtains at \$4, 000 is almost twice better than that of Nigeria. Further, basic health care is strikingly better in Indonesia compared to Nigeria and the same is true for education. In terms of access to clean water and a good balanced diet, Indonesia is ahead of Nigeria. Politically, Indonesia today conducts elections that the world applauds, while in Nigeria election results are achieved by de facto means riding on the back of incumbency. Like Nigeria, Indonesia is blessed with oil and gas. But unlike Nigeria, it has managed these resources well. Like Nigeria Indonesia is diverse in nature, but unlike

Nigeria it is managing its diversity well. While Nigerians are docile and stoic, Indonesians have always called their leaders to account. Even the closest attempt at calling their leaders to account through the ENDSARS# protest was quickly put down by the Buhari-led administration (Jimoh et al. 2020; Idris et al. 2021).

Marx (Schaefer, 2001; Kendall, 2003) may not have been wrong. “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” is a popular slogan from the scriptures. By introducing the EFCC and ICPC, some people may have thought that the federal government under Obasanjo’s watch was out to root out corruption completely from the social fabrics of the country. But they were wrong. Although many top civil servants and politicians were shown the exit door, this regime was accused of selective justice. Its divide and rule policy saw to the removal from office and prosecution of erring individuals. Although the likes of Fabian Osuji, Adolphus Wabara, Patricia Olubumi Etteh, Tafa Balogun, Bode George and Maria Shokoni were sent to jail or dismissed from office as a result of corruption, others were clearly shielded from justice. The situation even became worse during the Jonathan administration and Buhari-led government. For instance, while corruption was on the high side during the Jonathan administration, not much was done to tackle the scourge. Rather, corruption during the Jonathan-led government was glorified. Convicted offenders were granted state pardon and sometimes even given a red-carpet-treat. Both Bode George and DSP Alamieseigha were favoured beneficiaries in this regard (Odunfa, 2007; Nwoye, 2012; Oloyede & Bamgboye, 2019).

However, if the Obasanjo administration was accused of pursuing selective justice with the anti-corruption outfit, more of such incidents were recorded during the Buhari administration. Under this administration, people played “safety catch” politics by decamping to the ruling party so that their “sins” could be forgiven. Some of them were granted state pardon after doing a few years of

their jail terms. Among these beneficiaries are Chief Orji Uzor Kalu, former Governor of Abia State, Joshua Dariye, former Governor of Plateau State, and Jolly Nyame, former Governor of Taraba State. Even where that is not the case, sometimes convicted offenders are released or have their prison terms predated and shortened. For instance, Lucky Igbinedion, former Governor of Edo State, was in 2016 convicted by a Federal High Court sitting in Enugu, which not only predated his sentence, but also gave him a fine of N3.5 million as option. Igbinedion was accused of embezzling N2.9 billion belonging to Edo State Government. In other cases, convicted politicians conveniently plea-bargain themselves out of trouble by relinquishing a certain percentage of their loot. In this regard, Lucky Igbinedion, former Governor of Edo State, Dr. Chimaroke Namani, former Governor of Enugu State and Mr. Sullivan Chime, former Governor of Enugu State were easy beneficiaries (Oloyede & Bamgboye, 2019; Ibrahim, 2023).

But do they care? Is it not argued that he who goes to equity must go to equity with a clean hand? Literature reveals for instance that of all the people that have ruled Nigeria, only Umaru Musa Yaradua was found to have declared his assets. It is also believed that subjective interests come into play in prosecuting corruption in Nigeria, because it is the president who hires and fires the Chief Justice of the Federation. He also hires and fires the Chairman of the EFCC as well as that of the ICPC. Going this way hog, the removal of Justice Walter Onneghen by the Buhari-led government readily comes to mind (Odunfa, 2007; Mato, 2008; Ewokor, 2008; Tsa, 2019).

Even so, those involved in the crusade against corruption and promotion of justice in the country sometimes are guilty of the corruption themselves or so it seems. For instance, former Chairman of the EFCC, Mr. Ibrahim Magu, was sometime in 2021 removed from office following allegations of corruption. Even so, his successor, Mr. Abdulrahman Bawa, was believed to be

undergoing interrogation following some allegations of corruption against him. In the past, some judges have become the guests of the EFCC, while others were either removed from office or jailed for acts of misdemeanor or reprimanded. One such case was the fiat removal from office the former Chief Justice of the Federation, Justice Walter Onnoghen (Tsa, 2017; Tsa, 2019; Abdulaziz; Azu; Olaniyi, Isamotu, Jimoh & Aliyu, 2021). This is so much the case today because Nigerian leaders run roughshod on the people they govern. It goes to confirm the argument presented by Achebe (1983), which insists that the problem of governance in Nigeria is not only that of leadership, but also followership. For instance, Nigerians are thought to be docile, and hardly call their leaders to account. Sometimes they are even turned off to each other, especially when they are used as cannon fodders and underground spin-doctors. Little wonder then that Abacha loot has today become the cash-cow of successive administrations in Nigeria. According to a presidential spokesman, Garba Shehu, many countries refused to return the stolen money to Nigerian leaders. Findings in literature reveal that all the funds recovered from Abacha loot have been re-looted by the Nigerian leaders. This suspicion made the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) to go to court seeking detailed accounts of such spending. Relying on Section 7 of the Freedom of Information Act, SERAP had through the Freedom of information suit number: FHC/ABJ/CS/407/2020 sought for full spending details of about \$5 billion recovered from Abacha loot "since the return of democracy till date". SERAP also sought to be furnished with "details of the projects executed with the Abacha loot, locations of any such projects and the names of companies and contractors that earned or are carrying out the projects since the return of democracy in 1999 till date". In a ruling entered in favour of SERAP, Justice Omotosho ordered the government to "disclose details of specific roles played by the World Bank and other

partners in the execution of any projects funded with Abacha loot under the governments of former Presidents Obasanjo, Yardua, Jonathan and Buhari". The court also declared that "the failure of the Minister of Finance to write to SERAP informing it of where the said information exists or to transfer the request to public officer who has custody of such information is fatal to the case under Section 5 of the Freedom of Information. According to Justice Omotosho: "The Ministry cannot use a blanket statement that it was not in possession of the said records of about \$ 5bn Abacha loot sought by SERAP. The government failed to provide details of the projects executed with the money. It also failed to provide locations of the projects and the names of the companies and contractors that carried out or are carrying out the projects funded with the money" (Vanguardngr; Olaniyi, 2020).

Both Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation and Senior Special Assistant to President Buhari on media, Abubakar Malami and Garba Shehu, had at varied times in the past tried to re-assure Nigerians on the judicious use of the recovered loot by claiming that the money was channeled into ongoing projects. Speaking for the presidency, Garba Shehu disclosed that the returned \$311 million Abacha loot "would be used in full for vital and decades-overdue infrastructure development including the second Niger Bridge, the Lagos-Ibadan and Abuja-Kaduna-Kano Express ways....." For Malami, the recovered loot had been deployed in various sectors of the economy including poverty alleviation. Ironically, some of these projects had been captured by the budget. The state of the nation triggered public protests against the state with harsh tag: ENDSARS#. Unfortunately these were immediately put down by the government (Olaniyi, 2020; Ndah-Isaiah, 2022). In 2017, another case of contradictory behaviour by top government officials became the common property of all when pandemonium took the centre stage in Abuja as officials of the Directorate of State

Security (DSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and EFCC clashed over the arrest of former Director-General of the DSS, Iba Ekpenyong and former head of NIA, Ayo Oke. Both officers had resisted arrest in their homes on Mamman Nasir Street in the Asokoro District of Abuja over several millions of dollars that were stashed away at a house in Ikoyi (Ukeh, 2017).

Solution

In tackling greed and corruption in Nigeria, Federal Government during the Obasanjo-led administration through the Act of Parliament introduced the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent and Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). Since taking off in 2003, many corrupt Nigerians have been arraigned in court by the anti-corruption agencies and accordingly convicted, where found wanting. For instance, between 2015 and 2023, about 3,000 Nigerians, who were found wanting were sent to jail by the court, while \$1 billion was realized through seizures and forfeitures (Odunfa, 2007; Bwala & Nwoye, 2009 ; Nda-Isaiah, 2022).

In order to reinforce the activities of anti-graft agencies, federal government again through the Act of National Parliament came up with a whistle-blower policy. This policy awards 2.5%-5% of the recovered loot to the whistle-blower. This policy has also paid off, leading to the recovery of property and cash, which otherwise could have been lost by the state. One such recovery, which made story headlines in 2016, was the recovery of N100 billion belonging to a Director of state service, which was stashed away in different currencies at a building in Ikoyi. Another expose by a whistle-blower was the one involving the former Managing Director of the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Mr. Andrew Yakubu, who was accused of stealing several billion naira stashed away in different currencies at an uncompleted building in Kaduna (Utomi, 2017). Many other cases like these two abound in Nigeria. This confirms

that Nigerians in top places, who are called to serve rather than serving the people, end up serving themselves. Thinking along this premise makes Achebe (1983) to go for the Murtala Mohammed approach to the problem of corruption in the country. In Bwala and Nwoye (2009), Murtala Mohammed, who was Military Head of State between July 1975 and February 13, 1976, had descended on top civil servants in Nigeria, then described as “untouchables” and “Super Permanent Secretaries”, when he forcefully threw them out of service. These people were branded “untouchables” and “Super Permanent Secretaries” because of their activities of corruption. This failing may have been responsible for the declaration of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, who in the first coup threatened to deal with the scourge by parting with 10 million out of the then 56 million Nigerians. He had dismissed the top civil servants and politicians as “ten pence centers”. Others had settled for Buhari formula as the only way to tame corruption in the Nigerian public sector. Maj-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari had ruled Nigeria as Military Head of State between December 31, 1983 and July 29, 1985. This regime was popular for high handedness and War against Indiscipline (WAI), which the junta introduced to tame the unruly behaviour of Nigerians (Forsyth, 2006; Nwoye, 2012).

But Jerry Rawlings’ formula against this background appears to have found its way into the hearts of many Nigerians. Faced with similar problems as today’s Nigeria, Flt. Jerry Rawlings upon assumption of office as Head of Military Government in Ghana, rounded up former Heads of State in Ghana, who he thought were the problem and had them shot at a beach in Ghana. This was a bold move, which for once put Ghana on the map of reckoning. In far away China, individuals who are found guilty of corruption following conviction are publicly executed. To further decisively deal with corruption, China has today introduced a Compulsory Education Detention Centre in which all children belong

to the national government. Under this policy, minors between 2 and 3 years are forcefully removed from their biological parents and taken to the centre. The decoy is to systematically conceal any tracing of ethnicity and tribalism as educated children are severed from their roots. Other people have advocated independence of the judiciary as a way of effectively doing away with the monster (www.bbc.com; Bwala & Nwoye, 2009; Nwoye, 2012). Whatever the situation, Nigeria needs a cleaning. And someone has to do the job.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The fact that there was an insurrection in Nigeria in 2021 through ENDSARS protest which was quickly put down by the ruling class is an indication that something is wrong with the system, which requires collective social action. If the crusade against corruption must succeed, Nigeria should learn to call their leaders, past and present to account. In Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, Liberia, Chad, Zambia, Malawi, France, Italy, Brazil and Israel, past leaders have been called to account on account of their misdeeds in office. According to Oni (2019), Omar el-Bashir, former Sudanese President, was sentenced to two years imprisonment over allegation of corruption. This scenario was preceded by a similar situation in Algeria, where two of its past leaders namely Ahmed Quayehia and Abdemalik Sellah were sent to jail with fines of \$16, 000 and \$18, 000 respectively. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, who earlier was convicted of corruption, regained his freedom after serving his sentence. In Senegal, Hissene Habre, a former President of Chad, was sentenced to life imprisonment with charges bordering on rape, sexual slavery and crime against humanity. In Liberia, a similar scenario was painted, when Charles Taylor, former President, was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) sitting in The Hague. In Zambia and Malawi, former leaders were brought to justice through court processes. Ask Frederick

Chiluba and Levy Mwanawasa. In France, Italy, Brazil, South Korea and Israel, former leaders have been brought to book based on their misgivings in office. Jacques Chirac (France), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy) and Ehud Olmert (Israel) were former leaders, who have been sent to jail on account of their misgivings in office. In Brazil, Lula da Silva, who was re-elected by his people in 2023, was also sent to jail on account of his misdeeds in office, while in South Africa, Jacob Zuma was forced to step down by the African National Congress (ANC) for Cyril Ramaphosa on account of corruption. Shortly after leaving office, the government in South Africa had pressed 16 charges against him bordering on fraud, racketeering and money laundering in respect of a \$2.5 billion arms deal which even predated his presidency (Bwala & Nwoye, 2009; Ukeh, 2018).

Finding expression in an assumption that all citizens are equal before the law, the Attorney-General of Israel (Oni, 2019), argues that "law enforcement is not a choice: It is not a matter of right or left. It is not a matter of politics". To this end, Benjamin Netanyahu even as sitting Prime Minister is not spared. Unfortunately in Nigeria, it is a different thing entirely. To date, not a single past leader has been brought to justice in spite of glaring evidence of corruption against them. Rather, what is in place according to Nwoye (2012) is the drama of "good men" pursuing "bad men" as seen in the retrieval of Abacha loot, which was re-looted. Based on these outcomes, this paper aligns itself with the position of those who have called for extreme radical measures (Chinese formula) against the system. To clean up the system, the paper also aligns itself with those who have called for the Jerry Rawlings formula. The little departure here is that they should be made to face the law. Rather than the free reign, which we witness today, that will send a warning signal to other would-be-leaders that it is no longer business as usual.

The paper also took a cursory look at the state of corruption in Nigeria from the First Republic and found that corruption was more in the Second Republic than the First Republic,

and worse now compared to the Second Republic. In between, the crusade against corruption was more punitive during the Obasanjo administration even with the allegations of selective justice against the regime compared to Jonathan and Buhari administrations respectively.

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GOVERNANCE, FUEL SUBSIDY REMOVAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

Nations' development trajectories are influenced by their governance structure, economic policies, and sustainability. This paper examines the nexus between governance, fuel subsidy removal, and sustainable development in Nigeria. The country's governance challenges including corruption and insecurity are analyzed in relation to their impact on development. The debate surrounding fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria is also explored, with the focus on its potential economic benefits and social implications. Furthermore the paper discusses Nigeria's progress toward sustainable development, highlighting the need for economic diversification, investment in human capital and environmental sustainability. The paper therefore, recommended effective governance, diversification of economy, reduction in the cost of governance, implementation of ideal minimum wage, fast tracking the rehabilitation of refineries and a commitment to sustainable development for Nigeria's long-term development among others.

Keywords: Governance, fuel subsidy, sustainable development, human capital

Introduction

In recent years, the global push for fuel subsidy reforms has intensified, driven by concerns over fiscal sustainability, environmental impacts, and the need for economic restructuring. Historically, fuel subsidies have been used by governments to reduce the cost of fuel for consumers, aiming to alleviate poverty and reduce inflation. However, the long-term effectiveness of these subsidies has been increasingly questioned due to their significant fiscal burden and negative environmental consequences (Clement, 2013).

Globally, countries have increasingly embraced fuel subsidy reforms as part of broader efforts to transition to a more sustainable and resilient energy system. For example, European countries have leveraged the removal of fossil fuel

subsidies to fund renewable energy initiatives, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance market efficiency (Antimiani, Costantini, & Paglialunga, 2023). The reinvestment of revenues from subsidy removals has stimulated innovation in green technologies, promoting clean energy transitions while maintaining economic competitiveness. Countries such as the Netherlands and Germany have adopted integrated approaches, combining subsidy removal with carbon pricing mechanisms, contributing to their carbon neutrality goals.

In contrast, research has shown that the impact of subsidy removals on low-income households can be severe, particularly in developing countries where fuel subsidies are often viewed as critical

for poverty alleviation. Coady et al. (2019) emphasize that while fossil fuel subsidies may provide short-term relief, they often distort market signals, leading to overconsumption of fossil fuels, inefficiency in energy markets, and hindrance to the adoption of renewable energy sources. The removal of subsidies is seen as an essential step toward mitigating the environmental and economic costs of fossil fuel dependence, but it also introduces challenges such as increased inequality, higher living costs, and social unrest.

Countries like New Zealand and Canada have made notable strides in subsidy reform. New Zealand's approach to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies has been recognized for its commitment to global climate goals, focusing on removing both direct and indirect subsidies while redirecting funds toward sustainable energy infrastructure and social programs (Kelly, 2023). In the year 2021, Canada announced its intention to phase out subsidies for fossil fuel production, with a focus on reducing reliance on fossil fuels and increasing investments in clean energy technologies as observed by Corkal, Levin, and Gass, (2020). These reforms reflect a global trend towards aligning national energy policies with international climate commitments, such as the Paris Agreement.

In recent history, the issue of fuel subsidy removal has been one of the most contentious policy matters in Nigeria. Despite multiple attempts by previous administrations, since 1999, to phase out subsidies, the policy has faced significant opposition, particularly from low-income households and key stakeholders. In May 2023, the current President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2023) announced

the end of fuel subsidies, citing the need to reallocate funds to critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The immediate consequence was a substantial increase in fuel prices, leading to widespread economic distress across the country, particularly in states like Benue, Katsina, Nassarawa, Yobe, Zamfara among others where many households are heavily reliant on subsidized fuel for transportation and energy needs.

Recent studies have highlighted the devastating effects of subsidy removal in Nigeria, with fuel price hikes exacerbating existing economic challenges. Research by Oladipo (2023) indicates that the sudden rise in fuel prices has led to increased poverty, rising costs of living, and widespread unemployment, particularly in rural areas and agrarian communities. The study also points to a growing sense of frustration and mistrust among the population, as many Nigerians perceive the policy as a failure of governance to protect vulnerable groups. Additionally, the sharp price hikes have significantly impacted small businesses, which depend on fuel for generators to power their operations due to the country's unstable electricity supply.

Nigeria's communities are agrarians with a significant reliance on civil service jobs; fuel subsidy removal has had dire consequences. The agricultural sector, which is a major source of livelihood for rural households, has been particularly affected. Farmers face increased transportation and equipment costs, threatening food security and reducing agricultural productivity. According to recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2024), over 70% of households in Nigeria live below the poverty line, and the fuel price increase has pushed many

further into poverty. Vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly, are disproportionately affected, as they are more likely to spend a large portion of their income on fuel for basic needs such as cooking, lighting, and transportation.

Recent studies on fuel subsidy removal in other African nations, such as Ghana, Angola, and Namibia, have highlighted varying degrees of success and challenges. In Ghana, the phased removal of subsidies since 2001 has been accompanied by significant public resistance, though the government has implemented compensation measures to mitigate the impact on vulnerable populations (Clements et al., 2013). Similarly, Angola's decision to reduce fuel subsidies in 2023 resulted in an 87.5% increase in fuel prices, which affected household energy consumption and transportation costs. However, the government aims to redirect the savings from subsidy removal to critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, with the goal of promoting sustainable development and reducing the country's reliance on fossil fuels (Aduloju, 2023).

Namibia, which never implemented fuel subsidies, serves as a case study of an alternative approach, where market-driven pricing mechanisms have been used to manage fuel prices since the 1990s. This has allowed the country to avoid the fiscal burdens associated with fuel subsidies, although it has faced public outcry over price increases during periods of global oil price volatility.

Conceptual Clarification

The concept of fuel subsidies in Nigeria traces its origins to the 1970s, formalized through the enactment of the

Price Control Act of 1977, which sought to regulate the sale of essential products, including petrol, at controlled prices (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2023). While the idea of a subsidy can be considered noble in principle, its implementation in Nigeria has been marred by allegations of corruption, mismanagement, and inefficiency. Thirteen years after the deregulation of diesel in 2003, the Nigerian government began reducing its subsidy on kerosene in 2016. However, managing the subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), commonly known as petrol, remains a significant challenge for the Nigerian government. Estimates indicate that a substantial portion of the nation's budget is allocated annually to sustain the fuel subsidy program (Nwachukwu & Chike, 2011).

According to the Agreement on Subsidy and Countervailing Measures (ASCM) maintained by the World Trade Organization (WTO), subsidy refers to government transfers, which can include direct financial transfers, potential liabilities, revenue forgone, or situations where the government offers goods and services below market rates or purchases them above market prices (Beaton et al., 2013; Foo, Lean, & Salim, 2021). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2010) further defines subsidies as government measures designed to influence consumption patterns, with energy subsidies, including fuel subsidies, having been practiced in various forms worldwide. These subsidies are intended to lower the price of a product or service for consumers, reducing their financial burden.

Investopedia (2015) defines a subsidy as a financial benefit extended by the government, often in the form of cash

payments or tax reductions, aimed at alleviating price burdens for certain groups or sectors. Despite its positive intentions, politics often plays a significant role in the distribution and effectiveness of subsidies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2001) describes subsidies as unrequited payments made by government enterprises, typically based on production levels or quantities, with the aim of influencing production, pricing, or compensation in certain sectors, such as energy.

In terms of energy subsidies, they typically manifest in two primary forms: first, subsidies aimed at lowering the cost of consuming fossil fuels (e.g., petrol), and second, those intended to support the domestic production of fossil fuels (Burniaux et al., 2009). The subsidies for petrol, which are targeted at consumers, typically aim to keep fuel prices low, stimulate certain sectors of the economy, and reduce poverty by improving access to energy (Saunders & Schneider, 2000; Morgan, 2007).

Governments employ various mechanisms to support the production or consumption of fossil fuels, including:

1. **Direct Payments:** Financial assistance to companies involved in fossil fuel production or consumption.
2. **Tax Benefits:** Tax breaks or exemptions granted to organizations engaged in fossil fuel activities.
3. **Price Controls:** Regulations that keep fossil fuel prices below market rates.
4. **Market Access Restrictions:** Policies that limit competition, favoring specific fossil fuel producers or consumers.

5. **Trade Barriers:** Tariffs and trade restrictions to protect domestic fossil fuel industries.

6. **Energy Sector Regulation:** Policies that influence demand, pricing, and market access for energy resources.

These mechanisms can be direct, such as price controls or tax exemptions, or indirect, such as promoting favorable regulatory environments, research and development, and the provision of essential resources. In essence, subsidies lower energy production costs, increase revenues for producers, or reduce the price paid by consumers (Citizens Guide to Energy Subsidy in Nigeria, 2011; Todaro, 2009).

Despite Nigeria's status as one of Africa's largest economies, with an estimated 37.2 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, the IMF (2013) notes that a large portion of its population (54%) continues to live below the poverty line. This paradox highlights that the nation's wealth has not substantially improved the quality of life for its citizens (Nwachukwu & Chike, 2011).

Over the years, the Nigerian economy has become heavily dependent on cheap petroleum products, particularly petrol and kerosene, for both domestic and commercial use (Bashir, 2014). This dependency has been exacerbated by an unreliable electricity supply from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), forcing many households and businesses to rely on generators powered by subsidized fuel. Small-scale enterprises, including hotels, barbershops, welders, hairdressers, newsstands, food vendors, and hospitals, depend on subsidized fuel for their operations (Bashir, 2014).

The removal of the fuel subsidy has exacerbated inflation, leading to a sharp

increase in the cost of goods and services, making them unaffordable for many Nigerians. Increased transportation costs have had a ripple effect on various sectors of the economy, further compounding the challenges faced by businesses and consumers. This has also negatively impacted household welfare, as inflation diverts resources away from savings and investments towards meeting daily necessities (Remy, U., 2012).

Theoretical Framework

This paper is based upon the foundations of the rational choice theory, champions by Adam Smith in his seminal work of 1776, *"An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations"*. Smith's theory emphasized on self-regarding interest and the concept of market forces, which formed the theoretical backbone for understanding the individual behavior within constraints (Van & Werff, 2022). There are three basic tenets in rational choice theory thus; rational actor(s), self-regarding interest and indivisible hands. The theory's major assumptions are as follows:

- 1) People make decisions based on a rational evaluation of costs and benefits;
- 2) For an action to be worthwhile, its benefits must exceed its costs;
- 3) If the benefits of an action falls below its costs, the person would discontinued the action; and
- 4) Individuals utilized their available resources to maximize benefits.

Rational choice theory is largely relevant in this paper as it provided a framework for understanding the decisions of both Nigerian government and individual citizens in the country, specifically on the disagreement of 29th

May, 2023 fuel subsidy removal. Both individual citizen(s) and government aimed at maximizing benefits based on the perceived rationality and self-regarding interests. The government, as the initiator of the policy (rational actor), view continues payment of subsidy on petrol as waste of resources and believed that ending it would save the economy from collapsing. By stopping fuel subsidy, the government anticipates inflows of enough funds to maintained welfare services and build infrastructure in the economy. On the other hand, fuel subsidy removal would favor the ruling class by granting them access to available fund to fulfill their personal as well as political interests.

Further to this, the tenet of rational choice theory 'individualism' is evident here, as it explained that, individuals are the primary initiators of action in social and other societal contexts. The government initiates and implemented the policy driven by self-interest and perceived rational choice, aimed at maximizing self-regarding interest to accumulate wealth. This action influenced the broader societal outcome, leading to rejection and agitations from the citizens (Abell, 2000).

However, individual citizens in Nigeria perceived the policy as damaging to their living conditions. The high fuel prices resulting from the removal of fuel subsidy were negatively affecting the performance and revenue generation in the road transport sector leading to high transport fare and hike cost of vehicle maintenance, which affects the prices of commodities in general. This situation brought inflation in the economy affecting severely the livelihoods of many and those working in this road transport sector. Consequently, from the part of the less privilege in the

society, the policy considered as anti-poor, which is the sole aim of agitations and protest for government to take necessary action in mitigating its adverse effects in the economy. This related to the idea of rationality being the tenet of the theory, which states that individuals operate in a manner that maximizes their own benefit by pursuing the course they considered most favorable (Abell, 2000).

Finally, the rational choice theory was employ for its comprehensive nature, encapsulating various models that elucidate social phenomena of fuel subsidy removal as the outcomes arising from individual actions deemed rational. The rational behavior signified actions conducive to achieving specific objectives within the confines of a given situation. Central to rational choice explanations are personal preferences, beliefs, and constraints. This influences the government acting logically to defend its self-deriving motive on the policy implementation of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.

Governance and Fuel subsidy in Nigeria: The Rationale for the Removal

The Nigerian government introduced oil subsidy to cushion the effect of rising global oil prices in the 1972. McCulloch et al, (2020) stated that subsidies exist because the government fixes the price of gasoline for consumers below the international price and uses government resources to pay for the difference. They further mentioned that subsidies were first introduced in 1970s as a response to oil price shocks in 1973. Subsidies can have both positive and negative consequences. It can be a useful tool for achieving various economic and social goals, such as reducing poverty, supporting industries

during economic downturns, and promoting innovations (Niyi & Aregbesola, 2023). During president Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inauguration speech on May, 2023, he declared that the national subsidies on petroleum derivatives was lifted, and the fund earlier spent on subsidy would be spend in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and job creation (Sunday, 2023). Niyi and Aregbesola (2023) stated that within 30 minutes of the president's address, not only fuel prices rose automatically, but the cost of transportation, food and manufacturing also increased. The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria has brought several changes in lives of its citizens. While the intention may be to address fiscal challenges and encourage market driven pricing, the decisions impact on inflation, transportation costs, and individual 's livelihoods cannot be overlooked Ogunode & Ukozor 2022, as cited in Niyi & Aregbesola, (2023).

Ahmed et. al. (2024), Identified the following as the rationale behind the removal of oil subsidy in 2016 by president Buhari administration.

1. It will ensure private sector participation in the importation of petroleum products which will freeup the market, empower many Nigerians and also allow government focus on other key sectors of the economy.
2. It will ensure the ready availability of petrol at all times for all Nigerians as Nigeria will be saturated with petrol and there will be no diversion by marketers
3. It will curb the greed for higher profits and sabotage by a few players in the oil industry removal and positively affect the economy.

4. It will ensure competition in the industry and market forces will drive down the price of petrol in the long run as witnessed in the telecoms sector for the benefit of Nigerians
5. It will permanently banish queues from petrol stations across the nation and free the country from the endless pains and sufferings that comes with lining up for fuel. Naij news (2016).

The Challenges of Fuel Subsidy Removal in Nigeria

Fuel subsidies have been a contentious economic and political issue in many countries, including Nigeria. For years, Nigeria has implemented fuel subsidies as a means to provide cheaper petroleum products to its citizens. However, the removal of fuel subsidies has significant challenges on the economy, society, and government finances. One of the primary challenges of fuel subsidy removal is the immediate impact on the cost of living. Fuel is a vital commodity in Nigeria, and any increase in the price of fuel will have a ripple effect on the cost of other goods and services. With costs rising over 400% due to subsidy removal last year, Price of commodities took similar turn, and because they are more widely used locally, the impact of this increase affected the majority of Nigerians already living below the poverty line. The impact will be a steep increase in the cost of living, which will have a devastating impact on households and small businesses, further plunging more people into untold suffering. Another challenge is the potential for social unrest. Fuel subsidy removal has historically been met with protests and strikes, with citizens calling for a reversal of the policy. This is because the removal of the subsidy is often seen as a betrayal by

the government, which has failed to provide alternative solutions to the problems created by the removal. Social unrest can lead to disruption of economic activities, the loss of lives and property, and a general destabilization of the country, as it seems the timing is wrong because our refineries are still non-functional. A clear justification was the massive protests carried out across Nigeria on 27 and 28 of February, 2024.

Labor unions over hardship instigated by fuel subsidy removal. Furthermore, fuel subsidy removal could lead to an increase in inflation. Inflation refers to the rate at which the prices of goods and services increase over time. As the cost of fuel goes up, so will the prices of other goods and services, as was observed with the removal of subsidies as the primary source of energy for medium- and largesized organizations. This can lead to a rise in inflation, which can have long-term economic consequences such as a decrease in purchasing power, reduced economic growth, and increased interest rates. Another challenge is the potential impact on small businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of innovation and the emerging economy status of Nigeria, which cuts across the formal and informal sectors. Small businesses are particularly vulnerable to the removal of fuel subsidies because they often rely on fuel for transportation, utilities, and power. An increase in the cost of fuel could lead to higher operating costs, making it more difficult for small businesses to survive or remain profitable. This could have a negative impact on job creation and economic growth. Finally, the removal of fuel subsidies poses a challenge to the government's ability to effectively manage its finances. Ethical and moral issue

hampered Nigeria's development over the years. The subsidy has been a significant drain on the country's finances, and its removal could help reduce the government's spending. However, the government must ensure that the funds saved from the subsidy are used effectively. Failure to do so could lead to increased corruption and mismanagement of public funds. There is a promise for some intervention fund disbursement to Nigerians to cushion the early effect of subsidy removal. However, such payouts have been sources of corruption in the past, thereby making Nigerians doubt the impact of such payouts. Opportunities of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Nigeria's Economy We have examined the short to long term.

The Anticipated benefits of Fuel subsidy Removal on the Nigerian Economy for sustainable Development

The withdrawal of fuel subsidy may have so many challenges but if properly managed, in the future there will be some benefits. The long Short term opportunities Reduces government borrowing and the associated huge deficit: The Fuel subsidy has been a major source of government expenditure in Nigeria, with huge sums being spent annually to keep petrol prices artificially low. This has led to the government borrowing heavily to finance the subsidy, which in turn increases the country's deficit. By removing the subsidy, the government can reduce its borrowing and the associated huge deficit, freeing up resources for other important sectors. Adequate or availability of resources for investment in other critical sectors: With the removal of fuel subsidy, the government can free up resources that would have been spent on

the subsidy to invest in other critical sectors such as education, healthcare, security and infrastructure. This will not only improve the standard of living for citizens but also enhance economic growth. Reduce/remove incentive for smuggling and associated security risk: Subsidy has created a huge incentive for smuggling of fuel to neighboring countries where they can be sold at higher prices. This has resulted in security risks, as smuggling has also led to illegal refining, pipeline vandalism, and other criminal activities. By removing the subsidy, the incentive for smuggling will be reduced or eliminated, which will lead to a reduction in security risks associated with fuel smuggling. Long Term Opportunities Stronger Naira and decline in imported inflation: The massive importation of fuel increases the demand for foreign exchange. One of the medium to long term impacts of the subsidy removal is the reduction of fuel purported consumed in Nigeria as cheap, subsidized fuel will no longer be available for smuggling. This reduced volume will translate to a reduction in demand for foreign exchange which will lead to a stronger Naira. This will also reduce imported inflation and its pass-through effect, as the cost of importing petroleum products is a major contributor to inflation in Nigeria. Investment flow to the downstream sector: Removal of subsidy will create an enabling environment for private sector investment in the downstream sector, leading to the development of local refineries and the creation of jobs. This will enhance the country's energy security and reduce dependence on imported petroleum products. More profitable downstream players: Along with the increase in investment flow to the downstream

sector, deregulation of the downstream sector will stimulate increased activities that will lead to more profitable downstream companies. This will result in improved tax revenue both from the companies, their employees, vendors and other players across the value chain. Product availability: Removal of subsidy will incentivize private sector investment in the downstream sector, leading to increased local refining capacity and improved product availability. Improved sovereign credit rating: Nigeria's sovereign credit rating has been adversely affected by its low revenue, high debt levels, rising deficit, and vulnerability to oil price shocks. Removal of the subsidy will increase government's revenue, reduce borrowing and the associated deficit, leading to an improvement in the country's sovereign credit rating and lower cost of borrowing. Leverage on the AfCFTA to legally export refined products rather than crude oil to other African countries: The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement provides a platform for Nigeria to competitively export refined petroleum products to other African countries. With the removal of fuel subsidy, Nigeria can leverage the AfCFTA agreement to increase its exports of refined products, thereby generating more income.

Reasons for subsidy retention

Is there actually need to continue payment of fuel subsidy? Ahmed et al (2024), fuel subsidy is often retain mainly to serve the social goal of reducing fuel cost and increasing access among poor with the aim of achieving desirable social goals. In view of this, Goldstein and Estache (2009) and IEA (1999) as cit in Ahmed et al (2024) provided a discussion of

possible rationale for subsidy. Major ones were includes:

1. Supporting the poor and improving equity.
2. Achieving energy security: The provision of a subsidy to a particular source of supply may improve its competitiveness and hence reduce dependence on other sources of energy, notably imported fuels.
3. Correcting local externalities: Fossil fuel use primarily in the power, Industrial, and transport sectors is associated with negative local Externalities, largely associated with indoor and outdoor air pollution.
4. Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.
5. Supporting domestic production and associated employment

Where a Domestic energy industry is no longer competitive with the world market and foreign energy can be imported more cheaply, or former export market have disappeared, then government have resorted to production subsidies. According to the synthesis report by the UNEP and IEA, (2001), Government intervention, which may involve the use of subsidy, is intended to remedy market failures, either by addressing their causes or by trying to replicate the outcome of a perfect market. Social considerations such as concern for the poor, sick or otherwise disadvantaged may also provide a rationale for subsidizing energy. Most governments consider that access to a reasonably priced minimum supply of modern energy services is socially desirable. In practice, all energy subsidy programs are ultimately justified on one or more of the following grounds:

1. To protect employment in a particular indigenous industry or

- sector against international competition or promote job creation.
- II. To stimulate regional or rural economic development.
 - III. To reduce dependence on imports for energy-security reasons.
 - IV. To lower the effective cost of and/or provide access to modern energy services for specific social groups or rural communities as a means of welfare support.
 - V. To protect the environment. Cit in Ahmed et al (2024)
- World Bank (2010) posits that subsidy is retained in an economy for welfare. It further stated that the Governments need to make the appropriate accommodation for the population demographics and distribution when planning policies on subsidies, especially understanding those who would be affected and how they would be affected. This is because “governments that have rushed subsidy reforms without preparing the population for the changes, and without providing targeted support to particularly disadvantaged groups, have often had to reverse the policy in the face of widespread opposition.” Ojameruaye (2011) presents the following as some of the economic, social and political reasons the government provide subsidies or subventions to producers, suppliers or provider of certain products or services:
- a) To control price inflation and thereby prevent a decline in the real income and living standards of consumers, especially lower income households.
 - b) To smoothen the process of long term structural change or transformation in certain industries and prevent a decline in the production of some agricultural crops such as cotton.
 - c) To encourage the provision and consumption of “merit” goods and services which generate positive externalities (increased social benefits)
 - d) To prevent industrial action, protests and riots that can lead to political instability. Labor unions, nongovernmental organizations and the poor generally try to resist any attempt to reduce or eliminate subsidies. A particular problem with energy subsidies is that, once established, they become difficult to reduce or remove, especially when they have been given on a universal Basis. Kojima (2009) and the IMF (2008) noted that, when faced with the large oil price increases prior to the August 2008 peak, many developing countries preferred to stay with a subsidy scheme, or even to increase or re-introduce subsidies or decrease taxes, despite the enormous fiscal burden this represented. Because of potential opposition from beneficiary groups, government has to take their likely reaction in to account in determining the objective of any plan to alter the subsidy level.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concluded that the removal of fuel subsidy remains one of the most

complex policies ever taken by Nigerian government. This is because; it has multifaceted implications and needs to handle with a serious political will in order to succeed the aims and objectives of the policy. If properly managed it may reduce government borrowing, increased revenue generation, improved productivity in the oil sector and alleviate fuel theft among others. It has multifaceted implication because it also has challenges such as inflation, social unrest, high transportation cost and the potential negative impact on low-income individuals. Therefore, decision to withdraw fuel subsidy must be carefully planned considering the welfare of the citizens as the major goal in order to promote sustainable development. Based on these, the paper therefore recommended the following measures:

1. the government should introduce subsidy in the transportation sector and also improve our public transport sector
2. Government need to fast track the rehabilitation of Warri, PortHarcourt and Kaduna of refineries to ease the suffering of the citizens
3. The minimum wage implemented by both Federal and State governments is not real enough feed and there is more to be done as regards to this
4. Diversification of our Economy, more attention should be given to Agriculture and knowledge based economy by empowering the youths rather continuously given palliatives
5. Government should also try to reduce the cost of governance

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WATER SCARCITY AND CONFLICT IN LAKE CHAD: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Water scarcity in the Lake Chad region has generated escalating environmental issues, social-economic problems, and security challenges. This research is grounded on hydro-political theory to examine state relationship and management of water resources. The paper adopts a descriptive research design utilizing secondary sources of data and thematic analysis to investigate the causes and impacts. The analysis investigates how climate change, population, governance weaknesses are the causes of water scarcity in the Lake Chad area. The paper investigates the link between water scarcity and conflict in Lake Chad which are resources competition, economic stagnation, resource control, migration among others. The research also investigated the challenges of addressing water scarcity in the Lake Chad which include; weak enforcement of existing water management policies, lack of cooperation among states, corruption. The proposed solution introduces a combination of regional cooperation efforts with better water management systems sustainable elective income options and conflict resolution practices to resolve the crisis. Joint security strengthening measures and technological advancement and economic diversification remain essential for achieving continuous stability and resilience within the Lake Chad Basin.

Keywords: Water, scarcity, Lake Chad, conflicts

Introduction

Lake Chad is one of Africa's largest fresh water bodies. It spans across Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. It provides important ecosystem services and support millions of people whose livelihoods are closely linked to agricultural, herding and fishing activities (Trevino & Davy, 2023). According to Eric (2006) Lake Chad experienced a 90% reduction of its surface area in the past six decades because of climate change as well as stressed water resources management alongside population need. Treszkai (2018) asserted that water scarcity in the 21st century will be one of the leading causes of conflict in Africa. The drying up of Lake Chad has intensified resource competition, food insecurity, migration leading to conflicts among communities, farmers, and herders. Extremist groups, such as Boko Haram, expand their membership and

while destabilizing the regional security landscape (Carlesi, 2022).

Against the above background, this paper intends to clarify the concept of water scarcity and analyzing the conflicts in Lake Chad region. The research further investigates the relationship between water scarcity and conflict in the Lake Chad Basin by evaluating the main causes of water scarcity in the Lake Chad, examining the impacts and identify possible solutions for reducing water disputes while building long-term regional stability.

Methodology

Descriptive research design is adopted in this paper which provides detailed knowledge regarding water scarcity causes and their effects on local populations alongside the resulting disputes. The research adopts secondary data collection techniques for obtaining relevant information regarding

water scarcity and conflict in the Lake Chad Basin. The research employs thematic analysis to investigate patterns and relationships between water scarcity and conflict.

The Concept of Water Scarcity

Water scarcity refers to the lack of sufficient available water resources to meet the demands of water usage within a region (FAO, 2021). It is broadly categorized into two types: physical water scarcity, where natural water resources are unable to meet demands, and economic water scarcity, where access to water is limited due to lack of infrastructure or governance (UN-Water, 2020).

Theoretical Framework: Hydro-Political Theory

The term hydropolitics was first coined by Waterbury (1979) in his book *Hydropolitics of the Nile Valley*. Waterbury implicitly defined hydropolitics as the study of inter-state politics regarding the management of shared water resources. Hydro-political theory posits that water resources are inherently tied to political power dynamics and that conflicts over water can arise due to competition among states, communities, and groups (Delli Priscoli & Wolf, 2009). Mollinga (2001) identified hydropolitics as inter-state politics regarding the allocation, distribution, control and quality of water resources. The hydro-political theory demonstrates how water resources impact political interactions that occur among different levels of regional entities. Water shortage causes either political disputes or collaborative efforts based on proper resource management.

The basic assumptions of the theory /Application of the theory

- Water is a strategic and political resource (Zeitoun & Warner, 2006). The lake Chad is a symbol of unity among states like Nigeria, Chad, thus transformed the lake into a contested space.
- Powerful states control of the water resources could lead to inequitable

distribution and potential conflict due to dominant states or groups with greater political, military, or economic power (Mirumachi, 2015). Nigeria, a powerful state plays a dominant role in shaping water policy by leading regional water development projects, such as construction and irrigation schemes, without fully consulting or compensating neighboring countries (Olaniyan, 2015).

- Cooperation or conflict in shared water systems is determined by political will, governance frameworks in transboundary water management.
- Powerful riparian states may use coercion (economic or military threats), propaganda or other means to force its water agenda on less powerful neighbors (Zeitoun & Warner, 2006).
- Water promotes cooperation rather than conflict. States may cooperate on technical matters while engaging in political competition, (Wolf, 2002). According to Treszkai (2018) due to the decline of water in the Lake, the states surrounding the Lake Chad have been forced to cooperate with each other in order to avoid further escalations of conflict and war
- Regional institutions, such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission, established in 1964 significantly contribute to the resolution of water-related disputes and foster long-term cooperation.

Overview of the Lake Chad Basin

The Lake Chad Basin lies in the Sahel covering 2.5 million square kilometers (965,255 square miles) or 8% of the African continent straddling four countries Chad, Nigeria, Niger and Cameroun (Kamnitzer, 2025). The Lake Chad Basin to Hamidu (2016) maintained historical importance as it supported the local economy by enabling livelihood activities while facilitating trade activities and conserving biodiversity. The freshwater body supplies water to about 30 million people and provides the foundation for

agricultural development together with fishing activities and livestock farming. The lake according

Historical Analysis of Water Levels and Change Over Time

Historical records show Lake Chad occupied a place among the largest water reservoirs in Africa in the 1960s by measuring approximately 25,000 square kilometers. Satellite images together with historical records indicate Lake Chad has seen its surface area decrease above 90% during the last 60 years. The lake reached its minimum size of 2,500 square kilometers during the 1980s and continues to face recovery obstacles (Olowoyeye & Kanwar, 2023). Scientific evidence shows how droughts mixed with inconsistent rain and rising human involvement led to this major decline in the water level. The lake depends mainly on water flowing from the Chari and Logone Rivers but their water volume has decreased because of weather pattern changes and upstream operations for irrigation and domestic needs (Erickson-Davis, 2025). Dry areas now occupy major parts of the former lakebed while the habitat breaks into isolated pieces leading to significant hydrological changes in the region.

Link between Water Scarcity and Conflict in Lake Chad

Water Scarcity serves as the principal source of physical disputes throughout the Lake Chad region. Water-related conflict is a growing concern across Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in trans boundary river basins such as the Nile, Niger, and Lake Chad. Scholars like Swatuk and Wirkus (2009) argue that while water scarcity does not always directly cause conflict, it creates a fertile ground for disputes, especially where there are historical grievances, political instability, and weak institutional capacity.

- **Competition of resources:** There is competition of resources between fishermen, herders, and farmer as they compete for limited water and land. This

competition often manifests as resource-based clashes

- **Militant & terrorist recruitment;** The decline of sustainable livelihood due to water of scarcity of water increases poverty, thus groups like Boko Ha-ram who have access to water in certain areas recruits young men by exploiting their environmental grievances and using it as a strategic resource to fight the state (International Crisis Group, 2017).
- **Economic Stagnation:** The declining lake has caused extensive harm to local economies through joblessness leading to economic stagnation and promotion of criminal activities like piracy, banditry etc. (Ashafa, 2018)
- **Migration;** there is great movement of people across national borders. Migrants from Niger, Chad, and Cameroon often settle in Nigerian territories, causing demographic shifts that spark indigent-settler tensions.
- **Resource Control;** State and non-state actors have made water points a strategic and tactical objective for control. The trans-boundary nature of Lake Chad further complicates matters, making water governance a highly politicized issue (Sadoff & Grey, 2002).

Causes of Water Scarcity

The Lake Chad Basin faces water shortage because of three key elements including environmental conditions as well as population dynamics and governance practices (Reasons Behind the Water Crisis and Its Potential Health Outcomes, 2024). The primary causes behind Lake Chad's water crisis include climate change together with increasing population count expanding agriculture and insufficient water resource management.

- **Climate Change;** Climate change has been identified as a threat to global security and a driver of conflict (Policy Centre, 2020). Coe and Foley (2001) asserted that climate change especially the decline in

rainfall across the Sahel—is a major driver of the lake’s shrinkage. Global warming has produced major changes in the water supply of Lake Chad. Extreme weather conditions including flash floods together with dry spells have damaged the lake ecosystem which makes water levels consistently unpredictable.

- **Population Growth;** The Lake Chad Basin experiences severe strain on its water resources due to its high and quick population expansion. With a population of over 30 million people relying on the basin, the demand for water has outstripped supply (LCBC, 2020). There is high rates of growth whereby the population could double between 2010 to 2045 placing pressure on increasingly scarce natural resources (Trevino & Davy, 2023).
- **Agriculture;** The use of irrigation has great effect on the Lake Chad causing increased water withdrawal. Irrigation projects in countries like Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon, often uncoordinated, have diverted water from the lake and its tributaries (Gao et al., 2011).
- **Lack of effective management;** The lake faces diminishing waters because of poor governance along with missing coordination between regions and weak enforcement of conservation rules. However, many scholars have criticized the LCBC for lacking strong enforcement mechanisms and for being underfunded and politically weak (UNEP, 2011). The commission's success has been limited by unequal power dynamics among member states, and a general lack of commitment to joint decision-making.

Impact of Water Scarcity on Local Communities and States

The humanitarian effects of the Lake Chad crisis produce catastrophic outcomes. The people living in local communities based their lives on farming fishing and herding before the water resources declined which led to their

current difficult situation. Key results arising from the situation include:

- There is food insecurity as a result of decline on agricultural production.
- The rise of displacement of millions of persons as they have taken refuge in pools of displaced community installations yet find themselves starved of proper infrastructure and scarce resources. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), over 2.7 million people have fled their homes in the Lake Chad Basin.
- Poverty and decline in economic activities.
- The recruitment of people by terrorist groups like Boko-haram

Cross-Border and Geopolitical

The Lake Chad Basin attracts competing interests from the four main countries Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger.

- Nations situated higher in the Lake Chad basin have adopted agricultural projects that decrease water influx into the lake which creates growing tensions among lower riparian states.
- The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) exists as a regional military operation formed by forces from Lake Chad Basin countries to fight Boko Haram. The member states encounter impediments in coordination because they face political conflicts together with limited funding resources.
- The region suffers from limited intervention effectiveness because conflicting foreign interests and international organizations prevent harmonious action.
- Organised criminal network like smuggling, piracy and banditry

Challenges in Addressing Water Scarcity and Conflict

The affected countries face substantial difficulties in confronting Lake Chad water

scarcity due to their insufficient coordinated management structure along with inadequate policies. Some key issues include:

- Weak enforcement of existing water management policies and lack of accountability among government agencies.
- The lack of cooperation between Nigeria with Chad and Cameroon and Niger results in divided efforts and non-effective water preservation plans.
- Corruption and poor fund management
- Lack of proper infrastructure creates impediments to industrial and agricultural development through its inadequate irrigation mechanisms inadequate road networks and weak public service delivery systems which leads to worsening food insecurity issues.
- High temperatures combined with unpredictable rain patterns contribute to the continuous reduction of the lake's size.
- The loss of forests together with the expansion of deserts diminishes farmland and produces soil erosion.
- Industrial waste together with agricultural pollution runoff continues to deteriorate water resources through harmful contamination.

Propsects and sustainable Solutions

The Lake Chad Basin requires essential regional collaboration because it extends across international borders. Key initiatives include:

- The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) needs assistance to enhance its function as an organization that improves inter-state coordination for water management.
- The implementation of water restoration projects receives funding through alliances with the United Nations World Bank and the African Union.
- Enhancing the collaboration between security forces across different borders enables better exchange of intelligence while executing joint military operations

against extremist groups active in the region.

- Aquaculture and Fish Farming promote the establishment of controlled fish farms through artificial ponds to address the decreasing fish population in Lake Chad (IFPRI, 2009).
- Solar and wind energy projects combined with renewable energy initiatives serve to create employment opportunities along with decreasing agricultural spirit.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Lake Chad Basin plays a vital role but now faces multiple severe environmental and socioeconomic difficulties. The declining water body combined with variable rainfall patterns and growing water requirements has triggered extensive local group competition which frequently results in violent community disputes. The rapid decrease in Lake Chad exists as one of the major environmental challenges in Africa since it causes severe harm to food security and employment systems while disrupting regional stability. Implementation of better regional cooperation together with improved water management practices along with new technological solutions should provide remedies. The development of fish farming together with renewable energy projects can decrease people's reliance on the lake. The long-term stability requires both strengthened peace initiatives and enhanced security measures. The right set of actions will lead to Lake Chad's recovery as it brings better prospects to residents of the surrounding area.

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